

MEETINGS



Prior to the trip, we had various in-person and Zoom meetings, including a sleepover, to get to know one another and learn to work as a team, as well as addressing the practical aspects of the experience. We played various games, designed our trip badge and the challenge that would allow other units to earn it, and chose colours for our uniform. We also had a swim meeting where we played various aquatic games.



Preparation

We had many meetings before going on the trip so that we all got used to each other and so that we could share our excitement and questions we had about the trip. We incorporated our group meet up with fundraising events to pay for the trip. This is a picture from the summer fete at Mitcheldean, which was one of our first fundraising events.



Travelling to the Netherlands:

Our travel to the Netherlands went very smoothly in my opinion. As we arrived at the coach very early in the morning and the journey to the airport went without any issues. As we arrived at the airport there where a few long lines but all in all until we had to board there were no problems. However, as we waited for boarding to start we realised that there was no announcement for our flight and we almost missed it which was a bit stressful, we had to run through the airport to make sure we made it on time. Once we finally boarded the plane the flight was very peaceful, however a lot shorter than I expected. After we arrived in Amsterdam and waited in a very long passport control line we managed to get to our taxis and travel through the countryside to the campsite where we could be staying. After a long drive we arrived at the beautiful Dwingeloo Campsite where we would be staying with the Scouts for the next 7 days.



On day 2 we got to pioneer our own seating area, which I really enjoyed doing because the explorers taught me many new knots. Even though it was a different activity for me, because I had never done it before, once I got going, I became excited when I had learnt a new knot. Later that day, we got to meet the scouts who I became friendly with and I even had a handshake with one of them.

Chapter 2: The Camp at Dwingeloo

When we arrived, the weather was not the best for putting up tents, so we played games in the food tent to get to know our host troop. When the rain died down we got our tents up albeit a bit wet.



The food there was very nice and fun to make. The theme for our camp was Masterchef so for dinner we got recipes and had to make a variety of different dishes from different countries that would then be judged. For breakfast and lunch we mainly made our own sandwiches. We ate a lot of bread :)

We made a lot of new friends from our host troop and through badge trading. It was fun, and one of my favourite things, going to other subcamps and extending our friendships.

While we were there we saw a lot of clog woggles, I wasn't very good at trading, so I whittled my own from a stick I found. I am very proud of it.



Whilst there we did a range of interesting activities: 'Challenge 75' was 75 tasks to choose from and we had to do 35 of at minimum to get the badge. There was also geocaching to do for those who didn't fancy going on the big walk that was arranged.



You got a piece of paper that had questions that you could only answer by going to the coordinates. The instructions led us to a badge.

We visited a waterpark on one day - that was very good fun but also a bit cold when we first got in the water. We also played big games like Risk. We went off in groups to play games against another group, if we won we took over their country but if we lost they took over ours. It was very entertaining.

On our second day there we pioneered a big rustic bench that we ate all our meals on if it wasn't raining.

We went to Dwingeloo market in the village and had lots of fun exploring the different stalls and what markets were like in The Netherlands, also seeing the regional architecture and comparing it to home.

Activities

During our 7 day stay in Dwingeloo we enjoyed many activities such as pioneering a table, swimming, evening walks and a hike. As well as that, we went to a flea market and went into some local shops and camp games (including kubb, candle games and living rise). Also the explores told us about the night walk activity they do where they go in a car blindfolded at 12 am and try and walk back to camp which took them 3 hours! We avoided going on this activity because of the torrential rain. We enjoyed swapping with other sub camps and camp photo challenges that if we completed we won a badge.

On camp we took with us British badges to swap with the other scouts on the campsite. We met some German scouts and other Dutch camp scouts, while trading. Everyone got involved with the trading and some people even trading clothing! Meeting new people was interesting and to see different uniform, such as the variety of neckers. My favourite trade was for a wooden spoon that had been 'pyrographied' with a face and a name.

Day 3: the hike was really amazing even if our team may or may not have cheated and taken a slight short cut again it was really great to talk to the explorers more and navigate with them and also see more of the Netherlands. On the hike we sat in an amazing bird hut where there was an excellent view and birds kept flying in and out to their nests it was really lovely to see



Lunch break picture!



Day 4: day 4 was definitely park! It was I being a little s really good

In the evening we played kuub to a lot of "California gurls" for good luck this was definitely my favourite game it was great fun to pick teams and get a bit competitive over!



Day 5: we went to the scout shop in the morning where we got Jeroen to translate all the badges for us and somehow continued are trading addiction while we were there. We then went to the flea market Ilse told us about in Dwingeloo which was really good me and lucy got a warm Stroop waffle which was so delicious and me and Anya bought some more clogs as if we didn't have enough! In the evening we played more games with the scouts.



Each morning we woke up and had breakfast, which was usually bread and hagelslag (which are chocolate sprinkles) and fruit. Then we normally took part in one of the activities, like a hike, where we saw the Dutch countryside, which

was very flat! In the evening, we often played a game with the Andromeda Scouts and occasionally a night game too.

On the eighth day, we travelled to the Andromeda Scouts hut, where we met a commissioner; her name was Rudi. She sold us badges and woggles to raise funds for South African guiding. The next day, we went by train and tram to The Upside Down, which was really fun to discover and take pictures. In the café we had shared Oreo milkshakes and nachos. We then took a tram and train to the Heemskerk hostel, which was a castle, with a moat!



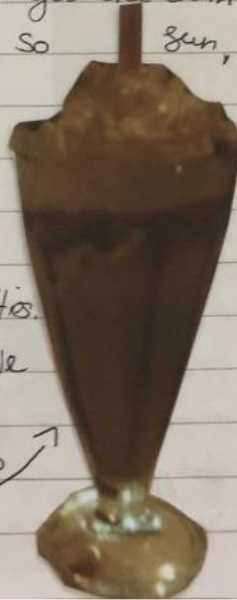
AMSTERDAM ACTIVITIES

On the day we arrived in Amsterdam, we visited the 'Upside-Down' social media activity—various themed rooms, some of which were upside-down, that were designed to take photos in. This was a lot of fun to explore! We travelled around Amsterdam on the trams, and on the second day we went on a boat trip and did some shopping for souvenirs and Dutch foodstuffs that we would be unable to get at home. I purchased a klomp magnet!

DAY 9

AMSTERDAM / UPSIDE DOWN EXPERIENCE

Dropped bags off then got the train to the UDE. It was so ^{sun,} you walk through these different ~~sub~~ uniquely themed rooms with loads of different photo opportunities. We really enjoyed it! We also went to the cage and got oreo [↑] milkshakes.



WHAT I GOT OUT OF BEING PART OF INTOPS:

I ~~got~~ got wonderful memories, life-long friends, useful skills and experiences.

TIPS FOR FUTURE PARTICIPANTS

Just really throw yourself into everything you can because it only happens once!

WHY WOULD I PROMOTE INTOPS:

It's ^{just} such a wonderful experience and opportunity.

By being part of this INTOPS experience, I feel that I have gained confidence and independence, as well as learning various useful skills such as social skills and knot-tying. I have made some very close friendships with people that I hope will last far longer than this experience, and I have discovered that despite my cerebral palsy, which makes things more difficult for me, my limits are further than I thought they were, and there are things I can achieve that I never would have thought I could.

I would promote INTOPS to other Guides for a lot of reasons: first of all, it is a lot of fun, and an incredible experience that I would recommend to anyone! It also allows you to build lasting friendships with people, and improve independence, teamwork and problem-solving skills.

Epilogue: Key Memories

Some things from the trip will remain with me forever - the classic fields of tulips and windmills, the sound of a LOT of crickets, the smell of the forest where the camp was at Dwingeloo and how different it was from the forest at home, and the taste of Hagel Slag

(chocolate sprinkles for bread stuff).



The four leaders were awesome, and stayed cheerful and calm no matter what we got up to - I can't think of anyone else I would have liked to have this adventure with.

Thank you very much for this opportunity. If I could I would do it all again.

All in all I had an excellent time, made some great friends and definitely ate way to much bread I hope that I stay in contact with the explorers from the Netherlands and everyone on the trip because they were truly lovely and would love to go back one day!

Being part of INTOPS, I met lots of new people from different parts of Gloucestershire and from different cultures. I saw new places and experienced new foods and traditions, and even learned some Dutch! The qualities I developed were: courage in meeting new people and visiting new places; organisational skills in arranging what we needed to take and attending regular meetings; fundraising and letter writing skills, and a general sense of adventure, such as swimming on Christmas Day and doing night walks.

I would recommend to future participants that they do take everything on the kit list; they are there for a reason, such as having a day rucksack for excursions and a waterproof, even when you think the weather will be sunny! I'd also suggest that trying new things can bring surprises; there were some foods I'd never tried before, but they were actually very tasty. Attending the preparation

meetings is important to get to know your fellow travellers and make friends prior to the trip.

For other Guides I'd say that INTOPS provides new life skills and is a real opportunity to have a semi-independent adventure at a young age. Not many people go on a trip without their parents that has been self-funded. It is a real achievement and demonstrates that you can choose to go on an adventure, no matter your age!