

## WinterCamp 2008

There is a phrase "what happens in 'Vegas, stays in Vegas". However, as the closest that Winter Camp comes to Las Vegas is that there is something happening all the time, that phrase really doesn't apply here....

12 Scouts from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> Harrow Scouts met Friday night – and the first thing we did was to give the parents all their trainers... they wouldn't need them this weekend.... We finally got on site at about 9:30pm, having endured the very long queue up and into Gilwell. Luckily the tents had been put up the day before, so it was just a case of putting the inners up.

Saturday morning, twelve very red eyed Scouts emerged from their tents – hardly surprising as for many this was their very first Scout camp (this is jumping in the deep end!) and with a cold night the excitable young people had only taken about 2 hours sleep...

After breakfast, we issued the wristbands (some of the Scouts had been unable to get into the Disco as we hadn't issued them the night before) and the Scouts disappeared off to have a go at all the activities that had been laid on for them... quad bikes, climbing, Zorbing (rolling down a slope in a giant inflatable ball), high ropes, very high swing, dodgems, waltzers, Segway two wheeled vehicles (and I've never seen the off road versions before!), laser clay shooting, archery, simulator. Many of them also took part in the very unofficial (but popular) mud slide out the back of the site. The ground was already of very slushy proportions - and nothing was going to stay white - or clean - for long.

As leaders, we found somewhere warm and dry (and that sold coffee) and planned our summer camp and term programmes! We also took a stroll round the site, taking a few pictures – and spent a few minutes chatting with the 17<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Scouts who had come to camp as well.

We met for lunch to get the feedback on the day - and it would seem that the pace and the freedom (plus the lack of sleep) was starting to take its toll on the younger Scouts. However, they bravely set off again in the afternoon to continue their enjoyment.

After tea, quite a few decided not to wait until the end of the disco, preferring to watch the back of their eyelids from the sanctuary of their tents.....

Sunday morning we were up and quickly put the tents away, in case we got caught in the forecasted rain. Ivor, Ash, James and myself finished off the tents and packed the trailer ready to leave straight after lunch. The queue to get the minibus and the trailer onto site was quite long – vehicles abandoned in the main thoroughfare caused gridlock and frustration for all. After what seemed like an hour, we left for home.

Thoughts and observations from Winter Camp:

- The weekend is a challenge for new Scouts. I think next time we needed to be a lot clearer about what the Scouts could be letting themselves in for... especially the newer ones....
- At the end of the camp, by the Wardens hut was about 20 pairs of abandoned wellies - one can only wonder what was being worn by the owners to go home in....
- It was yet another very successful camp... and we will be looking to go again next year I'm sure....