EXMOOR ADVENTURE PROVIDES GREAT FINALE

FOR 2019 BADER BRAVES SEASON!

Despite some pretty dodgy weather in October, our Bader Braves Adventure Weekend on Exmoor was an outstanding success and seemingly much enjoyed by all of the Braves and their families. This was our third visit to this excellent facility owned and operated by the Calvert Trust and once again their great team of instructors and support staff ensured that everyone had a super weekend where they could try a range of challenging activities, enjoy new experiences and make new friends.



Following the Friday arrival and checking into their weekend accommodation, the Braves were straight into supper followed by a briefing meeting and then an evening of social activity before a reasonably early night in preparation for a busy weekend.

The Braves had been split into three groups and each allocated to an activity ready for a prompt start immediately after a hearty breakfast on Saturday. Some set off to the lake for the challenges of either canoeing or cycling whist others headed off for the rock wall and zip-wire. Everyone had been provided with the appropriate equipment for their activity; buoyancy aids, helmets and safety harnesses all brightly coloured and, of course, essential.



In no time at all the canoes had been launched and were now heading out across the wide expanses of the lake which, despite the somewhat disappointing weather, provided some beautiful scenery and home to a host of

wildlife. Once the crews had familiarised themselves, under direction from the instructors, with the intricacies of guiding the canoe in the direction they intended, it was down to the furthest point for a game of “paddle-polo”; plenty of action, plenty of splashing and plenty of laughter!!



Meanwhile the cycling group were selecting their mounts for the morning trip around the perimeter of the lake. There was a choice of machines from a vast range designed to meet the requirements of all abilities. Once aboard and ready to go there was another briefing regarding safety for the path from the bike shed to the lake involved negotiating a fairly steep incline to the waters’ edge and the instructors emphasised that the aim was to ride around the lake and not across it!!!



Once all were safely on the pathway at the bottom of the slope the procession set off for a challenging ride of about three miles; however, a scheduled stop at the halfway stage not only allowed the slower riders to catch up but provided an opportunity to refuel on hot chocolate, coffee, tea and snacks. Ten minutes later it was back on the road to complete the challenge and then head off for a catch up with friends in the other groups.



Whilst the biking and canoeing groups were down by the lake the third of our groups had been shepherded to the kit room for the issuing of some serious rock climbing equipment. Once the instructors had carefully checked that climbing safety harnesses and helmets had been properly fitted and adjusted it was back outside and up the steep path to the top of the rock-wall ready for some abseiling. For most this was the first experience of abseiling and as they received instruction as they were attached to the safety lines the realisation that nearly twenty metres was the equivalent of being upstairs on a double deck bus which was standing on top of two more double deck buses, was quite awe-inspiring!!

The trick if you find the drop intimidating is, apparently, not to look down!! It's the obvious answer for one by one our Braves leaned back, took a few steps backwards and after a squeal of either delight or error, disappeared from view.



After each had made a couple of descents and had taken their refuelling break it was back up the hill but, this time, it was the zip-wire. Once again it was for some a first time experience. The safety harness for this activity was a somewhat more complex affair than that of the abseiling and one that, once safely in place, left the incumbent suspended in mid-air. The zip-wire itself was about 300-350 metres long and took in a fairly steep incline. Brave number one was safely attached and ready to go; the instructor handed the responsibility of release to one of the family members – a quick tug on the release rope and the first was away. This time the squeal was most definitely delight as the thrill of speed, freedom and the surprise of a sudden stop at the bottom was enough to kindle huge excitement all round. There was time for each Brave to have a number of rides down the wire before it was time to go back to the kit room to shed the paraphernalia associated with this activity and head off to catch up with the others for lunch.



Lunchtime itself was a very excited affair with youngsters exchanging stories of their morning but it was soon time for the afternoon session and the three groups rotated enabling each to experience each activity throughout the weekend. Fortunately the weather improved a little during the afternoon which was rather bad luck on one of the morning groups!! As dusk began to creep in the afternoon session drew to a close and the Braves and their families had time to try some of the more casual activities that were available before supper. After a hearty meal it was time to put on the party gear and off to the disco where everyone danced the evening away until it was time to put the lid on a very busy day, get to bed and look forward to the next morning.

Sunday dawned a somewhat brighter day, not clear blue skies and sunshine but certainly drier than the day before. After breakfast the groups reformed, rotated for the final time and set off in different directions for their activity. Lunchtime



arrived and some of the Braves prepared to leave for home but not before all of the Braves had been presented with their attendance certificates and they had given three rousing cheers to everyone at the Exmoor centre. Then time for farewells and as the Braves set off for home in Leeds, Isle of Wight, Essex, Cornwall in fact our group of Braves had travelled from far and wide, would you believe it …….. the sun came out!!!!!