

From Norfolk to Normandy by way of South Wales

What do the above three locations have in common? They are the attractive countryside locations chosen for residential school journeys in Years 4, 5 and 6.

The Kingswood Activity Centre in Cromer, North Norfolk provides a perfect setting for pupils in Year 4 to combine Geographical studies of rivers, rockpools, woodland and a seaside town with a comprehensive programme of outdoor pursuits such as abseiling and quad biking. When the children reach Year 5 the Pembrokeshire coast of South Wales becomes the Geographical focus and more of the physical activities are performed in, or on, usually cold water! The outdoor pursuits continue in the Year 6 trip to Normandy with the added interest of using French instead of English as the preferred language.

Five Days at the Chateau

by Alex Nicholson (6N)

Lundi 10 Septembre 2001

Today we were woken up by Mr Lowe at 7.35. I read my book for about half an hour. Then we decided to get dressed and get ready for the room inspection. After inspection we went down to the 'salle a manger' for 'petit dejeuner', before being split into two groups. We got shown around where we were going to do all the activities, like the assault course and climbing wall. During the last half hour I got quite bored and started pretending a twig was a pipe. After lunch and free time we had two French lessons. And then after tea we did races and football for evening activities.

Mardi 11 Septembre 2001

Today we went to the market and went around in groups of six. We had to fill in a sheet and then we could buy things with our spending money. After a picnic lunch we drove to Mont St Michel. We went round the shops and were shown around the abbey. The evening activity back at the chateau was a treasure hunt.

Mercredi 12 Septembre 2001

Today Group A (my group) did initiative exercises in the morning (the outdoor part was fun, arranging the coins was quite boring if you couldn't do it).

After lunch and free time Group A did VTT, a long cycle ride (I hated the bumpy downhill bit) and after crashing at least twice, I got back having missed ten minutes of journal writing. At dinner I dressed up as a Corsican from Asterix and when the snails were passed around I said that I was a vegetarian and got away with it!

Jeudi 13 Septembre 2001

This morning Group A did the assault course with Group E and Mr Davies. My favourite obstacles were the pipes and the one where you had to swing across the river. In the afternoon Group A did climbing. I got to the top both times. In the evening we had the Talent Contest which I entered but Camilla Douglas won, and after the Disco I went to bed at 1.30 a.m.

Vendredi 14 Septembre 2001

As the last activity Group A had bread making. I made a racing snail but at lunch when I got it out of the oven, it was all flat!

I sat next to Bill on the coach and I didn't like the film that was shown on the ferry.

Harriet Childs-Huglestone also shares her diary:

Lundi 10 Septembre 2001

Today is Monday. In the morning I woke up with Amy, Lucy, Tajana, Isabella, Laura, Claire and Anna-Maria. We had about 1 hour to wake up and get dressed. We were in a hurry so we quickly got dressed, got on our shoes and ran to get our breakfast. For breakfast we had French bread, cereal and some other kind of bread. Then we had an inspection. We got 9/10. Then we had lunch, it was quite nice. Then we got on to our activities. We did French and it was great fun.

Mardi 11 Septembre 2001

Today we were going to the market. We were all very excited. We had room inspection and we got 8/10. When we got to the market I was in a group with Pascale, Nikita, Mala, Simone, Balbina and of course myself. There was a shop where a man was selling bargains. I bought five bracelets and two necklaces. Then we all got together and had a picnic. I had a ham salad sandwich. Next we went to a different market. I didn't really like it. It was an abbey. I bought two lollies and a drink of water. Then we headed back. I thought the day was very good.

Mercredi 12 Septembre 2001

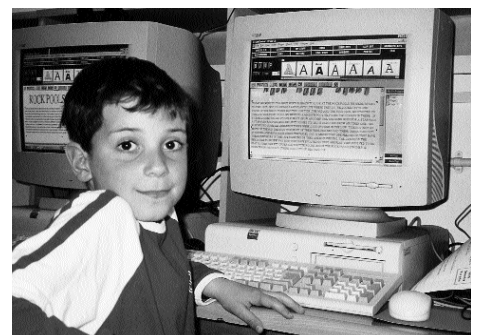
In the morning it was very cold and foggy. Our activities today were climbing and the assault course. The climbing was really good. It took me 42 seconds to climb up. Next was the assault course. It was good too. We would all line up then we would have to say what we were going to do in French. My favourite bit was when we played in the river and went back to the chateau very wet. I think this was my best day.

Jeudi 13 Septembre 2001

Today is our last day so we all got out our suitcase and started packing and then had breakfast. Straight after that we made bread. I was in a group with Lucy, Katy and Laura. Lucy and Laura made a plait and me and Katy made a frog. Next we did the initiative exercises. It was really fun but quite hard.

Vendredi 14 Septembre 2001

Now I am sitting on the ferry after leaving the chateau and being on the coach for two hours.



KINGSWOOD *DIARY*

Day 1

On Sunday we arrived in Kingswood. We got off the coach, the driver took out all of our luggage and we went up to the dormitories to unpack. After we had unpacked we had to go to a meeting and the manager of Kingswood talked to us about out of bounds places and also safety. Then our group, which was 'G', went to our ICT lesson to make our own web pages. In this session we had to make our own home page. I wrote a bit about myself and to finish it off I put a photo of myself on it and I also put some backgrounds on.

After our ICT we had to go to tea then evening entertainment, this night it was bingo. We got into groups of four and then we got our cards with the numbers on. Our instructor for this activity was called Neil he was the one calling out the numbers. Unfortunately our group were not the winners, in fact we came last. However, we still enjoyed it.

After bingo we went out to the dinner hall for our cocoa. When I got to the hall and saw that the queue was incredibly long I decided to abandon the idea of cocoa and go back to my dormitory. I was the first one to get to bed but I wasn't able to fall asleep immediately, as I had to listen to Theo who kept repeating "I need some self control". I didn't know what he meant but I agreed with him.

Day 2

I didn't get woken up again until the morning when Mr Wilkins came to my bed and started shaking it. When I eventually woke up I got dressed and made my bed. At 7.30 I went up for breakfast. The breakfast wasn't the best in the world but I tried to eat as much as I could.

Following breakfast we had bed inspection. I had to help Olivier out because his pillowcase wasn't even on his pillow. Then Mrs Poole came with her clip board ready to record a score. Marks were out of 10 and we scored 8, which was not a bad score.

After this we went to a meeting where we found out that our group would be going on the River Study. The instructors went to fetch the equipment while we went to the totem pole and waited for them. The totem pole has an interesting history all to do with what used to be on the site before Kingswood was built. When the two instructors came back with all the equipment we loaded it on to the coach and we were off.

The river that we were going to was called the River Glaven. When we arrived we unpacked the equipment and we were told to stand by the side of the road for a head count. Luckily we were all there, nobody lost! We made our way to the river. At the river the instructors put the equipment down and the first thing we did was to get the two instructors into the water. We then gave them a measuring tape to measure the width of the river. They called the measurement out to us which we recorded on our clipboards.

The next experiment was the Orange Race. When the two instructors were in the water, one of them had two oranges. This instructor let go of the oranges. Eventually they got to the other end of the river and the other instructor stopped them. The orange on the right

was the winner because the one of the left got caught on the side.

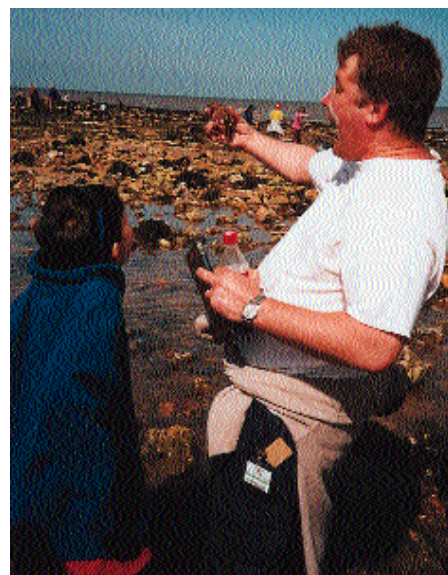
We then headed towards a smallish lake. Here were going to do some dipping. The instructors each had a net and they dipped into the water. They emptied the contents of the nets into my tray. There were some very peculiar things. One of them looked like an earwig, but smaller. Eventually the instructors tipped the contents of the trays into the lake. After this the instructors said we were running late and we had to run to catch the coach back to Kingswood Activity Centre.

When we arrived we changed and got ready for lunch. After a delicious lunch of fish and chips we had a game of football outside. Then we went to our ICT follow-up to type up all about our river study. I wrote an awful lot and I added some pictures with backgrounds to make it more interesting, I even added some sounds. Then the instructor taking us said it was time to log off and go straight to climbing.

Before we went climbing we had to put our helmets and harness on and hear the safety rules. Four people were harnessed and they started to climb. I go to the top of the climbing wall safely and banged the wall. That was the signal to release the rope and abseil down. When I reached the bottom I got applauded and sat down to wait for all the others to have their go at climbing. After the session we took off our harness and helmets and we went to the caving sign.

In a short period of time two instructors came and took us to the caving hut where we put on our helmets which had lights on. This would help us to see in the dark. We strapped the battery for the light around our waists. Then we filed out of the hut and one of the instructors opened the gate to the caving area. We had to go on our hands and knees as the entrance to the caves was very low and we followed the instructor through the cave. It was very dark and muddy and we felt quite frightened. When we got to the centre of the cave the instructor said we could go and explore. She said that there would be ladders and tyres and other war things to find down there and whoever found the green group found it. We were then told to turn our lights off and we were to make our way back without any lights on. This was extremely scary and I was pleased that I was directly behind the instructor. Back at the caving hut we took off all our equipment and went to the dining hall to have tea.

After tea we went to evening entertainment. Tonight this was sports night. We did lots of games. One of them was a pirate game. When the instructor made pirate commands we had to obey them and if you were too slow you were out. Soon it was time to stop the games and go for cocoa. This time I made sure I was not near the end of the queue so I actually had some. It was rather nice. I went back to my dormitory when I had finished my drink. I brushed my teeth and got into my pyjamas. This night I got to sleep straight away as I was so tired.



Day 3

In the morning Mr Wilkins came and woke us up as usual. I got dressed and I woke up Olivier who was still asleep in bed. I made my bed and went outside to play football with my friends before breakfast. We then lined up and waited for our instructor who was going to take us on the Woodland Trail. We started walking, it was really long and boring, my legs felt like dropping off but you still learnt things. The last thing we saw was a beehive. We were told to stay away from it in case we got stung. After that we walked back to Kingswood. When we arrived we went straight in to lunch. Lunch was delicious, it was burger and chips. After I had wolfed it down I went out to play football. The group 'G', which I am in then went abseiling. It was really scary going over the edge but I made it down.

After abseiling we went directly to Team Challenge. Following the safety talk we put on our helmets and gradually moved on through the course. It is called team challenge because we are a team and we have to get all along the course without losing a member of the team.



After the first obstacle to get through we had got the hang of it and we moved through the rest quite easily. Then the instructor, realising we were running late, told us to get our helmets off and we ran to where we would have the quad bikes.

The instructor gave us a very long and thorough safe-

ty talk about the bikes. Then the first two people had their go on the bikes. When it got to my go I put on all my gear and with great excitement I turned on the engine. It was frightening at first but I soon got used to it and started to really enjoy it. I nearly toppled over when I bumped into some tyres. Then my go was over and we had to go off for tea.

Tea was not very nice that night but I had it anyway. After our tea we went to evening entertainment. On this night we had to watch a film Spy Kids. It was very boring for me because I have already watched it before at the cinema. When the film ended we went to get our cocoa then to our dormitories to get ready for bed and brush our teeth.

Day 4

At seven o'clock in the morning I woke up and got dressed and went outside to play football with my friends. After a good game of football we went to breakfast which was the best breakfast that I had ever had at Kingswood. It was a cooked breakfast, something that I

am not used to having at home because my mummy won't let us have sausages.

Then we lined up at the totem pole and waited for the instructors to come who would be taking us to the rock pool study. We followed them across some grass to the sea. When we got to the sea we went through the safety

talk and then we got into groups and we started looking for creatures in the pools. My feet got soaked because I was not wearing any Wellingtons. In the rock pools we found lots of different creatures and we also saw a few largish crabs which were hiding under rocks, and some fish. After some time the instructors called us over and said that it was time to go back for lunch. When we had eaten up all of our lunch we went out for our lunchtime break.

After our very short break we went to our ICT follow up session to type up about our rock pool study. I wrote a lot for this and when I had finished typing I added some pictures of crabs and a couple of fish. Soon the instructor said that it was time to shut down our computers and go off to our fencing session.

After our normal safety talk we got into our pairs and we started fighting. It didn't matter if the sword hit us because we were very well protected with a chain mail hat and a suit over the front of our body. This wasn't one of my favourite activities as I felt it was quite boring compared to the other things we did.

The next session was called nightline and I was not too fond of this session either. We did our safety talk and then the instructor put some blindfolds on us and we held on to each other's backs all in a line and we followed a rope which went through tyres and other obstacles. When the session was over the instructor showed us where we went because we didn't know as we had our blindfolds on. We then went to tea.

After our tea we went to evening entertainment, this night it was the talent show which we did with other schools. I think our school was really good and the very good people from our school got a certificate. After the talent show we went to get our cocoa before getting ready for bed. I was so exhausted after all those activities that I went to sleep very easily that night.

Day 5

In the morning we woke up at seven, got dressed and went out to play football before breakfast. Today I had some toast with jam. After our breakfast we lined up and waited for our group instructor to take us on the coach for our Cromer study. When we got off the coach we followed the instructor to Cromer Church for a safety talk then went to the new lifeboat station and saw the big lifeboat that goes out to sea when someone is in trouble. The old lifeboat station is still standing and we saw where the boat used to be. When the lifeboat was needed, it would slide out of the back door and into the sea. Next we walked to two houses. Here we had to find out the style and age of the houses from sheets of paper containing information on how to find these things out. We also had to make a sketch of the two houses, one was Victorian, the other was a post-war house.

Next we visited Woolworths where we had a chance to buy sweets. I bought a king size Mars bar. The coach then took us back for a delicious lunch and a game of football before our ICT session to type up about our first visit to Cromer. I added some photographs to mine but soon the instructor said it was time to shut down our computers, so I didn't actually get much done.

We then went to our archery session. After the safety talk the first four people got their bow and arrow and fired. I got the bull's eye twice and the other arrow didn't

hit the target at all. After my go I waited for everyone else to have their go. I think Stuart was the best in our group.

Our aeroball session was next so we had the usual safety talk. To play aeroball you had to bounce on a trampoline and try to shoot a ball through a hoop which was on a piece of netting. You had another person on your team and would be playing against another couple. We all had two goes. At the end of the session I was sweating and tired and glad when the instructor said it was time to have tea.

After our spaghetti bolognese, which I hated, we went to our evening entertainment which was to watch a movie or go to the disco. I decided to go to the movie which was Rugrats in Paris. Unfortunately I had watched that at the cinema so was glad when it was cocoa time. We then went to our dormitories and got ready for bed.

Day 6

The next morning we woke up bright and early and got dressed. We realised that this was our last day at Kingswood and felt really sad that we were going home. Our sadness did not stop us from having our breakfast because we were so hungry. I was starving as I had not eaten the spaghetti the night before.

It started to rain soon after breakfast. Still, couldn't complain, the weather had been brilliant all week. The teacher said that it was time to go outside for our problem solving. Some of the problems were very hard and it took a lot of brains to work them out. Then it really started to rain hard so we went inside.

Then we went to the ICT block to finish our website. In this session I decorated all of my writing with pictures, borders and a couple of extra photos. At the end I was really pleased with my effort because it was bright and cheerful and showed a lot about what I did at Kingswood. This ICT session was shorter than usual because we had to get the coach back to school.

When we got to the coach the teachers did a head count and then allowed us on. The driver put on a video for us to watch. I fell asleep halfway through because I was so tired. I even slept through the toilet stop! We arrived back at school to be met by our mums and dads. They were very pleased to have us back and we were pleased to be home.

Thomas Hodgkiss (4P)