



Moor House School News and Events

Sayers Croft

Monday 14th - Friday 18th August 2007

In August 2007, 13 Moor House School students went to Sayers Croft for an outdoor activity week, supervised by Mr. Hart and Miss Short.

Despite extremely rainy weather, we managed to have a very enjoyable time and completed all the activities which we had planned to do. The week began with climbing the 35 foot climbing wall and the students showed that they were up for a challenge at this first event. All students took part and it was extremely encouraging to see the effort they put in. Rufus and Will were up and down the climbing wall in very respectable athletic times, but it was equally encouraging to see Calums determination to reach the summit despite the occasional slip, and Alices bravery in starting the week the way she was to go on by stepping outside of the comfort zone and giving herself a real challenge!

In the evening, we did an activity where the students worked in pairs with one student blindfolded and trying to follow an obstacle course, with their pair giving spoken assistance and safety guidance where necessary. Harley showed she was willing to get her hands dirty, literally, by crawling through a muddy tunnel without a second thought as for the way she would look at the end, and rightly so, its Sayers Croft, not a fashion show! Alice started laughing uncontrollably in the tunnel on her turn but made it through unscathed. The evening finished with games in the Sayers Croft Hedge Maze.

The following day began with the High Ropes course which, again, all students took part in. Adam, Christian, Matthew and Sophie were old hands at this from having done it the previous year, and were able to give good encouragement to the others.

We followed that up with abseiling, which was possibly the scariest activity of the whole week. Even though you are safely installed in a harness, and effectively restrained by a guide rope in the hand of a qualified instructor, it is still very hard to convince yourself that stepping backwards off a 40 foot cliff is a sensible idea! Everyone attempted this task which was brilliant, with Matthew once again showing his inner Sylvester Stallone, and Louis and Alex proving they could manage it like professionals!

In the evening we had a nature talk from a local wildlife expert who brought a few amazing specimens of his own, including a barn owl, a snowy owl, and ferrets which were nearly required to go up the trouser legs of a staff member. I dont know who was more scared, the ferrets or the member of staff.

Wednesday morning brought archery practice, and all the students managed to hit the targets with some consistency even from quite far away. Scoring bullseyes was another matter, with one of the archery games resulting in one student supposedly winning a holiday in Australia, for one day only, and having to travel there by bus. Much to the relief of the students family we decided to bring them back to school with us instead.

After that, the students formed two teams and attempted to build makeshift rafts from airfilled barrels, freight pallets, wood and rope. Normally there is always a dodgy raft built that collapses under the

weight of its passengers but this year the standard of both rafts was extremely high which is credit to the engineering skills of both teams!

All students had a go sailing their rafts from the dock to the island in the lake, with varying amounts of success. Calum got an early bath, possibly the fault of his eager shipmate who liked rocking the boat, but Rufus, Will, Harley and Bede all managed a successful paddle. Sophie was the unluckiest on this one however, forgetting that when Christian disembarked from the raft, she would need to move to rebalance it. The result was one very drenched Sophie, but her good humour meant she managed to keep smiling!

In the afternoon we went to a local pond to indulge in a spot of canoeing and kayaking. Obviously the idea is to stay INSIDE the canoes and kayaks as far as possible, but there were inevitably a few accidental capsizes, with the AlexLouisCalum boat capsizing in a record of less than 60 seconds after departure! Despite cold and rainy weather, the students managed to keep smiling and everyone who wanted a chance to try out a kayak was given the opportunity. Aisha and Christian showed particularly good technique given their limited experience at this. Matthew and Alice were nervous about falling in, but trusting enough to place their faith in Miss Short and Mr. Hart to keep them safe and dry, and their trust was not misplaced. Bede pretended she didn't want to get wet, but made it her mission to splash anyone and everyone if she could.

That evening we received a surprise visit from Mr. Heine, and did a night walk using special reflective markers to guide us round a predetermined route. This required some bravery on the part of the students and again it was excellent to see all students having a go.

On Thursday we started with the famous Sayers Croft Zip Wire. This requires you to climb about 50 feet into a tree, firstly climbing up a ladder, then up iron rungs, and then onto a tiny platform on the side of the tree, before getting harnessed in and launching yourself down the zip wire. It is not for the faint of heart! Nearly all the students had a go, and many of them managed to touch the hanging tyre at the far end of the wire.

In the afternoon we put our canoeing and kayaking experience from the previous day to good use as we went out onto a canal near Godalming. Harley and Matthew tried going in a kayak for their first time and while they are not yet ready for the 2012 Olympics, it showed they had great courage to give it a try. In the evening we received more surprise guests in the form of Miss Parkes, Miss McEvoy and Miss Leniston who boogied on down with the staff and students at the Sayers Croft Disco. DJ services were provided by Will and iPod music by Louis. The evening ended with talks, sausages and some very memorable ghost stories around the campfire (thanks to the disembodied voice of Alex).

The last morning brought a 5 mile trek up and then down Pitch Hill, a nearby hill which gave great views of the whole of southern Surrey. The walk gave us all time to reflect on our week, share time with the departing Year 11s and Miss Short, and get some excellent healthy exercise.

All the students returned home on Friday afternoon exhausted but in good spirits, which is the way it should be. Thanks must go to our Group Leader Liam and canoeing instructor John from Sayers Croft, as well as numerous other Sayers Croft staff members, not least David Quoroll who once again managed to find a way to allow our students to have this wonderful opportunity.

Nick Hart
Visit Coordinator