Monday 22nd September 2025

We managed to keep the children out of the building for a good 15 minutes before reluctantly accepting that we needed to let them in to enjoy the residential, rather than have a week of rest and relaxation ourselves. After the children had officially moved out of home and into Bewl as what appeared to be permanent residents (if you saw the amount of luggage each child brought!), Tasha introduced the week before we allocated rooms and the carnage began.

Bedding…

Wow… that was an experience and a half. The look of pure confusion rained down on 30 little angelic faces whilst the children muttered to each other and turned pale. They were handed a sheet, a duvet cover and pillowcase and sent to their rooms to start making the bed. On checking the children, the staff found many had been eaten by said bedding and comments of 'that's a small hole, how do I fit it in that hole?' were heard ringing out whilst they were fitting the duvet into its cover. 'Where do the corners go? How do I get out of here? And 'I'm too lazy to do this at home, my parents do it for me' rang out. Meanwhile, whilst helping Teo with his duvet, Mrs Cheeseman was consumed by Sammy's jumping out from the bunk bed above.

Next came lunch, our wonderful chef for the day, Theodora had been busy cooking up a storm in the kitchen. The children ate hungrily and were soon ready for the afternoon.

Canoeing…

Well, what can we say… I'm not sure we have any Olympic canoers in our midst but the laughter at the beginning definitely warmed our souls. We started out holding the paddles and being taught about how to paddle forwards, backwards and how to turn. We then jumped into the canoes with great gusto and a set of simple instructions… go right and stop at the green buoy. Approximately 30 minutes later, 3 teams had somehow arrived at the buoy (obviously the competitive Mrs Thompson and her team came first!) with 2 paddling somewhere towards France. After being nudged (ok, perhaps pushed is a far better adjective) to the buoy, the children and teachers played a game of 'Head, Shoulders, Knees and jump', in pairs initially before building to the whole boat jumping to prove how 'stable' the canoes are. Screams could be heard for miles around as children were almost catapulted into the water. The next task, which was seemingly simple was to paddle round to the cove. From my vantage point on the support boat I could hear the instructors shouting, 'left hand side paddle more, paddle in, right side paddle backwards, head towards the shore, no, don't beach on the shore, turn that way the wind will help!' Again, we were summoned to rescue 3 groups by pushing them towards the winning teams (and yes, Mrs Thompson was there again!). We got them to within metres of the shore, turned to get the next team only to find the original were back in the middle of the reservoir. Each of the three teams couldn't manage to stay facing the direction we had left them and travel the last 3 metres without a detour around the world. Once we had finally managed to stop at the shore the children felt that this was the time (whilst the wind was whipping around us) to dive in and scream repeatedly for help (thanks for the heart attack, Edward). We tried to play a game of throw the tennis balls in and everyone paddles to collect them, but their paddling left so much to be desired this had to be quickly abandoned. You will be pleased to know that Mrs Thompson and Mr Furey abandoned their children (who decided to go for a swim) and played the game themselves, declaring themselves the winners as they managed to collect four balls. It was at this point that our instructors decided to quite literally pull the plug as any more

water would have flooded the poor canoes. We hooked the boats together and towed them back to shore… looking back from the support boat I could see a flotilla of mayhem following us with splashing, standing up, arms in the water and screams of 'go faster' echoing around the place. I'm not sure that the fishermen or windsurfers were overly impressed with our presence, but we all had fun. That is, until we then had to get out of the canoes and make our way back, waterlogged, to the accommodation with the wind biting at our every move. Mr Furey, with teeth chattering, slowly made his way up the path whilst Sammy decided now was the time to give me a hug declaring 'I thought I'd hug you Mrs Cheeseman because you are nice and dry and I really want a hug, even though I'm wet.' I feel this is the first, and last time I will get a Sammy hug as I'm not sure he appreciated my screams whilst trying to fight him off me.

After watching the children trying to fight their way out of buoyancy aids and waterproof jackets and showers all round, the children emerged wrapped up in their pjs before 5pm. We then settled to a dinner of meatballs and pasta, which led to a standing ovation and all-round clapping for our chef, in the true TWFS way.

As today is Mr Furey's birthday, the staff and children had planned a special surprise. 'Code Red' was announced and declared everyone needed to go back to their rooms – Mr Furey was delighted to announce it, knowing nothing of what was to come. He trotted back to his room alongside the children and shut himself in. Meanwhile, Mrs Thompson and Mrs Cheeseman handed out party hats and arranged the cake (luckily our chef was on site still to say we could not light candles as it sets off the fire alarm). The secret mission almost complete, the children tried (in vain) to hide in the dining room quietly… they failed spectacularly, though Mr Furey didn't notice. When he was told 'Code Red' was over, he nonchalantly wandered out of his room only to have 30 party hat adorned children (although many looked like unicorns), charging down the corridor with what can only be described as a shouty almost aggressive version of Happy Birthday was hollered at both him and Marcus before he expertly mimed lighting candles and blowing them out… something Marcus sensibly refused to partake in.

The excitement of the day was palpable… as was the sugar high that came from the many many thousands of bags of sweet treats that needed their own suitcases. As always comes from a sugar high, we had the crash but luckily this coincided with bedtime and at the time of writing all children are tucked up fast asleep and the staff aren't far behind. In fact, I think we have all dozed off whilst writing this so if it doesn't make sense… we're sorry!

Sleep well, (although I bet you already are) and we will be back again tomorrow night with the next rendition of 'what in the world is happening with Bannister at Bewl.'

Good Night!