



The John Warner School October 4th – 6th October 2017

On the 7th October six members of staff and 141 Year 7 pupils set off for an experience they would never forget! The three day residential course was to act as a fantastic step towards the development of leadership skills, demanding resourcefulness, decision-making and practical thinking from our students. Each day would be made up of a range of hands-on workshops, offering a chance to really get to grips with life in the outdoors and providing a unique environment in which to learn and interact.

When we arrived we were momentarily struck by the beauty of the forest before being warmly welcomed by our enthusiastic and excited Bushcraft team. We very quickly realised that this team would make it an unforgettable experience for our pupils and that there would be no opportunities for pupils not to complete the challenge!

Our experience was structured so that activities alternated between group discussions and practical elements, putting the skills taught into immediate use. The students worked in small groups of between ten and fifteen and were ably led by engaging and inspiring Bushcraft group leaders. Every student was given the opportunity to really contribute to the collaborative effort required.

Our pupils were offered the chance to excel away from conventional classroom standards with the intention to inspire a positive attitude to learning, as they developed new skill sets in new and exciting surroundings, and it certainly did this. There was not a second over the three days when any of the pupils were not totally engaged in what they were doing.

Time spent living in the wild offered a fantastic opportunity for our pupils to interact away from the distractions of everyday school life, taking them out of their comfort zones and encouraging both independence and teamwork. By the end of the course, our pupils left with a new sense of self-sufficiency and confidence.

Below are some of the activities our pupils were involved in:

Camouflage and Concealment Exercise – pupils took part in a fun camouflage and concealment exercise, employing team tactics and making the most of their surroundings to camouflage themselves and evade capture.

Fire Workshop – our pupils learnt about the basic principles of fire and the fire triangle, and were shown some of the ways they could make fire. They then collected firewood in their tribes and lit their fires using flint and steel.

Wilderness First Aid Workshop – our pupils learnt basic skills to cope with a medical emergency in the wild, including how to construct a simple stretcher from the items they had on them, and how to improvise an effective splint.

Camp-craft - This was a chance for the tribes to develop a tribal identity, build a comfortable and functional camp as well as making fun tribal flags and necklaces.

Wild Food Workshop – our pupils were taught why it is important to find food when they are in a remote setting, and how this has been achieved over the centuries. Instructors demonstrated the many different trapping methods, before each tribe designed and built a small model of a trap. Unfortunately for Mr Caranese and Mrs Chapman were lured into these traps by cake and coffee!

Shelter Workshop - pupils learnt why we need shelters when we are living outside, and the types of shelters people from different societies, nationalities and places have used across the ages. Each tribe then built their own shelter, using natural materials from around the woodland. Over half our pupils stayed in their own shelters out in the woods overnight and were kept warm by the fires they had made.

Cutting Tools – our pupils learnt about the different types of tools used in the field of Bushcraft, both primitive and modern, and the reasons for their use. They were taught safe handling techniques which helped them to understand how to manage risk effectively.

Bushcraft Tournament - the tribes competed in a series of fun but challenging exercises and games which demanded team work and communication from the students.

In the evening there was plenty of chocolate brownies, hot chocolate, games and stories before bed and the quality and quantity of food over the three days was superb.

The maturity, perseverance, team work, determination and positive attitude from every single one of our pupils made it a thoroughly enjoyable trip and made us all very proud to be teachers at the John Warner School.

