

1st Brownsea Island Camp Re-Visited
15th Cheltenham (SHURDINGTON) Scouts – 2nd June 2007

On Saturday 2nd June a dozen of our Scouts camped in the Millennium garden to re-enact the first 1907 camp at Brownsea Island. It was quite a feat and starting camp at 7am on the Saturday they crammed an 8-day programme of the first ever Scout camp into one day. Scouts were told to leave the 21st Century behind and imagine they were in 1907.



They thus arrived wearing no uniform at all; there wasn't any in 1907. Programme consisted of Preparation, Campaigning, Observation, Woodcraft, Chivalry, Saving a Life, Patriotism and Games, and they formed themselves into two Patrols, Wolves and Ravens.



As happened in 1907 they had a camp cook, and Lucie Mitchell very kindly stayed with them most of the weekend and cooked breakfast lunch and supper for them. They even had Mafeking Stew with a bit of Guinness thrown in. Delicious.



In keeping with the times they made their own staves using old fashioned sheath knives, and sewed their own patrol pennants, made some bedding from straw on a homemade loom and slept in Bell Tents reminiscent of Brownsea Island.



They practiced working with triangular bandages and an old wartime stretcher, and helped put a fire out with a stirrup pump. As a Kudu Horn was not available for waking them up, they heard a recording instead.

Afternoon they followed tracks round the village made with tiny strands of straw, brought leaves in to recognise, and made muddy footprints on paper where each patrol had to guess who made the print.



On Sunday during the St Paul's Church fete several people visited the campsite and were taken round the various items on display. A memorable weekend, especially for the Scouts who had to wash in an old-fashioned canvas washtub outside with freezing water;



Well! This was 1907 after all.

Special thanks to Scout Leader Louise Slee who devised and lead the programme, Steve Hanks for his help, and Stuart Evans for sticking it to the end.