

Kempson Rosedale Enterprise Trust -Expedition Report – Matty Bonser World Scout Jamboree 20th July until 9th August 2019

This summer I had the adventure of a lifetime!

I've been in the Scouts for over 11 years and in December 2017 was selected as one of 45 Explorer Scouts to represent Wiltshire at the 24th World Scout Jamboree.

The World Scout Jamboree happens once every 4 years and this was the biggest ever - a 10 day gathering of 40,000 scouts aged 14-17 from over 150 nations ALL on one vast campsite in West Virginia, USA. The numbers sound enormous, but as there are over 28 million scouts in the world and over half a million in the UK it's only a very lucky few that are able to attend. Each country can only send a maximum of 5% of the total attending to make sure that there is a wide range of cultures, religions and experiences taking part. For the bigger scouting countries, competition for places is stiff so it was a huge honour to be selected. Since selection, I have been fundraising and attending training weekends building up to the 3 week expedition to North America.

Travel/New York

This Jamboree was jointly hosted by Mexican, Canadian and American scout associations with the theme of "Unlock a New World". We camped on a purpose designed, permanent scout campsite with hundreds of adventurous and cultural activities available along with stadium shows with inspiring speakers through to opportunities to learn about environmental issues, emerging technologies and learn about many different national traditions.



The opening ceremony was a spectacular occasion in an open amphitheatre stadium with Bear Grylls speaking followed by an amazing drone display and Broadway stars performing a Disney compilation. Hearing "Let It Go" from Frozen sung in unison by the whole stadium in about 8 different languages was awesome. It was a true example of how despite different cultures, religions and languages we had a lot in common. It set the tone for the whole Jamboree.

The next 10 days were a blur of activities with each day usually including something adventurous interspersed with cultural activities, debates, sharing meals and swapping neckers, badges and snapchat usernames. Adventurous activities included white water rafting, mountain biking and water obstacle course races. Most evenings were chances to learn and share scouting and national traditions and food. We would pull tables together between camping pitches to try each others cooking, teach games and songs and talk about where we lived.

The adventurous activities gave us the chance to learn or improve our skills such as trying out SCUBA diving or improving climbing skills. During mountain biking one day, I took a short break, went to sit down on a rock and heard a rattle. Needless to say, I shot back up, grabbed my phone and snapped a picture of a rattlesnake warning me away from his siesta spot!



Some people were selected to take part in a Model United Nations spending a day debating global issues. They were pre-assigned a country to represent and a committee such as the Environmental Assembly and spent their day discussing viewpoints and finding a way to finish with an agreed resolution. In informal chats I found common ground on gun controls and climate change with several American scouts which was great to hear.



One day was dedicated to the history and traditions of scouting with a hike up Mount Jack. We were rewarded with a range of traditional activities such as spoon carving, pioneering and blacksmithing. There were a lot of team competitions testing our ability to tie knots, problem solve and work together. We were able to mix with other units to make new friends or challenge other units to friendly competitions.

A highlight was the Cultural Exchange Day when every unit had prepared activities, games and food from their home area to share with everyone else. We taught skittles and cooked fish and chips for our visitors and then, when



visiting other nations areas, enjoyed learning Polish dancing, a Mexican game like bingo and eat all sorts of food from Japanese noodles and hot Thai soup to genuine Kentucky fried chicken. There were also 14 different Food Houses to sample national delicacies.

The Cultural Day finished with another stadium show and multi-faith celebrations. One of the aspects of scouting which I most value is the opportunity to learn about other peoples values and beliefs. It's enabled me to learn about the many things we all have in common such as different faiths having similar ceremonies, like the Jewish Bar Mitzvah and Catholic Confirmation both welcoming teenagers into the faith fully and sharing "rules" like giving to the less fortunate whether Islamic Almsgiving or Buddhists Right Work (helping others). There were many chances to learn more in different worship areas or tents with activities and people to discuss issues and global problems. We could try out yoga, find out the reason Sikhs wear a sword or why Chinese cultures celebrate New Year with dragons and fireworks.



All scouts make a Promise when first being invested into the movement. The UK Promise is:

On my honour, I promise that I will do my best to do my duty to my God and the Queen, to help other people and to keep the Scout Law.

It was great to compare the Promise we make with other countries' versions and find that many are very similar.

The Jamboree site was very modern in that there was WiFi coverage almost everywhere, but it was also very environmentally aware. Scouts try to "Leave no Trace" when camping, and so we had solar heated water in the showers, extensive recycling and most of the camping equipment such as tents were either donated to developing nation scouts or sold to be reused. The Sustainability Treehouse and the Global Development Village were two more zones dedicated to educating us about environmental issues and how we can reduce our impact on the planet's resources. From food miles and thinking about seasonal food to reducing energy useage and re-

purposing outgrown clothes these areas will help me to share environmentally conscious ideas with others. I think this is becoming much more relevant to young people since Greta Thunberg raised the profile of climate change with her school strike.



The final Jamboree event was a closing ceremony when Ban Ki Moon inspired us all to think globally and to try to bring people together and to help reduce climate change effects. We were also encouraged to give back to our communities and help make sure that younger scouts apply for the next Jamboree in Korea in 2023.



We left Camp Bechtel after striking camp and headed to Washington DC for 3 night staying in university halls of residence. Everyone enjoyed sleeping on a mattress, hot showers and an early night. This was a chance to taste a little US culture by going to a baseball match, seeing the sights, visiting museums and memorials and dinner at Hard Rock Café.



I have been doing Park Runs in UK as part of my Duke of Edinburgh's Award physical section. So it was brilliant to be able to join the Washington Park Run. The Marlborough Park Run usually has about 150 runners each week so it was a huge surprise to run with only about the same number in such a large city. Park Run has only recently spread from UK where it was founded to other countries so I expect that Washington has already massively overtaken Marlborough!

Our final section, after an 11 hour coach journey, was the spectacular Niagara Falls being hosted by Canadian Scouts. We were treated to 3 hectic days of BBQs, boat trips, historic village visits, home cooked traditional meals and learning about this fascinating bi-lingual country with a consequently rich culture and internationally diverse attitude.



On return our Jamboree unit plan to share our experiences and pass on the skills, games and traditions that we have learned about to younger scouts. In October we're sharing our experience with other Explorer Scouts and 11-14 year old scouts from across our district. Many of us are Young Leaders helping with scout troops and cub packs every week and will use our experiences to run games we have learnt and other activities. Then in July 2020 our unit are running a series of international themes bases at a district cub camp. We hope that this will encourage them to want to explore and apply for future international expeditions and Jamboree.

I feel so grateful to have had this experience which I will always remember. The Trust's support through the application and interview process really helped me to have the confidence to make the most of the Jamboree. Thank you very much.

Matty Bonser