

Camp Life at Currendon

Day 1-4

Arriving fresh faced and excited for the two weeks of camping that lay ahead, we were given our first look at Camp Currendon – an exceptionally well built campsite for the purpose of this SERT, kindly built by a team of National Trust volunteers. After setting up our two-man tents (with some questionable tools being used, FYI, a deodorant can isn't an effective hammer for tent pegs), we explored the facilities and began the ominous task of cooking with our camping gear. Dishes ranged from questionable eggs on toast, cereal and, our American camp-mate Miriam's chicken pizza (never question an American on their BBQ skills).

After a wet and stormy night, we woke up to more rain, luckily though the tents had served their purpose well. One of the camp-mates, Archie, was celebrating his 20th birthday and, as a present, we let him be the first to experience the port-a-shower. A shivering Archie later informed us it was not pleasant. Our first breakfast of the SERT consisted of more eggs and George and Archie informing us all how their meals were 'spam-tastic'. After a day of work, we later entertained ourselves with card games and heading off to the pub for Archie's birthday.

The next day at camp consisted of debating the most powerful Pokémon over another gas stove breakfast, data entry from the habitat surveying and crowding around the Wi-Fi spot for necessities like snapchat and Facebook. Myself (David), Archie and Dave ventured beyond the campsite and explored the local town of Swanage (mainly to get a portion of seaside chips and avoid more pasta).

Day 4 began with a bunch of bleary eyed campers listen to George convince himself that water can be used as a good substitute for milk with his cornflakes (as the one and only difference between the two is consistency, apparently). After being dumbed down by George's ramblings, we set off to the heathlands. Upon our return, we were back to Swanage for more chips, and visited the arcade. To my utter delight and many, many attempts on the claw, me and Alice managed to win a yellow T-Rex, which we would share custody of. Me, George, Alice and Archie then spent the night sleeping outside under a very starry night.

Day 5-8

After spending the day deer surveying and sweeping for insects, it was finally the weekend. George had left us to visit family in Yorkshire (so he says, I'm sure his Nan's Yorkshire puddings were a major motivation). The group then watched a sporting spectacle in Swanage, the great annual wheelbarrow race, in which the roads are shut down and many pairs in hilarious costumes raced on wheelbarrows to the finish line. Since then, Dave and Archie have been planning their entry for next year, from the outfit to the training strategy.

We woke in the morning to a stack of delicious pancakes prepared by Emily, we spent the Saturday working on our data, hogging the Wi-Fi, reading and heading into Swanage yet again (at this point my vegetarianism was on its last legs, but was completely broken when I gave into temptation and was caught with a box of fried chicken). The next day, we entertained ourselves with a newly invented sport which basically consisted of physical fights over a tennis ball.

Day 9-12

With the end of the SERT now in sight, the final few nights at camp Currendon consisted majorly of data entry, report writing and watching Tarzan and the Mighty Ducks. I finally began to get the hang

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of producing edible food using one gas stove (after my tent-mate had set his hand on fire, leaving the cooking to me). I unfortunately had to miss a day of research due to an injured foot, but spent the day organising data and designing graphs.

On one of our last nights, Michelle and Anita, our supervisors, kindly threw a BBQ. After one too many burgers, a stomach full of regret and any chance of salvaging my vegetarianism now gone, we set off with Michelle for a night of bat watching at Winspit caves. We had a great time, seeing bats flying in the starlight and exploring the caves.

With all the research finished, our last trip made to Swanage and tents deconstructed, our time at camp Currendon has drawn to a close, but has however, left our group with many great memories and given us many lessons on how to survive successfully as a camper.