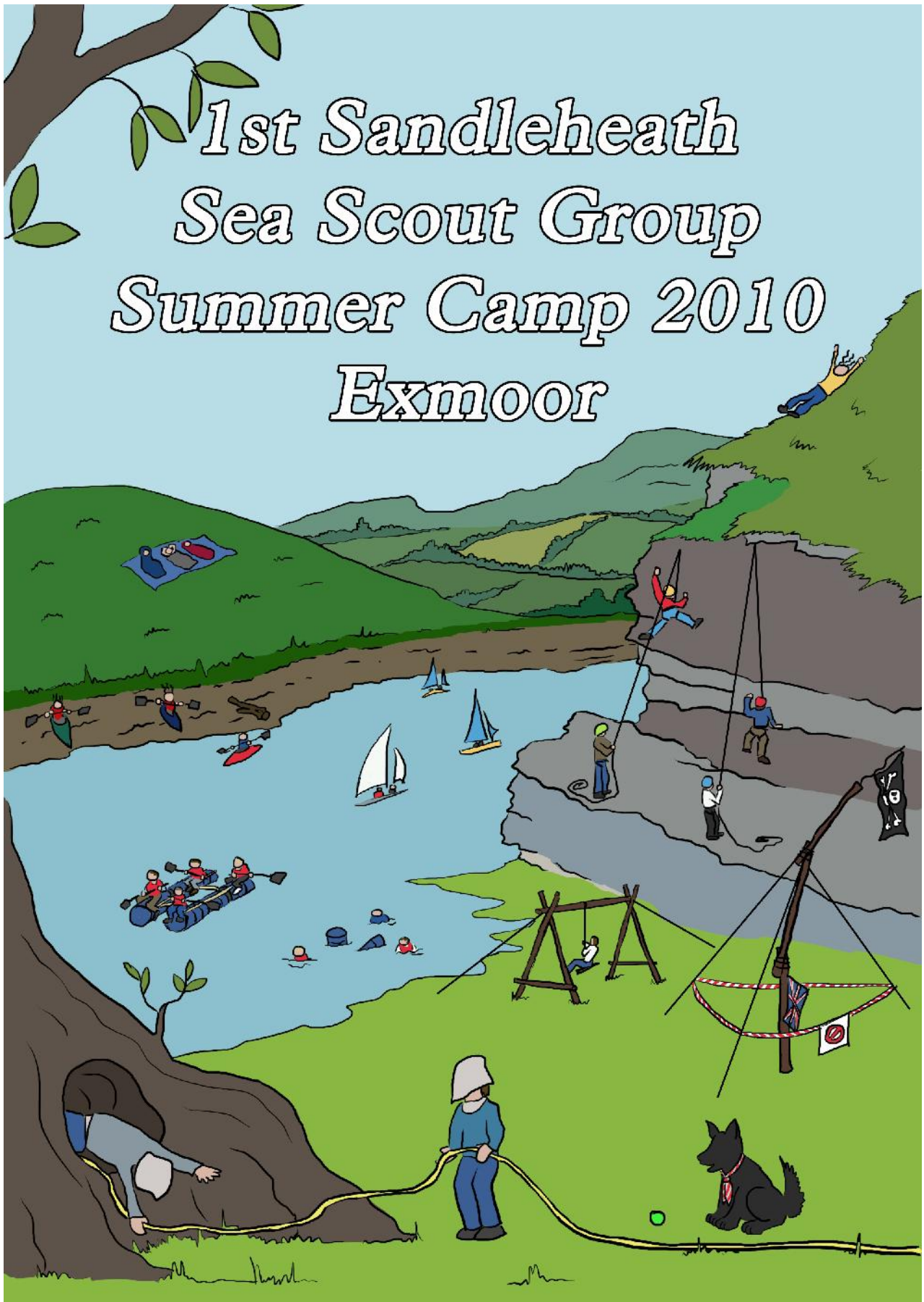


1st Sandleheath Sea Scout Group Summer Camp 2010 Exmoor



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Summer Camp 2010. Wimbleball Lake, on the edge of Exmoor.
<http://www.sandleheathseascouts.org.uk/events/2010/scout-camp/>

Front cover by Laura Dawes.



Left: Sailing on camp by Laura Dawes

Sunday 25th

Ros went on a food shop while Stephen confirmed that there was no mobile phone signal within miles of the site, especially if you were on Orange.

The other leaders met the Scouts and Explorers at the H.Q. from where, with the remaining boats, they travelled to Wimbleball, arriving late morning. Tents were erected, then there was a break for lunch before the afternoon treasure hunt to explore the local area.

After dinner came the blind trail. The Leaders had to spend a while clearing nettles, but managed to produce a route that was fairly interesting with the usual climbing through trees and holes and down banks. It was fairly tame compared to last year, at least in part because the weather was much better. Imi was able to take part, with her broken foot, under close supervision.

Scout camp this year was held at Wimbleball Lake, on the edge of Exmoor, from the 25th to the 30th July 2010.

Many additional photographs are available on the Group website:

<http://www.sandleheathseascouts.org.uk/photos/gallery/scout-camp-2010/>

Thursday 22nd - Saturday 24th

On Thursday Leaders collected boat trailers before the Scout meeting, and loaded the boats and kayaks onto trailers ready for camp.

On Friday Ros collected the two box trailers for kit and, with Jimbo's help, loaded all the camping equipment into the large box trailer.

On Saturday the morning was spent finishing getting the boats and equipment ready. Immediately after lunch Ros and Stephen took the camping kit, the pioneering poles, the Vagos and a couple of kayaks to Wimbleball. After finding our site (we had been relocated from the one we expected) the mess tents and store tent were erected and Stephen did reconnaissance for the next day's treasure hunt. This was followed by a dinner of Fish and Chips in Minehead.

Meanwhile, in Sandleheath, David C, Jimbo and Richard spent a long time rebuilding bits of the Vago trailers to make them better balanced for towing. The most polite description of this exercise was "a right pain", but at least it is done now so they should be better in future.

Below: Blindfold trail

Far below: Our campsite



Monday 26th

**Right: sailing on
Wimbleball Reservoir**

**Below: Kayaking on the
Bridgewater and Taunton
canal**



and I set off straight after breakfast to set up for climbing. We parked at Bossington and walked to Hurlstone point, where we would be climbing. When we arrived there were chalk marks on the cliff up to a height of just a couple of metres, suggesting that the area was popular with boulderers as well as climbers. More on that later.



Monday was the first day of sail training for those that had opted for it, which turned out to be a fairly wet experience for most participants. Everyone else went for a kayak on the Bridgewater and Taunton canal.

In the evening was an attempt at the low ropes course. Unfortunately this was started a bit late, and having been delayed by an accident (unrelated to the low ropes course, it turns out that the most dangerous activity on camp is larking about in a field) had to be aborted.

The climbs needed rigging from the top, partly because there is where there were 3 large metal stakes that could be used as the basis for the safety ropes, and partly because the foot of the climbs was still awash with the sea. Access to the top of the climbs required walking across a very steeply sloped grass bank which ended, just feet below where we were walking, with a drop off the cliffs. The route was made more precarious by the morning dew on the grass. After rigging the top of the climbs we abseiled down to the rapidly drying ledge from which the climbing would be based, and waited for the sea to retreat enough for us to be able to carry equipment across to it from the beach.

Despite having to wait a little for the tide we finished setting up before the Scouts arrived. I walked back along the path a little way to meet them, in case they'd been confused by David's instructions suggesting that the path was all downhill. A "fact" that was open to interpretation.

Climbing was good. The ledge we were climbing from was initially a little slippery but dried out quickly. It provided a constrained area that made it easier to supervise the Scouts belaying each other. Despite the small area we were able to rig 3 climbs that weren't too difficult, and which most people could complete. There was also one more difficult climb, with a slightly awkward overhang followed by a slab with relatively few holds. This was able to challenge the more able climbers. The slightly sharp rocks did draw blood from the more determined climbers, leading to an exclamation along the lines of "Eww, this rock is all covered in blood. How gross!" as one of the last to ascend reached the top.

The Scouts were split into two groups. While one group climbed the others undertook a first aid session led by Penny, and then went for a short walk. On the walk they found a steep grassy slope, similar to the one David and I had to traverse, but which they

Tuesday 27th

Climbing Report - by Stephen White

On Tuesday the weather forecast was good, so David



Left: Climbing at Hurlstone Point

enjoyed sliding down. I'm pleased to say that their chosen slope led down to a path and fence, and didn't end in the sheer drop that the slope David and I had to contend with did. There no opportunities to put Penny's teaching into practice.

The final group to climb were the Explorers. The tide stayed out long enough for everyone to do as much climbing as they wanted before we de-rigged. Fortunately the grass had dried out, making access to the top of the climb slightly easier. It took a while to get all the safety equipment that had been put in to back up the metal stakes out, not helped by me dropping my nut key. I must get some string for it. I was able to retrieve it and everyone was safely away before the tide returned to re-claim its ledge.

While we were taking the climbs down the Explorers were fascinated by someone that had come to the same area of rock to do some bouldering. This is similar to climbing, but avoids use of ropes by staying within a few feet of the ground. Routes often traverse along a cliff face, rather than going up it. Extra safety can be provided in the form of a crash-mat, or via a second person "spotting" the climber to help protect their head and neck if they fall. Bouldering is popular as it can be used to building up strength and develop technique in the same way as climbing, but avoids much of the expensive equipment and can also be undertaken without needing a partner.

While the Explorers were climbing, the Scouts went to a swimming pool in Taunton.

Wednesday 28th

Everyone went either sailing or kayaking on the lake in the morning, then in the afternoon came the second (and this time successful) attempt to run the ever popular low-ropes course.

Below: Kayaking and sailing on the reservoir



Above: On the low ropes course

The Scouts undertook this in slightly larger groups than normal, which unfortunately had the effect of reducing the amount of teamwork that occurred.

People that weren't on the ropes course went on a local nature trail. The interest seemed to be most concentrated on various dead animals found on the route, although at least one Scout also took the opportunity to try and learn to fly. It turns out that Scouts can't fly unaided, and if they're keen to try we'd rather they attempt it over grass and not gravel.

In the evening the Explorer Scouts got to bivvie on Exmoor, more details on that are in Josh's report (below).

Thursday 29th

Thursday was another day of sail training for those that had opted for it. For others there was rafting, followed by pioneering or an orienteering course around the site.

Rafting - by Geoffrey White

On Thursday some of the scout and explorers split into two teams to build rafts. The plan was to race them across a narrow stretch of lake, and return with a stone from that foreign shore.

(MOSTLY) SCOUTS
TEAM:

- Alice Wood
- Brendan Miller
- Hannah Collings
- Jack Adams
- Stan Gulliford
- Suzannah Douglas (Explorer)
- Tom Collings

(MOSTLY) EXPLORERS
TEAM:

- Becky McGillveray
- Ben Collings
- Jacob Collings
- Jake Deakin
- Liam Hobbs
- Tom Madgwick (Scout)



Above: Scout raft

Below: Explorer raft



Spirits began high as the teams designed their rafts and collected the barrels, pioneering poles and various lengths of rope they would need to build them. Enthusiasm dropped as the need to tie knots became apparent, but recovered once the rafts started to take shape.

The Scout's raft (an ambitious design featuring six barrels) floated beautifully and they paddled it across the lake at speed. About half way across I (supervising from a kayak) suggested they could probably spare a second to look back and see how the other team were doing. The Explorers raft (shall we say a lightweight design) had failed spectacularly leaving the Explorers in the water amongst pieces of their now deformed creation.

On the return journey we encountered the Explorers again - demonstrating admirable determination and ingenuity they had adapted their raft into a sort of sit-on submarine and actually managed to get it moving.

Of course the Scouts had only completed a single test run of their raft, so they decided a stress test was necessary, and piled on as many people as they could. This ensured that on both teams, nobody stayed dry.

Those taking part in the pioneering built a swing. Unfortunately, being built at the end of camp meant that it only saw a little use before it had to be dismantled.

Right: Pioneering swing



Friday 30th

The Scouts and Explorers visited Minehead, where people had the opportunity to explore the shops, play crazy golf and eat an early fish and chip lunch. After that came the journey home.

In the evening the leaders went to the Surma Valley for dinner and for a bit of a de-brief meeting.

Below: Scouts on camp and their Patrols



Saturday 31st

The leaders returned to the Scout H.Q. to unload, clean and dry the camp kit. The boats were all washed, returned to Spinnaker and rigged ready for sailing on Monday (except for one pico that was returned on Sunday).



Avon Valley Explorers

Report by Josh Cleall

This year Avon Valley Explorers joined Sandleheath Scouts for their 2010 annual Summer Camp. The camp was to be run a little differently this year, with the Explorers being encouraged to follow the three Rs; Responsibility, Roles-Models and Rotas. The Explorers stepped up to the challenge and provided four Duty Explorers each day to help around camp, supervise Scouts and help prepare dinners. Nevertheless the sense of fun and the sound of laughter that comes with an Explorer Camp was ever present, camp entertainment was made early on with the decision to rename Jake Dipento to 'Günter' so not to confuse the two Jakes on camp, a moniker which stuck all week. The Explorers also built the camp flag pole, a responsibility not to be taken lightly, however Jacob stamping his own mark on the project, gave the pole a rather 'jaunty' angle which required hard hats to raise the flag!

There were 11 Explorers on camp this year with number being boosted mid-week with the arrival of Becky and Amelia. They had the services of two dedicated Leaders, Andy and Josh for the week. The Explorers were given a wide programme of activities for the week including everything sailing on Wimbleball Lake, a very entertaining Blind Trail (Ben was the worst wounded with an impressive head-butt) and the disastrous Rafting race.



Above: waking up on Dunkery Beacon

A real highlight for many of the Explorers was the mid-week bivouac on Exmoor National Park, having looked at potential sites on a (short) walk up Dunkery Beacon, the highest point on Exmoor, it was decided we would bivouac on its Eastern slopes, overlooking a wide valley with views over Bridgewater Bay, the Quantock Hills and distant Wales. Tarpaulins were taken and spread out under the cover of darkness over thick heather and bracken providing ample insulation to the cold of night, the site chosen being out of the wind and facing the rising sun in the morning. Shooting stars were spotted, spooky stories told and sleeping bags slept in. A rain-free night with slight dew was disturbed by a lacklustre sunrise, not that this bothered the heavily sleeping Explorers, but they were roused at 6am in order to return to the campsite for Breakfast and to let the Duty Explorers carry out their daily duties.

Many Explorers enjoyed helping out around camp with Jacob and Günter helping out building the Low Ropes course, Amelia manning the safety boat and Suzie seeming to do all the washing up for the Explorers for the entire week. As always Avon Valley Explorers Camping facilities were excellent, we are lucky to have so much good quality camping equipment to house the Explorers in style, even down to carpets for the tents!

The last day of Camp was a busy one with a rush to catch the 'steam' train to Minehead, as so many Explorers had commented on how much they had enjoyed Minehead the first time they visited, it seemed unfair not to give them another opportunity to sample its delights. Crazy golf was played with Raffi hitting some unorthodox shots, a brief foray up the high street was completed with a fish and chip lunch on the sea front before being shuttled back to camp for the speediest packing ever.

In all the Explorers had an awesome week, all the leaders were impressed with their behaviour and how well the Duty Explorer system worked, it seems this is going to be a permanent fixture on camps from now on! And as promised as an award for their actions for the week with the remaining Camp monies they are to be treated to a Jet Ski extravaganza in the Solent – details to follow soon!