Bewl Day 3- Wednesday 27th September

Barely had my head hit the pillow before I could hear, yet again, the thundering herds outside my door. The children were clearly not suffering the after effects of having kept me up till 11.30 last night and were all, slightly annoyingly, very happy and full of beans. They were even more full of beans, literally, after they'd finished breakfast, and I gave a silent prayer of thanks that we would all be outside in the fresh air today. There followed the usual brief respite while they prepared for room inspection, which gave me a few moments to gather my thoughts and see if anyone from the Samaritans had answered my emails.

Room inspection usually raises my spirits as well as my blood sugar level; the children have truly grabbed this baton and run with it. They had really tried to tidy their rooms but more importantly, come up with some excellent bribes. I took a picture of the offerings from one room, and I was glad I did as they were immediately snatched by Miss Graham and I never saw them again.

We were also lucky to be joined by Mr Page, as we always are when there's free food and watersports on offer, and despite already having consumed two breakfasts before he got here, there was no holding him back when the bacon was served. Happily, none of the children were seriously injured as he elbowed his way to the front, which was just as well as Miss Graham, who was today's official First Aider (and unofficial responsible adult), was unresponsive on her bed in a near diabetic sugar coma caused by eating all the confectionery from earlier. We managed to get her going again – thank goodness I had my jump leads in the car – and although nothing she said for the next 30 minutes made any sense, this was not entirely a new experience for us or the children, so they were blissfully unaware of the earlier CPR dramas. A few of them did ask me why she smelled faintly of singed hair, but I managed to brush them off by

making up a story that she'd misunderstood the 'short n curly' setting on my hair straighteners that she'd borrowed, with rather startling consequences.

We then split as usual into our three groups, one to rock climbing and archery (presumably not simultaneously), another to kayaking with Mr Page, while my group clambered aboard a big sailing boat for a couple of hours. Most of these children have never been sailing before so it was lovely to see them revelling in the excitement and mild drama when we were fully in the wind, contrasted by the lovely calmness when we sailed into more sheltered waters. All of the children had a go at steering, which we somehow survived, and we had lots of interesting chats about what we saw, such as the varied birdlife, and about the history and workings of the reservoir. They were really intrigued by the idea that were sailing above former villages and houses in some places, albeit 30 meters beneath us, and that one can still see the remains of roads that end at one side of the lake and reappear opposite. We were very lucky to have a well informed and skilful sailor guiding us, and I was happy to contribute my usual mixture of mostly useless trivia combined with total fabrication without the children or Mr Jennings being able to tell which was which.

We all had a cheery lunch together where the children from the various groups mingled again and shared their stories of the morning's adventures, before moving on to Raft Building. This is a simple idea on paper: the children discuss, plan and build a model of how they want their raft to look, but in practice descended into a total bunfight. The end results were terrible to behold; group 1's looked like it had been designed by Salvador Dali, in the dark, and there was a sudden tension in the room when we were told to head to the lake to build a full-size version.

The TWFS staff thought it would be more beneficial for the children if we remained hands off and let them organise themselves as teams, supervised by the Bewl instructors. At this point, I'd love to report how proud I am of how they worked together to build a robust raft on which they then sailed across the lake, singing merrily. Reality, however, was not even close. I have never witnessed such a disorganised rabble expending so much energy and talking so much without achieving anything, at least not since I last watched 'Today in Parliament'. It was quite difficult as their teacher for me to restrain myself from helping/tasering them, but the Bewl staff rightly let them get on with it. After all, what was the worst that could happen? (Answer: mass drowning), but even so, Mr Page had to restrain me when I was on the phone trying to find out if Deliveroo could send me some decent Border Collies.

After about 2 hours, each team carried their creation into the lake, accompanied on their way by helpful heckling from their teacher, ‘Isn’t that barrel supposed to be attached to your raft?’ and then climbed aboard.

Team 1’s effort lasted nearly one second before disintegrating and dumping the children into the lake; Team 2 had only just finished laughing when most of their raft decided it wanted to be free and headed off in different directions, leaving the children upside down in the water, whereas Team 3 managed, to our general astonishment, to paddle out and back round the jetty intact.

Once they had put all the gear away, the children were allowed to get back in the lake, and perform a Mexican wave before falling back into the water – which is something they’ve been asking to do all week- go figure.

As we walked back to our lodge, looking forward to our lovely shower, pizza, film and bed, I took a moment to reflect on the important lesson I had learned today.

Nothing in this world or the next could persuade me to ever travel on anything built by our children.

Goodnight!