

## Queen's Diamond Jubilee Scout Parade and 1<sup>st</sup> Commonwealth Scout Forum

27 – 29<sup>th</sup> April 2012

Report by Clarke Truscott

In April Carl Shann and I had the great privilege and honour to represent SCOUTS New Zealand at the 2012 UK National Scout Parade and Service, to be held at Windsor Castle where Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh were to take the inspection. In honour of The Queen's Diamond Jubilee, two scouts (aged 18 – 25) from every Commonwealth country had been invited to attend. We also participated in the first Commonwealth Scout Youth Forum and Carl and I were invited to be official stewards at the London ANZAC Day service. This easily ranks as one of the most exciting and enjoyable experiences I have ever had in scouting.



My trip started at the beginning of April. Due to flight delays, I had only a 10 minute stop-over in Hong Kong rather than the anticipated three and half hours. Upon arrival in London I received a 10 minute grilling from the border control agent who kept asking me questions like; why have you arrived so early?, where are the rest of the scouts?, and my personal favourite: you're a bit old to be a scout aren't you? I was then picked up by the Adams family who had very kindly volunteered to host me for the month. Finally, after more than 30 hours of travel I arrived in the town of Chelmsford, where I was to be staying.

I spent my days seeing the sights of London and getting involved with the local scout community in Chelmsford during the evenings and weekends. Activities of note include participating in a St George's Day parade and seeing the Chelmsford and District Gang Show. I couldn't help but notice how often I found myself in a pub when I was with other scouters. Towards the end of the week I meet up with Carl, who had travelled separately to me and had spent a couple of days in Japan.

Carl and I spent 5 days in Rome taking in the sights and eating lots of pizza, pasta and gelato. A definite highlight of our Italian side adventure was the day we visited Pompeii. The ruins of Rome's ancient monuments are very impressive however I found the ruins of Pompeii even more interesting because of the insights they give into the everyday life of the people who lived there.



ANZAC Day in London this year was one of the wettest and coldest days of my trip. I'm glad I was wearing thermals under my uniform because Carl and I were official stewards at the ANZAC day service at the London Cenotaph. We were responsible for looking after the VIP's and during the service we stood right beside the door to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Carl and I, joined by Edward Cook, then attended the service of commemoration at Westminster Abbey. The Abby was filled with Australians and New Zealanders which made the service among the most moving I have ever attended, given that we were all so far from home.

On the evening of Thursday the 26<sup>th</sup> of April, I arrived at Gilwell Park, the site of the Commonwealth Youth Forum. Carl and I travelled separately and I was among one of the last to arrive, just in time for a campfire. This was a special experience because there were so many people from all over the world gathered together singing some songs we all knew and sharing new songs.

The following day was the Youth Forum. The theme was 'developing scout partnerships in the Commonwealth'. Participants shared presentations about their NSO's and talked about their similarities and differences. Time was spent in discussion groups about how Commonwealth NSO's could better work together to support each other. In the afternoon we made personal and group pledges that were recorded for a video about the conference to be put in a Commonwealth time capsule for The Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The time capsule is internet based and anyone in the commonwealth can make a contribution. It can be found at: <http://www.jubileetimecapsule.org/>

Saturday was spent touring London and visiting Marlborough House, the Office of the Commonwealth Secretariat. Our tour included; meeting with local scouts, a river cruise, and a trip on the London eye. At Marlborough House we meet with the Commonwealth Secretary General and he talked to us about the work of the Commonwealth and how it supports youth engagement.



Finally Sunday, the big day, arrived. This day was cold, wet and windy (i.e. English). It started with a bus trip to Windsor where we had a security and uniform check. We then spent two hours in the rain learning to march with about 500 UK Queen's Scouts.



After lunch, we received an ironic heat exhaustion warning before heading up to the castle for the parade. Due to the wet weather, The Queen's officials instigated a wet weather plan. This meant that the parade was shortened. The Queen's Scouts were formed into sections, with Carl and I in 'A' section, immediately behind the colours party. This meant we were among the first to be reviewed by The Queen. This was an awesome opportunity and one I will always remember. We then attended the UK National Scout service at St George's Chapel followed by Bear Grylls addressing the Queen's Scouts outside before the parade reformed and marched out of the castle. Afterwards, Bear made the time to meet with the Commonwealth Scouts and talk with us.



That evening we had a formal(ish) dinner and stayed up late talking. John May, the deputy Chairman of WOSM, was the guest speaker and spent time after the dinner getting to know a few of us. The follow day, my only sunny day at Gilwell Park, we sadly had to say goodbye to all our new scouting friends. I spent most of the day relaxing with those who had latter flights and having a look around Gilwell Park. In the evening I began my long journey home to NZ.

I would like to thank the following organisations and people who helped make this experience possible:

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- UK Scout Association
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