

# 57th Episkopi Cubs and Scouts Half-term Camp



Look, no hands.

I don't know what could have come over me. Having managed to swap some shifts to get five days off over the half-term break, I had a sudden rush of blood to the head. This caused me to tell the Scouts and the Cubs that they could both go camping! I suppose though, that after two and a half years with the Cubs and six months with the Scouts, it was the least I could do to say goodbye.

I arrived at the Happy Valley Campsite on Wednesday morning, full of the joys of spring, bleary eyed from my night shift, bursting with what energy I had left in me after loading all the kit into the minibus. The weather I had ordered arrived in time so I had no worries whatsoever. Then the first of the Scouts arrived!!! 15 of them were on camp altogether, nine boys and six girls. We were all quite pleasantly surprised at how well they got the tents up, and with such little assistance too.

Following a quick lunch and the first leg of the non-stop cricket match, Paul Cunningham gave them all a good lesson in pioneering. That is, of course, the art of tying poles together to make something constructive(?). Their climbing frame complete, they were left to their own devices for a while and fortunately it all stayed together.

Camping seems much

easier now than when I was a Scout. We even had a chef down to cook for us on the first evening. Thanks again to John Robinson who cooked some incredibly delicious chicken for us all. Made a change from stew on the first night anyway! But we needed a filling meal inside of us to prepare us for our night hike.

Once the girls had finished doing their hair (!!!!!!!) we were finally ready. Everyone got into the minibus (and one car) and we made our way up the valley to Radio Sonde. Having parked there, we walked all the way up the road to the old Paramali village. Some of the Scouts were rather tired by then, not to mention certain leaders! So we decided against the cross country route back to the vehicles and followed the road back. Jim Hasler had some chocolate awaiting our return and then it was time for bed. The first night of any camp tends to leave the leaders in not quite so good a mood, usually down to lack of sleep. This was to prove no exception!

Thursday morning began earlier than I had planned! But Jim and Jean had prepared a hearty breakfast for us so we were all raring to go (honest!). The morning's activity was horse riding. Not one for me so I stayed behind and set up another course. I think all the Scouts enjoyed their time down at the Saddle Club. Some even found that horses weren't

so bad, maybe I should have gone too! Thanks to Richard Bingham for arranging this one for us.

In the afternoon we met Mark Lawrence at the rock face above the tunnel. Most of the scouts had a go at abseiling and some really surprised themselves at how well they did. Those who decided it was not for them missed out on a great opportunity to at least try it out.

The evening saw our campfire which Paul had built, go up in flames as planned. Unfortunately the Scouts didn't seem as willing to put heart and soul into their (attempts at) singing, unlike Paul and myself. I think they enjoyed it but it was a bit difficult to tell!! Then we went back into the hut to watch a film. Ben Whelan had loaned us an old film of an International Scout Jamboree in Athens some 40 years ago. It went down very well, then it was bedtime again.

Another thank you goes to Trish Jones. She travelled down from Ayios Nikolaos for the night, just so Jean could go back home for a bath and a good night's sleep. I wish I could have done that. Like I said, camping 'aint what it used to be!!

Now the second night is usually a good one for the leaders to grab some sleep. It was a late night waiting for everyone to settle down, but finally everyone was asleep. My sleep had been disturbed the previous night so I reaped my revenge at 6.30. I had planned to do so at 5 but when there was silence I just appreciated it instead! The fire drill was performed quite well by most. I won't mention any names but some did get five minutes extra sleep before the fire bell was moved to a few inches away from their ears!!

Friday morning saw yet another glorious day. It was decided not to take the tents down. Once the kit was all packed away there was plenty of time for the second round of the cricket, followed by a simple(ish) orienteering course. No names again, but remember the red arrow always points to north so if you follow the red arrow, you will always walk to the north!

1130 and it was time to bid the Scouts farewell. At the end of the closing ceremony I handed the Scouts over to Richard. Such a relief to relinquish control, I can tell you! Good luck, Richard.

So, looking very weary and hair almost torn out, Jean, Jim

and I pasted on some smiles to greet the incoming Cubs! The theme for Cub camp was Alice in Wonderland. The pack were thus "dealt" into "suits" and sent off to their tents to get ready. The camp actually began with the investitures of three new Cubs.

With no tents to put up, plenty of time was available for games. Then it was time for the first activity, producing a flag to represent your tent. Smaller pennants were also made and this took us up to dinner time. Jean had prepared some mince for us. Once more a hearty meal to warm us up for the evening.

Once everyone was fed we all made ourselves a badge. I adopted the Mad Hatter as my symbol for the weekend. Jim and Jean naturally became the king and queen of hearts.

Our new recruits into the leadership world became the Cheshire Cat and the White Rabbit (because he's always late!), alias Al Grant and Jim Miller.

Then it was time to wrap up warm and get ready for our night's adventure, finding White Rabbit's home. The walk up to Symvoul's village was taken nice and easy and I hope nobody got too tired. The

evening was colder than the previous ones had been so we were all ready for a hot drink when we got back. Everyone gathered in front of the TV for a viewing of Alice in Wonderland. By the end there were some very tired eyes and it was time for bed.

Considering this was the first night (for some) the Cubs didn't do too badly for sleep. Following breakfast it was time to get some work done. The morning was spent learning all about tracking, the country code, first aid, various knots and also doing a nature project. Then it was time for lunch. What better than a Mad Hatter's Unbirthday Party. After all, it wasn't anyone's birthday! Teacups, teapots full of juice and even an unbirthday cake. What more could you ask for!!!

The afternoon saw the "Royal Tournament" where the suits competed against each other. All of the cubs (except those who already had them) gained at least one Athlete badge that afternoon. I hope everyone had fun. I couldn't join them in the field as I was going crazy by then. A combination of tiredness and hay fever meant I volunteered to pick up the fresh milk!!

Refreshed from my

break (!) it was time to prepare a programme for the campfire. After dinner everyone wrapped up nice and warm to join me round the campfire. This was really my finale as Akela so I was pleased at the effort all of the Cubs put in to making it a very memorable campfire. A good time was had by all, but it was very cold outside. That meant going inside once more, and this time there was a viewing of *The Jungle Book*.

By now the Cubs were dropping like flies and going off to bed. It wasn't too bad a night for the leaders either. Once again a fire alarm was sounded in the morning. This time just one Cub couldn't be woken. This time we actually had to shake him! I wish I could sleep like that. Then the morning was spent tidying up the site and taking down the tents.

The closing ceremony saw me hand over the Pack into the hands of Jim Miller. I have had a fantastic time with the pack over the past 3 years (almost) but it is time to move on. I do wish Jim the very best of luck and hope the Cubs will behave from now on! Following the camp, I must also express my dearest thanks to Jim and Jean Hasler who I could not have managed the camp without.

The Scout Groups on island are always on the look out for new leaders and helpers. If you can spare some time to assist, then please get in touch with someone at your local group. It can be hard work but, believe me, it really is worth it.

**Russ Pearce (Ex-Scout  
Leader, Ex-Akela!)**