

FAMILY CAMP 2017

15th - 17th September; Walton Firs Campsite, Cobham.



A change of venue for Family Camp this year to Walton Firs Campsite and Activity Centre in Cobham. The Beavers, Cubs and Scouts are familiar with the site from their previous camps and the "awesome" amphitheatre hidden in the forest was a huge hit.

For us 'grown-ups', the priorities were slightly different and we were very pleased to see a shiny new toilet and shower block!

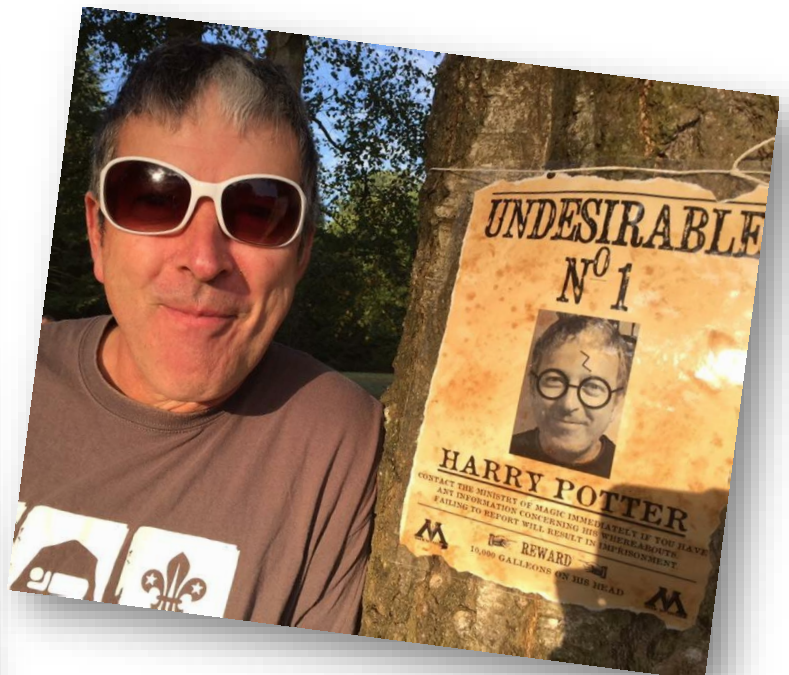
Their magical appearance on site was very much in keeping with the Family Camp theme as we assembled on Platform 9 3/4 for destination Hogwarts, School of Witchcraft and Wizardry!



The first task on arrival at Hogwarts is, of course, the Sorting Hat. It uses its mysterious power to choose the correct house for each family: Would it be Brave Godric Gryffindor, Loyal Helga Hufflepuff, Clever Rowena Ravenclaw or Sly Salazar Slytherin?



In the magical glow of the firelight, the Sorting Hat 'spoke' and our revered judges were selected for Slytherin. Luckily, their names alliterated perfectly: Spencer and Steve Slytherin...



A mysterious Autumn mist greeted us on Saturday morning as we were assigned our various tasks for the day. These covered a range of activities to keep all ages and temperaments busy:

Art (Adults): Create a house banner using fabric and pens provided.

Craft (Children): Create a junk-model Dragon mascot for the house Quidditch team.

Cooking: Bake a 'cauldron cake' using the cake mix and ingredients provided and a camp oven made from the altar fire and a billycan.

Muggle Quidditch: An afternoon tournament using seven 'Nimbus 2000' broomsticks created from foam lagging and gaffer tape.

Campfire Performance: A Magic Show of course! What else?!



The house teams worked hard to produce some beautiful silk painting on their banners with the best in show award going to Gryffindor. The children collaborated in true Scout spirit to create dramatic Dragons worthy of Turner prizes. Gryffindor produced a flying, fire breathing feat of engineering and were the well-deserved winners of this task. A special mention went to Lilly in Ravenclaw and her solo baby dragon creation complete with nest.



The 'Cauldron Cakes' were also engineering masterpieces and the atmosphere was every bit as tense as the Bake Off when the judges tasted and critiqued the decoration and presentation. Success in this task went to Hufflepuff.



Then on to the sporting highlight of the day - Muggle Quidditch. Andy and his team of engineers created incredible 4 metre high 'goals' from bamboo and hoola hoops. The game involved charging around the pitch trying to shoot a ball through the hoops whilst avoiding being 'tagged' by a 'bludger' ball which resulted in a 10 second time out. With 2 minutes of the match remaining, the 'snitch' was released in the form of a child with a tag attached to their back and a 'seeker' from each team chased said child around the field. Catching the snitch and retrieving the tag signaled victory for that seeker's team! The Quidditch champions were Hufflepuff.





It was very thirsty work and we all enjoyed some well-earned butter beer made by Sophie to a secret Slytherin family recipe.



Dinner was a hearty Hogwarts chicken stew followed by good old sponge pudding and custard a la school canteen. Ah the memories!





The evening challenge was to beguile and amaze with magic and mystery around the campfire and the teams didn't disappoint. From Dynamo mind reading to breath taking Houdini inspired body sawing to Doctor Who time travel and not forgetting plenty of Paul Daniels style card tricks which we liked a lot! Gryffindor were awarded the Hogwarts Got Talent title making them the overall Family Camp victors for 2017 -well done!





No Scout camp is complete without the campfire songs and the Hogwarts choristers were in fine voice. We enjoyed lots of traditional action songs and other Hogwarts favourites led by Sophie and Steve accompanied by John on guitar. Freddie completed the repertoire going back to his school days with a Madrigal style re-enactment of the history of Oliver Cromwell and the complete Periodic table!



All that was left to do before returning to Muggle world was to thank all the Wizards who worked so hard to make it all happen. **Special thanks go to Andy, Sophie, John and Harriet and her catering team for all their time and effort.** And, of course, thank you to all the families who came and enjoyed the magic.



So long till next year campers!

