

## Journey Around the Isle of Wight

Day one - London to Yarmouth via Lymington - 133 miles by train thankfully and 5.5 miles on foot!

We boarded the train and managed to fit the big bikes on for the leaders. We travelled all the way to Lymington by train and then walked to the ferry. We soon got on the ferry and the view was amazing and Lukas bought us fizzy drinks to enjoy on the trip! After the 45-minute ferry crossing we arrived at the port in Yarmouth side. First things first we had to hunt down some gas or there was no dinner, it appeared that there was a national shortage, and we bought the last two in the shop.

We started walking towards the campsite, Alex said it would take 30 mins but 2.5 hours later we arrived. It took us ages to walk all the way! Half of the walk we enjoyed the beautiful sunset and took some stunning photos. After it disappeared over the horizon we were left in the dark woods!!

It wasn't the easiest walk, but we finally made it in the dark to the campsite. We had taken several stops (like the one where we were sat at the edge of the road munching on short bread watching the cars whizz past). Once at the campsite, we soon ate our noodles and set up the tents and after this had an amazing fire in an old washing machine drum. Lukas and Rahim had a tent hanging from the trees and Josiah had the luxury of sleeping in a hammock.





Day two - Birthday and only a small walk...! - Shalfleet-Newton- Yarmouth and back again. - 15 miles

So just in case you haven't heard today was Lukas's 18th birthday....

We left the campsite with limited baggage as today was an acclimatisation day...! The weather was beautiful again and the workers walked with us today which was nice a little more support for Lukas and backup if needed. We began the walk by exploring the nature reserve this lead us through to the river which we followed until we reached the coastline. There were many lovely inlets along the way, and we found a very sunny spot on a boardwalk to have our snack. We also realised that last night we had taken a wrong turning in the dark and had added a little distance onto the total.

We had arranged a restaurant a real luxury for Lukas's birthday and by far the biggest meal of the trip. We all loved the fact that we had to cook the meat on our own hot rocks and Josiah was impressed with the bottomless fries. Lukas had also said that he wanted to have a swim on his birthday, so we found a lovely secluded spot and a few of us were brave enough to go in... the weather at this point was a little overcast.

On the way back we walked a more direct route back with the exception of Josiah who decided he wanted to jog so beat us all back...Rahim and Alex picked some plums which we all really enjoyed for our dinner.

Even though today was supposed to be a light day the group found the walk very challenging and Lukas's legs were hurting a lot, but we also had a lot of laughs particularly with Alexa.... Lukas's birthday balloon.



Day three - Not Lukas's Birthday - Newport - Wootton - Shanklin - Sandown - 14.3 miles - and a couple extra on the steam train.

So, on day three we had to pack up our tents and get ready for a big move to the other side of the island which meant a long walk today. The plan for today was first to walk to Newport, the capital of the Island where we would meet the workers who we were hoping had bought us enough food to last a few more days including a big lunch Josiah was always hungry...!

From Newport we walked up a massive hill towards Wootton station which is where we got on a steam train to travel to Havenstreet railway station. Rahim has a love of anything mechanical and so we explored the steam festival for the afternoon. At the festival there were many vintage cars and steam driven vehicles some of which took part in the steam Olympics which we all enjoyed. We also went for a small walk through the woods and discovered a hidden music room where we sat for a while and listened to the folk music really enchanting.

After our more relaxed afternoon we took the steam train in the other direction towards Ashley station. We arrived at Ashley station on the steam train after which we picked up our rucksacks again and started walked down towards Sandown from there, we walked all the way along the promenade which thankfully was very flat as everybody's legs were very tired at this point, someone pointed out that there was even a poo museum. In Shanklin we were meet by Alex who took us up the massive cliff in the lift...phew...!

We made it to the campsite which was very different than the other quite commercial but on the upside the showers were beautifully warm and constant. We put up our tents and made a beautiful meal which everybody was ready for and it wasn't long before we all headed to bed.





## Day four - definitely Not Lucas's Birthday - Sandown - Blackgang - Grange Farm - 14 miles

We left the luxurious campsite, we seemed to be the only ones staying in tiny tents everyone else seemed to have brought practically everything from home including what looked like little summer houses in addition to their sleeping tents....maybe next time...!

From the campsite we headed back down towards the coastal path continuing our walk towards Ventnor from Ventnor there was a killer hill inland towards Chale from where we took the coastal path again. We met the workers at Blackgang Chine, actually beating them for once... they were on bikes, but it had been a struggle up the hill and one had run out of battery...!

Blackgang was our treat for the day. We spent a couple of hours here and had lots of fun and nice ice creams a beautiful treat after a long walk. However, we still had to walk further along the coastal path to the next campsite at Grange farm. We all kept going for around two hours at which point Lucas was in tears and couldn't take anymore so we Phoned Alex who came to rescue Lucas on the Bullitt strapping him in safely before cycling back to the campsite. We all continued along the coastal path watching the beautiful sunset as we walked, and we beat Alex back to the campsite who was still out there riding with Lucas. The workers had discovered a local farmer shop, so we had plenty of fresh fruit and veg for dinner as well as some lovely apple pie and custard.



We set up our tents quickly as tonight was the night we were going to have a fire and eat on the beach, none of us were brave enough to sleep on the beach. We carried down our sleeping mat and all the food we were going to have pasta, noodles and fresh fruit and vegetables a feast it was already going dark at this point. We had to try and gather the wood from the beach just with our head torches, but it was really Worth it as we built a lovely fire and sat and talked and at one point, we lay still for several minutes just listening to the sea and the tide lapping the sand. Today was a day filled with lots of laughter as well as many challenging moments.



Day five .... Walk...beach....walk some more and finally splash a little at the aquapark... Grange farm to Stoats Farm 8.6 miles

So today couldn't have started any better full English breakfasts all round and we didn't have to cook it. Phebe even remarked that a breakfast had never tasted so good. It certainly gave us loads of energy as the first section of the walk today we finished in record time. beating the bikes, but I suppose they had stopped to get us all apple and mixed fruit pies.



The next part of the walk didn't go so well ... not entirely sure think maybe just the terrain was hard going on Lukas's feet and there appeared to be a missing footpath that meant we had to go further around. Unfortunately, we nearly missed our slot at the aquapark and we were all feeling a little glum ... but Jemima showed us all that no matter what happens sometimes a little of fun is better than missing out altogether. The workers also bought us a feast of a lunch which we consumed passionately. We all cheered up a little before we left and talked through how we were all feeling some of us feeling more responsibly for the pace of walking than others.



We continued with smiles and walked down to Stoats Farm, it was a really lovely walk and the workers messaged us to let us know that the bikes for tomorrow had arrived and that the campsite was lovely. This spurred us on for the rest of the walk. We stopped briefly when the sun shone for half an hour on the beach this was also fun and a couple of us had a paddle.

We arrived at the campsite still in daylight which meant we had time after the tents were put up to have a yoga class, in record time. by this stage we were real pros at this task. Our Instructor for the class was Lukas and we all really had a great laugh on this our final evening together.



Our resident chef . Jemima prepared with Kezia a feast tonight no noodles but plenty of pasta... even too much, Si didn't even manage to finish it all off.



We then tidied everything away and lit the wonder log, which burned for 3 hours no problem - we had marshmallows around the fire and as usual we read from the Losing Eden book and recounted our highs and lows of both the day and the whole trip so far.





Day six - the final leg - and today we got to ride bikes for the last section!!! - Stoats farm - Alum bay - Yarmouth - 8.5 miles

The campsite today definitely got voted as our favourite of the trip... we loved the natural state of the first campsite but this one was a good middle ground. It had warm showers, a well-stocked shop, great firepits, and for today's modern age even a charging station in the shower block... where Alex was to leave behind her headphones after telling us all to double check...!!!

The bike company actually dropped the bikes last night, so we were ready to roll as soon as we had put down our tents and eaten breakfast... not quite the cooked breakfast of yesterday but the croissants were very fresh.

For the first part of the trip, we left our large bags at the campsite and rode to the Needles... Lukas we took in the child trailer, and Alex got to ride the Bullit bike empty.

We arrived at Alum Bay and had a long discussion with Lukas about the chairlift as it was the only way back up and he doesn't like heights at all. So, Lukas and Alex stayed at the top and the rest of us walked the 97 steps down to the beach returning after a little paddle on the chairlift. From there you could see all the layers in the cliffs of the different coloured sand. When we got back up to the top Lukas and Alex made us all a little souvenir of the sands.

We cycled back to the campsite all uphill on the return ☹️ a difficult job for Si but he never gave up. We picked up all the gear and loaded it onto the trailer and Alex's bike and set off for Yarmouth. The first bit was a little hairy as on narrow roads, but we soon made our way onto the old railway track. This was really enjoyable to ride along and we could travel at our own speeds. We reached the end quicker than we all expected so we continued a little further riding back and forth finally stopping to refuel ourselves and return the bikes as the shop was closing. We all really enjoyed riding the bike and Lukas and Rahim did amazing with the electric bikes easily keeping up with us all. We had a very short walk back to Yarmouth even having time to get a couple of souvenirs before boarding the ferry for the start of the return trip to London. We made it back to London quite late but all in one piece and the only things we lost were Alex headphones and the pump which we had carried all week but accidentally left it on the last train.



*We made it all the way around the Island - more than 65 miles in total with no injuries but hundreds of really nasty mosquito bites*





So, after getting back home and having a good sleep and warm showers all round this is what we all felt about the trip - thank you again for enabling us to have an amazing experience that none of us will ever forget.

Lukas

I have really enjoyed myself in Isle of Wight. I really enjoyed spending my birthday with each and every one of you I really liked camping outside it reminded me of my bronze award that I did, I Really liked when my tent was tied to the trees it was an amazing birthday treat 🎈 I couldn't believe that I would be turning 18 really makes me feel like an actual adult. I also want to thank you guys for organising the birthday lunch and when I got given my birthday balloon from the restaurant which I called Alexa which got deflated still miss her and I am so happy that I managed to go in the sea really enjoyed it. I also liked the experience on the train it made me really feel I was traveling away from London. My challenging moments was when my feet was hurting, and I really liked when my friends and the workers gave me encouragement to walk in big steps. Now I know that I will do just that in Amsterdam or Slovenia I want to thank you guys for organising this really exciting and special trip.

Jemima

Going to the Isle of Wight allowed me to experience camping for the first time as well as have an unforgettable experience. The aqua park was one of the many highlights even after the long walk to get to it! I also really enjoyed the steam fair and the biking. As a team we overcame many challenges, and the long walks were rewarded with beautiful views. The campfires were always a fun time and we had many laughs together. The trip certainly taught me how to make good noodles on a gas stove! The trip has made me a more confident person and I proved to myself that I'm capable of more than I think. Thank you for letting me go on the trip and have such an amazing time.

Phebe

Taking part in this trip to the Isle of Wight made me gain many new experiences! The camping was a lot of fun even if it did take a couple of days to adjust to. My confidence grew a lot and made me push myself more outside of the comfort zone. I enjoyed leading the team for some parts of the trip and showing encouragement to others. Even though we were faced with challenges, we were always rewarded with such breath-taking views and beautiful scenery from all around the Isle of Wight. I really appreciate this time away from London especially as it has been a lot harder to travel this year and get away anywhere. Walking along the coast while watching the sunset was something I never got to experience until coming on this trip and it is something that I won't forget for a long while. The leaders were amazing when it came to planning and getting us food and food never tasted as good as it did on the Isle of Wight, and what made it even more enjoyable was the great company!

Si

The trip to the Isle of Wight was an incredible experience but a challenge. My favourite time was when we went on the chairlift at the Needles. The view was spectacular, and it was an unforgettable ride. Many times, I was faced with the task of walking thousands of miles (may be slightly exaggerated), but the rewarding view and the feeling of accomplishment made it worth every second. I had a great time with Lukas and Rahim, and we had some good laughs together. Camping outside under the stars was a fantastic experience (apart from the mosquitoes) especially in the morning when the sun came beaming in. I thought the trip to the Isle of Wight was amazing, but I can't lie, I really appreciated my own bed after a week of sleeping on the floor. Thank you very much for allowing me to go on such an amazing journey and learn many new skills.



Kezia

Going to the Isle of Wight for my first time was so amazing!! From the moment we arrived I was so excited as this was a whole new experience for me. I had never done proper camping before so, being able to camp in the wild, on the Isle of Wight was a fantastic experience. I also learned many new skills on the trip- from learning how to cook noodles on a gas stove to being able to map read my way around the island! There were many successes, but there were also challenges. A part that I found challenging was when my feet were hurting from the walking and the rucksack was making my shoulders ache, but thanks to the great help and support of my friends I made it through and pushed my limits! I also learned the importance of teamwork and when it was hard, I reminded myself that I CAN do it! I thoroughly enjoyed the trip and am so thankful to you for giving, me this great opportunity to go past my limits. Thank you so much.

Rahim

I went on this amazing trip to the Isle of Wight; it was an eye opening for me. The journey was really nice getting there because I got to travel on the ferry, and it was nice sightseeing on it then we got there eventually and safely. Everyone in the group was really nice, it was nice to be with Alex and Beth as they were amazing company. The countryside over there was breath-taking as the air was nice and fresh for me. The campsites were a new experience as I have never slept outside before in wildlife, it was something new and good which I enjoyed. The first campsite we were at was fantastic along with the historic long walks and eating on the beach in pitch black really opened my eyes and then we continued the rest of the trip moving to other campsites. I really did enjoy the amount of walks we did with the lovely fresh air and we took plenty of photos. To me the most challenging part of the trip was sleeping outside but it was quite nice as well and listening to the owl hooting was a nice experience, but overall, this trip was fantastic being somewhere different and doing things that I never thought I could've done before like sleeping outside and I wouldn't mind doing it again! Thank you