

First Black Forest Camp 1964.15 - 27 July

Team of Students:-

Gordon Edwards (Jesus)	David Ward (Selwyn)
Mchael ?eel (Jesus)	Victoria Waterton (Homerton)
Ian Cooper (Jesus)	Celia Charnings (Homerton)
David Beeby (Jesus)	Susan Bennett (Girton)
David Thomas (Trinity Hall)	

Number of Boys	22
Age of Boys	6 to 15 (mostly about 12 or 13)
Campsite	4 miles from st. Peter in the Southern Black Forest
Accommodation	1 marquee and 8 x 160 lb tents borrowed from B.A.O.B.
Equipment	Provided by Children's Relief International
Cooking	On wood fire and Calor Gas

The major items one needs for running a camp of this sort are money, equipment and a team of undergraduates. By the beginning of the Easter term the latter had been conscripted and by the end, when everybody had written enough letters to last a lifetime, the former had been achieved as well. We had also acquired two vans and a fair amount of donated equipment, mainly food.

The 6th of July saw an advance party of four males setting out in a heavily loaded Bedford Van for st. Peter in the Southern Black Forest, in order to prepare the campsite. This consisted mainly in setting up eight standard, 160 lb army tents and a marquee, as well as digging seemingly endless rubbish and latrine pits. However, a few days later the remainder of the team arrived and brought with them a complete change in the weather from the disappointing state it had been in to three weeks of almost continuous sunshine.

On Monday, July 13th the boys were picked up from their homes in Frankfurt and Wiesbaden in fact about half came from the dingy surroundings of Vorderberg refugee camp, while the rest were mainly living in flats where their families had been resettled. Meanwhile, at the campsite, the remaining part of the team waited for the arrival of the onslaught, which duly occurred at about 10 p.m. when twenty-two rather excited boys descended from the vans on to the campsite. Eventually, at about midnight, everybody had been provided with a sleeping-bag and packed away into their tents, and peace once more descended on the Black Forest. Not for long, however, for at 4 a.m. they were all up again and rather too full of life for what the team thought was a

disgustingly early hour of the morning. Fortunately for everybody's nerves, such early rising was never repeated.

After a few days adaptation to the rather novel situation, life began to follow a more definite pattern. The usual hour of rising was 7 a.m. and after inducing everybody to wash in a trough containing fiendishly cold water, breakfast followed at about 8.30 a.m. (We tried to keep meals at roughly fixed times).

The weather was so hot that much of the time in the first week was spent in or around the nearby lake keeping cool. We were also rather tied to the campsite because one of the vans had to be repaired owing to a blocked radiator. In the evening, when it was cooler, more energetic games were indulged in, such as football and shinty: the latter was new to the boys and was taken up with enthusiasm, being played with complete and almost lethal abandon. The evening always ended with hot drinks and everybody, we hoped, in bed before 9.45 p.m.

Meanwhile, of course, the routine life of the camp had to be followed. A washing-up rota was instituted (one institution not taken up with complete abandon), potato peelers were press-ganged into service daily and milk was fetched each morning from a nearby farm. The cooking was done partly on open fires and partly on a gas stove and was very ably executed by two of the girls, who produced what must have been the camping equivalent of Cordon Bleu cookery. The sight of Jolfgang (one of the boys) coming up for his third or fourth helping was not a rare one, and certain members of the team were not known to stint themselves either.

One of our difficulties in the first few days had been to get the boys to keep their tents tidy and a competition was started with prizes for the best kept tent. Unfortunately, this was taken up with fanatic devotion, to the point one suspected, of tent occupants craftily dropping pieces of litter around competing tents. It ended up of course with everybody getting a prize.

At the end of the first week we were visited by Mr. Faithfull-Davies (a Director of CRI) and Mr. Oliver Diggle (a trustee of CRI) who brought with them Martyn Edelsten, a leader of one of last year's camps and a very welcome addition to the team. On the Sunday everybody went to church down in St. Peter.

After the first week, more trips in the vans were indulged in and included visits to local swimming baths, waterfalls, the Freiburg Minster and other local areas of interest. One of the highlights of the camp was a coach trip which was very kindly organized for us by Herr Theo Dengler, President of the local Rotary Club, and which took us to Titisee, Feldberg and other well known Black Forest spots.

Other daily activities included an obstacle course organized in the adjacent wood, hare and hounds, a treasure hunt and some walks in the neighbouring district, (certain lack of enthusiasm was noticable for the latter activity) while again much swimming was enjoyed. In the evenings, campfires were organized several times (on one occasion a form of barbecue was held down by the lake) and timeless versions of English and German songs rent the Black Forest air hideously. One campfire produced a memorable series of impromptu turns by some of the boys; the punch line in most of these consisted in someone getting soaked with water, but everybody seemed to enjoy it, including the recipient of the drenching.

One standard feature of the evening was David Ward's surgery, which was very ably performed even though many of the boys seemed likely to become hypochondriacs if the camp lasted long enough.

The final evening of the camp was spent in holding a party in the Gasthof zur Platte, where most of the food was kindly prepared by Frau Saum. After a gargantuan meal the evening became lively and various impromptu sketches were again produced by boys and team. Finally everybody became tired and retired to bed, and next day the boys departed in the vans for their homes, clutching irremunerable souvenirs.

On looking back one can say, I think, that the camp was a success; one or two boys wanted to stay on rather than go home and all must have benefited from the exercise and the good food even if from nothing else, and we hope there was a bit more.

Finally, I must express my very grateful thanks for the wonderful treatment we got from the Saum family, who rented us the campsite. They showed us enormous kindness and without them the camp would have been a much poorer place.

Gordon Edwards

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY VENTURE

Second Black Forest Camp

3rd - 16th August, 1964.

Details:-

(1) Number of Students - 12 (4 girls)

John Rignall (St. John's)	John Endacott (St. Caths)
John Colquhoun (Trinity)	Gill Perry Keene (University College, London)
Edllard Tozer (Trinity)	Paul Hawksworth (Pembroke)
Susan Willmott (Girton)	Lindsay Smith (Girton)
Robin Horsley (Trinity)	Christine Green (Girton)
Martyn Edelsten (Royal (Dick) Vet. College) (Edinburgh Univ.)	Edward Lyttleton (Kings)

(2) Number of Boys - 24

(3) Age of Boys - 6 to 15 (mostly about 12 or 13)

(4) Campsite - 4 miles from St. Peter in the Southern Black Forest.

(5) Accommodation .1 marquee and 8 160 lb tents borrowed from B.A.O.R.

(6) Equipment provided by Children's Relief International.

(7) Cooking on wood fire and calor gas.

Finance:-

Credit	£	s.	d.	Debit	£	s.	d.
Money raised by appeal	293	0	0	Cost of Travel (petrol, Channel crossing)'	70	0	0
				Repairs to Vehicles	18	10	0
				Freight	21	10	0
				Equipment bought in England	9	0	0
				Provisions	144	0	0
				Incidentals (campsite fees, museum tickets)	24	0	0
					287	0	0
				Balance	6	0	0
	293	0	0		293	0	0
Credit Balance	6	0	0				

Report:-

Towards the end of July we converged on St. Peter from various corners of Europe to relieve Gordon Edwards, tanned almost beyond recognition, and his pioneers, who bequeathed us not only an impeccably organized campsite but also an enviable record of good weather, good relations with the local inhabitants and general success. A fortnight later we hoped we had matched them in all but the weather.

Another, as it were, legacy from the first camp was Martyn Edlsten from Edinburgh. He had organised the St. Peter camp last year and not only knew most of the boys already but had won their obvious admiration, and was to win ours by his indefatigable efforts to keep them amused. Also from Edinburgh came Frank Inman, Mike Berainger and Bill McTaggart who lent willing aid for a few days in preparation for a prospective Edinburgh camp next year.

On Monday, August 3rd the children were picked up by van from their homes in the Frankfurt Wiesbaden area, many from the notoriously squalid Vorderberg refugee settlement, and brought to the Black Forest. The tedium of the Autobahn was apparently successfully vitiated by tireless card-playing and the consequent circulation of pocket money. Additional excitement of sorts was provided for half the party by the behaviour of the Bedford van which not only had to be push-started but furthermore ignobly expired in a splutter of misfiring half-way up the hill into St. Peter. It took five days and £15 to restore it to health.

This and the fine weather meant that most of the first week was spent in or around the lake about a quarter of a mile from the camp. The site itself, about 3,000 feet above sea level and four miles from St. Peter, commanded a magnificent view of the Southern Black Forest. Firewood was obtainable from the forest directly behind the camp, milk from a nearby farm, and refreshment, entertainment and unlimited kindness from our landlord Stefan Saum and his mother Maria in the Gasthaus zur Platte. The only real deficiency was the water supply; a consumptive spring dried up intermittently and water from the Gasthaus has to be sterilized. From B.A.O.R. we were lucky enough to be able to borrow latrines, the pride of the neighbourhood, eight 160 lb tents to sleep in and a marquee which served as a kitchen and as a dining hall during bad weather. Cooking, undertaken entirely by the four girls, was done partly on an open fire and partly by gas: the results were exemplary and even elicited expression of approval from the boys to whom the practice of bestowing gratuitous compliments for the sake of politeness is entirely foreign.

In the initial days life soon found a certain rhythm. Volunteers collected milk and water, a tent inspection was carried out every morning with the promise of a reward for the cleanest tent at the end of the fortnight, and a washing-up rota was

introduced, and implemented by dint of threats and cajolery. Most of the day was spent by the lake, in walks through the forest and on one occasion in organizing a demanding and ingenious obstacle course. In the evening there was communal twilight football, followed by a camp fire, hot drinks and the rendering of approximations to "Old Macdonald", "My Bonnyll etc. We were fortunate enough to have a certain number of competent musicians. Martyn Edelsten and one of the boys on concertinas, and Robin Horsley and Edward Lyttelton with guitars made up an inventive and energetic band which was able to inspire even the entirely voiceless to contribute some sort of noise.

On Friday, after an appreciated visit to a clock museum in nearby Furtwangen, the weather broke and remained unsettled and generally cool until the end of the camp. Swimming was, for a long time, out of the question. A six-a-side football championship was arranged on Saturday and coincided with visits from Countess Szapary of Caritas, (the Catholic charitable organization and a possible co-operator in future years), and Sylvia and Gill from C.R.I., who stayed until Monday. The six-a-side championship, after the presentation of prizes and a photograph of the winning team, was followed by the first of a series of football internationals in which adult weight and strength was found to be no match for puerile skill and experience. In short, despite our unfeigned determination to win and the speed and expertise of our one real footballer, John Endacott, renamed "Blitz" by appreciative opponents, the boys beat us.

On Sunday protestants and catholics alike went down to St. Peter for Mass. That afternoon the Kandel, a nearby mountain with a fine view over the Rhine valley into France, was climbed - the sight of France producing some excitement.

The second week was remarkable mainly for its bad weather. When it was not actually raining there was much football, and hockey played with shinty sticks and almost no rules; this proved extremely popular, winning converts even among the most devoted footballers. Two wet mornings were spent in the Gasthaus drinking lemonade and playing cards and party games, and excursions were made in the vans. On Tuesday John Wilkinson, a 'veteran' of last year in Austria, arrived from England bringing with him his reputation as an R.A.F. pilot, which won immediate acclaim with the boys, and a pair of enormous regulation army boots that saw useful service on the football field. His presence was all the more appreciated because of an outbreak of sickness, probably provoked by the cold weather, which laid low two or three of the staff and half a dozen of the boys during the next few days. Fortunately only one case was too serious to be dealt with by our patient and very overworked Medical Officer, John Endacott.

By Friday all had recovered sufficiently to attend the farewell party given in the Gasthaus with the help of Frau Saum; enormous quantities of food were consumed and an ordinate amount of wine - not all of it, one fears, by those who were entitled to it. With ensuing games, singing and conjuring tricks by Stefan Saum the evening made a successful climax to the camp, although unfortunately having to be held a day in advance as Saturday was too busy a day for the Saums.

Saturday, the last day and a catholic feast day, begun with Mass in the small chapel by the Gasthaus, followed by a sight-seeing tour around the Black Forest in the vans, ending with a swim in the *pool* at Freiburg. So the camp wound gently down to its end and on Sunday after a group photograph and the distribution of secondhand clothes, the vans drove off to Frankfurt to take the tkind^{ll} home; an operation which, apart from a minor accident on the way down into the Rhine Valley, was completed without mishap.

In retrospect it would not be an exaggerated claim to say that the camp was a success; certain things could be improved for future years - the water supply for example - and the weather might have been better. But the children left looking healthy and well fed, and nearly all expressed the desire to come again next year - surely the most conclusive proof of success.

John Rignall