



# Moor House School News and Events

## Sayers Croft 2009

3rd - 7th August 2009

August 2008 saw thirteen Moor House School students ranging from Year 9 to Year 11 head off to Sayers Croft Field Centre in Ewhurst, Surrey, for a week of activities ranging from the interesting to the fun to the downright terrifying - all in the name of building confidence and 'having a good time'!

Despite BBC weather reports indicating that it would rain continuously for seven days and seven nights, we actually were fortunate enough to have blue skies and hot sunshine at the start of the week, which was very welcome because it was on these three days that the water-based activities took place.

Monday started gently with team-building activities. The group was divided into four teams and each team was tasked with completing a number of 'team challenges' - challenges that for the most part could only be completed if the team worked together. Fortunately the students understood this and most challenges were completed successfully, although Alex C. needed absolutely no help with the Maths Shape task, which he solved in less than ten seconds!

The afternoon saw the students learn the basics of navigating using a compass, which they used to follow a trail through the woods (a warm-up for the Duke of Edinburgh next year, perhaps?). In the evening the students had to complete an assault course - blindfolded, of course - with only verbal guidance from a trusted friend for assistance. The day finished with everyone enjoying games of manhunt in the hedge maze, and once again Tom B. proved that he can hide better than anybody...



Tuesday morning saw the students at the climbing wall, beginning by ascending the wall while being belayed by the other students. Following this they had to really confront their fears by abseiling down from the top of the 10 metre wall - backwards - despite their being a perfectly serviceable staircase available; well done to everybody for braving this challenge!

Raft-building was the afternoon activity, and the standard of rafts - built only from wooden pallets, plastic barrels, and little bits of string - continues to improve! So much so that John, our supervisor, decided to play a dirty trick and make the two teams switch rafts! Specialist Teaching Assistants Jane Davies and Jackie Gerety found this highly amusing, until John then pulled another dirty trick and informed them that THEY would have to test the rafts out first!

To the sadness of the students the rafts did not sink with Miss Davies or Miss Gerety aboard, and they didn't really sink at all with anyone else on them - testament to the thought that had gone into designing them. As such, Nick decided that he wasn't getting wet enough, and so took the plunge into the murky water, with a great dive that unbalanced the other side of the raft sufficiently for Megan to fall in too, with Tim following a few moments later.

The standard now being set, David and Kane did their best to ensure that they left the activity completely soaked, while Connor's trousers took on a life of their own, filling with water that for some reason disobeyed the laws of gravity and refused to drain even after he exited the lake.



The highlight of the activity, however, had to be Alex and David Cuthbertson's ill-fated attempt to board their raft which resulted in it very slowly tipping down into the water, and them both then neatly sliding off while Alex yelled about 'his bottom'.

In the evening we had a visit from Graham Cornick of Hydestyle Animal Shelter who gave us a nature talk and explained how he and his family look after injured animals. As ever Graham brought along some of these animals to show, including a snowy owl, two ferrets, and a barnowl who can do the punchline for any number of jokes, as long as the punchline rhymes with 'whoop!' The day ended with a campfire, toasted marshmallows and games of Cops and Robbers on the field as the sun set.

Wednesday saw a full day of canoeing and kayaking, beginning with some paddling practice on a lake in the beautiful gardens of a local stately home. After learning the technique of how to make your canoe go forward, backwards, and turn, Clark was keen to demonstrate the technique of how to make your friend's canoe capsize. He managed to perform this almost perfectly, losing only one mark due to causing his own canoe to sink in the process.

After a game of mudslinging - literally - and a relaxing lunch in the sun, we headed over to Shalford where we went for a canoe and kayak trip down the River Wey and back. Although the afternoon heat was quite intense, by a stroke of luck some heavy-duty water pistols were discovered and Mr. Hart and John kindly offered to use these to cool down people who looked a bit too dry. Strangely this provoked some considerable reactions from the students who exacted their revenge by splashing back using hands, paddles, and even empty shoes.



In amongst this excitement we did all get a chance to enjoy the beautiful surroundings and realise how fortunate we are to be able to take part in such activities. The students also got to see precisely where an egg actually comes from, as John allowed the students to feed the chickens and see that not all eggs come in a cardboard box!

On Thursday morning the students donned yellow hard-hats and were set to work building a shelter out of nothing but the sticks, branches and logs found in the forest. The brief was that it would have to keep you dry in a storm, and give you some defence against intruding animals.

Caroline and Alex B.'s team opted for the tried and tested 'four walls and a roof' strategy to create a pretty decent shelter. Shaid's team went for a slightly more military approach - a 'wigwam' style shelter with a secondary defensive fort from which missiles could be launched. Tom G's team had however clearly been watching 'Grand Designs' as they turned Clark's "grand vision" into a reality, complete with sloping roof and porch... very impressive (even though it still leaked!).

Before lunch we managed to get out into Cranleigh for a brief look at the outside world (and to stock up on essential items such as Mars bars), and then in the afternoon the students took on the biggest challenge yet - the ZIP WIRE. After getting harnessed up, students had to climb nearly 20 metres up a tree, firstly by going up a ladder, and then by going up iron footholds stapled into the tree trunk, before clambering onto a platform about the size of a piece of A3 paper.



Following the all important safety checks, students were then free to fling themselves off into thin air and swing along the 150m length of the zip wire. Well done to everybody taking part, especially those who managed to 'touch the tyre' at the far end of the wire.

Unfortunately by the evening the heavens had opened and it was raining like, well, England in the height of summer. As such our plans for a second campfire were drowned, but all was not lost as an evening movie, games of Karaoke and a surprise visit from special guest Ellis ensured that spirits remained high.

The final morning dawned bright but soggy as we set off for our final activity, suspended in the forest - the high ropes course. All students made it around the course successfully, most having a second go, all enjoying the thrill of the physical adventure required in the activity. As with many of the activities throughout the week, some considerable bravery is necessary to even attempt this, so well done to all the students!

After all the above activities - and some others that there hasn't been space to mention, including the nightwalk, Worms and World of Goo - the students returned home on Friday afternoon pretty tired out, but in good spirits.

Thanks must go to our Sayers Croft Group Leader, John, for his patience and his kindness, as well as numerous other Sayers Croft staff members, not least Simon (Head of Education) and centre director David Quoroll.

Thanks are also due to co-leaders Jane Davies (STA) and Jackie Gerety (STA) for their hard work supporting the students throughout the week, as well as the staff at Moor House who assisted the smooth-running of the week in numerous ways.

Report by Mr. N. Hart  
Teacher and Visit Leader