

ECYC GAZETTE

'.....For your ins and your outs,
and your whereabouts !

Welcome back!

Although we're sad to see the passing of summer, we just couldn't wait to show you all we've been doing these last few months.

Indeed, this issue is all about our much hyped holiday program....'A SUMMER TO REMEMBER AND INSPIRE!

Issue #4 - Summer/Autumn '21

Contents

An immersive catalogue of the trips and outings enjoyed by members of our club and their families.

Plenty of pictures detailing every escapade, mishap, and all round vibe of our programme

A special guest interview with Victoria Steward-Todd of the *Kensington and Chelsea Foundation*

Testimonies, highlights and quotes as cited from our members



Introduction

The COVID pandemic was the first truly global crisis in modern times. Not for decades, has the way we live and interact been so altered. In spite of the tragedy and sacrifice, COVID has taught us to hold dear things we previously took for granted. Community, oneness, and the common threads we all share have forced a radical change of perspective. And now, as the world gradually opens up, we are compelled to re-evaluate the future; none is more crucial in this process than young people, for it is they who'll be the chief architects of the new social contract.

As a pillar of the community and, foremost a space for our youth to explore and thrive, ECYC has for decades provided an outlet for generations of young people to learn and progress. Like many others, the trials of 2020/21, has obliged us to adapt to a strange reality. Nonetheless, we have continued our role of offering services to aid our youth's personal, social, and educational development.

Hence, it was with great anticipation that we have launched our ambitious program... *'a summer to remember and, inspire'*.

Of the many questions we pondered through the long period of lock down was, how can we reintegrate our young people into the world? No doubt lock down and its ramifications have tested the youth, forcing them to wonder what kind of future lies in store?

After careful planning and consultation ECYC, with grateful support from our partners, have decided upon a comprehensive itinerary of outings and trips across the UK.

This program we hope is not only beneficial to the young people but also, their families - who have equally had to endure the seemingly unending trials of lock down. The decision to invite parents into the fold was to encourage them to enjoy this rare experience with their children and also, establish ties with other families- bringing our community closer together.

This scheme would not have come about without the generous support of our partners- who realize the importance of laying the foundations for our young people to tread the path towards a difficult, but for certain, rewarding future.

Supported by the Kensington and Chelsea Foundation and The Kusuma Trust.

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'A Track, a wall, a wok....'

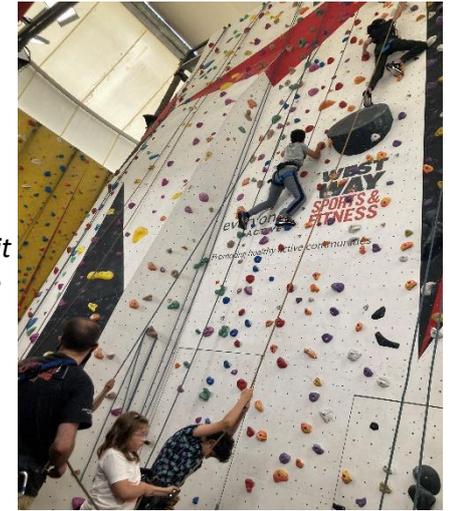
(Rock climbing & Go-Kart)

The inaugural outing of ECYC's highly anticipated 'summer to remember - and inspire' was a family affair, with 13 members invited to bring a parent along.

The day begun at Westway sports Centre and indeed, a hearty breakfast was needed to brave some high-octane rock-climbing!



Grown-ups and youngsters alike gamely tested their nerve against walls stretching 150 feet



'...Easier than it looks'' was the sentiment spoken by young and old both.



In between the rocks and burning rubber, the expedition stopped for lunch at NUR restaurant-bang in the middle of Acton Vale. NUR, of course, is the Arabic word for light' and in the same pleasingly misleading way, the Malaysian palette offers culinary gems from across southern Asia, in its Indian curries, Chinese noodles, and Malay fried rice with beef and egg seasoning.

The choice of restaurant was we attest, practical as it was but minutes' walk from our next destination. But all were impressed by the new discovery and left NUR nourished.... even if some choice diehards opted for chips!

Pos	Kart	Name	Laps	Best
1	1	Essia Zamzam	133	33.470
2	2	Ranva Zaiter	133	36.924
3	3	Lina Zaiter	133	36.925
4	4	Zakaria Ghazal	133	37.108
5	5	ramy zaiter	133	37.909
6	6	Semia Soualm...	133	38.353
7	7	adam khalifa	133	38.353
8	8	Taha Butt	10	40.331
9	9	vameena jabbar	7	41.423
10	10	miriam khalifa	9	48.832
11	11	Selma Zamzam	10	51.533
12	12	Suleiman Zam...		



TEAM SPORT GO-KART, was housed in a warehouse cluttered among a swathe of industrial sites lodged between Acton and Chiswick. Compared to the dizzying demands of rock-climbing, the subterranean course seemed a safer prospect. However, give a group the chance to play real life Nintendo, and all manner of fierce competition is unleashed!

The young and their parents were put in separate groups each allocated two turns on the track. For 40mile per hour vehicles the karts were surprisingly fast and, the track daresay, daunting. For once, all night Nintendo marathons proved useful as only addicts like Ramy Zaiter were able to stay ahead of the pack. Again, the visceral nature of the sport proved too much for some as Suleiman Zamzam had to retire due to a minor finger injury. His forfeit was astonishingly cancelled out when in the adult heat, mama Zamzam left all in her wake like a mum racing for the all-important school run!



The premier outing was a complete success, let's hope energy was left for skydiving and surfing!

‘Earth, wind and Water’ (indoor surfing and sky-diving)



After a wet weekend of torrential rain, the gang reassembled on a bright, sunny Monday morning. Tired eyes and laboured yawns were forgotten when the exciting itinerary was revealed. TWINWOODS ADVENTURE CENTRE was the destination - 66 miles north of London.

Two coaches ferried the 34 strong expedition and, as it raced up the M1 it was clear the vistas of the great British countryside were a new phenomenon. As professed by the Danah '....I never knew how green England is, stuck in London!' Even for those who'd been outside the capital, the rural gems were a far-gone memory- hinting at how constraining lock down was for many.

The group arrived at the centre- just outside the town of Bedford around noon- catching a good whiff of fertilizer which instantly woke the city folk, some of whom snuck a nap during the 2-hour journey.



Split between boys and girls, each was billeted to an activity. The boys, consisting of juniors and seniors, were shown to the indoor surf apparatus and once they were all donned in wet suits, began their challenge.

Meanwhile, the girls were taken upstairs and briefed on the mind-and body-blowing sensation of skydiving. Dressed in jumpsuits, helmets and goggles, the girls were led into the skydiving tunnel-billed as the tallest of its kind in the entire

UK.



So, after an exhilarating brush with the elements, the visitors left the Bedfordshire pastures as heavy rain fell- an apt coda to an adventurous first for ECYC.

'Essex Expedition of the Boys Brigade'

(Paintballing & Laser-Tag)

Next to outwardly riskier trials like Rock Climbing or Sky diving, there was something staid and primitive about wearing Army overalls in a wood, and carrying rifles that spat out balls of paint. Unsurprising then, should a turn of paintballing in Romford twist our genteel West Londoner's into something mercenary.

Prior to today's mission, the Essex site had laid scene for an exercise by ECYC's senior ranks- who had excelled with flying colours.

Two mini-buses was the mode of transport for the 34-strong Cadet contingent, making its way up river along an embankment lined by statues of military heroes and martyrs. Disembarking at midday, the squad was briefed on the first task of the day- Laser Tag.



At O-one-hundred, we stopped for lunch, before being led deep into Epping Forest for the main assignment- Paintballing.



The thrill of re-enacting COD or Fortnite, proved too much for the rowdy regiment who given more ammo would have soon turned mutinous, and that's including the girls...



A thoroughly rollicking coup was soured by a dishonourable discharge and, the suspension of R & R...in the manner of a Nando's canteen.

'Life's a beach....sometimes'

(Quad-biking and Zip-wire)



For the Londoner, sometimes a dip to the coast is a reminder that Britain is an Island. On Monday 9th was our first trip thus far to the sea. Like preceding outings, the day would be split in two: Quad Biking, at a farm just after the New Forest, before a descent into Bournemouth, where the faithful could test their zeal on zip wire.

Per usual, the coach-full of ECYC-ers left Earl's Court in the morning; taking the A3 from Putney, South-west wards. Foreshadowing elements of the day, the delights of Dorset would prove elusive. It would be a three-hour drive to Gorcombe Farm; a tenuous trek through miles of country that eventually gets boring had the passengers not been relieved by a glimpse of Portsmouth's sparkling bay. Midway through the journey we ran into traffic, which ultimately caused us to be over half an hour behind schedule. Fears this may eat up on our allotted time was forgotten, at least by those coming to partake.

Adorned with helmets and overalls- still smelling of the last visitor's adrenaline, the riders were given rushed instructions fooling some to thinking they'd landed upon a country auction.



Quad biking is a dangerous sport- faster and more hazardous than Go-Kart; where if splashing mud doesn't blind, troughs and hills make likely falls. But this program was designed precisely to challenge and test. Unfortunately, though, neither was given a fair chance to be realized. Mendacious management saw no qualm in making us pay for our delay. What should have been an hour on the tracks was half that, and just as riders were getting used to the belligerent vehicles were they asked off.

Our members were still dazed by the fact, as they sat eating a post- short circuit offering of crisps and sandwiches.

After that lackadaisical lark, a lot depended on Bournemouth. The sun would have to be a fantastical Gold, the sea an impossible blue, and a zip line, so invigorating to make up for what lacked on the track.

When we arrived the weather was warm enough for the beach to be packed; creating a vibrant atmosphere which did lift the spirits of the kids of ECYC- raised by the river. The zip wire tower stood at the end of a long pier and, a few awkward minutes passed as the group wondered if the thing was operational. '*...just on their lunch break*' was the happy response relayed to our manager who went to check, and may or may not have thrown himself over board had the answer been anything else.

They were told it took less than a minute, which saddened those determined to savor the giddy heights. Yet, even they had to double take as one by one they climbed the spiral stairs which seemed to know no end.



In all, everyone gave it a go. Some even went twice. The day had been so up and down that all forgot the bookend to the trip- fish and chips at the world-famous Ramsden's. In a nod to the quad, the promise of the '*...greatest in Great British Fare*' was met by a pithy '*...not gonna lie, Chicken-shop is better!*'



‘... A1! At the lake off the A1’

(Aqua Park)

After the debacle at Dorset, there was an air of apprehension that mid-way through our big program, similar calamities may belie the rest of our elaborate plans.

Big hopes were placed on the water sports center at Wyboston- halfway between Milton Keynes and Cambridge. Paddle-boarding, Jet-Ski, Aqua Park, Hover-craft and Jet packs were on the menu, much to soak up...or possibly hang dry.

It was less than a two-hour drive on the coach to the center; built around a lake just off the A1. Wetsuits were giving to the attendees who struggled to put them on, much less zip up the back. The toil was hoped to be compensated down by the lake where the jet-skis awaited. Younger members were no less pleased at being passengers while a kind instructor drove laps around a small island in the center of the lake. Those over 16 (like your narrator) were gladly giving the liberty of manning the powerful aqua bikes, which did manage to wash the stain of bitter memories of quad biking.



Paddle-boarding was next. From the view of the shore, the practice paled next to the speed of the jet-ski. However, put a group of city dwelling gamers on any raft, and suddenly naval skirmishes and piracy are the order....

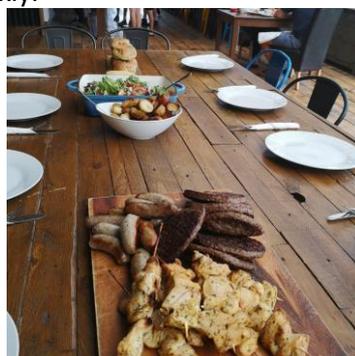


A Hovercraft is a strange contraption. It floats, even while on ground. It drives sideways and is so light, leaning of the body is enough to steer it. Participants were given a dry run which took place well, on dry land. Next was the real thing. Our inductees took to the lake going at full throttle as they circled laps around the island.



The final activity turned out to be the best. An Aqua Park where slips n slides were as impossible to avoid as staying dry in a wet suit. But there are few things more fun than trying to play football on a bouncy castle meant for net ball. The only let down was that it was over too darn quickly.

Timber cabins housed an ‘...oh so, rustic dining area. Along with Burgers, Kebabs and Chips, wood oven Pizzas were served to the expedition (which your narrator was happy to relay used gluten free cheese)



‘I love it when a plan comes together...’

(ECYC General Manager; paraphrasing Hannibal from A-TEAM)



Absolutely everyone asked attested this outing was the best thus far. Perhaps because we arrived on time, were back at the club by seven, and most of all, were dealt with an Outdoor sports venue who prioritized the merriment of their guests, rather than making up for lost revenue.

'A River runs through it...'

*'Before they went back to school...
before summer smiles turn to frowns...
a special date was made...
to rediscover our hometown...'*

*'Eyes perked with glee as we streamed past Chelsea and Battersea.
Quaint grandeur and elegance leant, as slowly up river the clipper bent.
Ringing to the tour guides call, the bronze and beige at Vauxhall.
A wonder magnified by ten, upon the medieval chimes of Big Ben.'*

*Coursing East along a Southbank, are many monuments on show...
A London Eye- a County Hall....and that's not nearly all.'*

*'Beneath the bridge at Waterloo- named after one Napoleon got his due...
...Blackfriars and Southwark was what came next. Then in under a while,
arrived one square mile- Gleaming skyscrapers of a finance city almost
makes commerce, something pretty.'*

*'Onwards to the Tower Of London, built by Norman Kings...
...A fancy jail, for he who fails, to meet the royal whim.'*

*'Twin blocks at Tower Bridge, made way for what had been docks...
...where global cargo, and worldwide goods, once housed an empire's
stocks...'*

*...wharves and quays- piers and yards, are once what lay where lies the
Shard.'*

*'In Greenwich we revert to serenity, where beside Cutty Sark, lives GMT.
Near an old maritime college, did sailors get their knowledge....
...prepped for naval navigation, inside the rooms of Wren's invention.'*

*As the boat proceeded East, did Thames streams ever widen...
...who can say beneath Woolwich's waters if there sleeps one,
Poseidon.'*

*'At the silver barrier, is where the tour did end...
...a happy day for families and, ECYC's friends.'*

*'a fine finale for a summer lit...
made memorable by many a-bit...
Troughs n peaks...trials and treats
Upon the stretch where a city meets'*



Special guest express interview

Toward the end of every issue, we meet one of our many partners here at ECYC. You may not have seen them on our grounds, but we assure you without their friendship and support we wouldn't be half as successful as we are. For our fourth issue, we have none other than *Victoria Steward Todd*.....! who as director of the **Kensington and Chelsea Foundation**, oversees large scale community projects, including ours!

-Who are you and, what do you do?

'...I currently serve as Director of the Kensington and Chelsea Foundation. Our mission is to identify and support impactful local projects which improve the lives and life chances of the most vulnerable in our community. As Director, my job is to oversee both our grant-making and our fundraising efforts.'

-What's your connection to ECYC?

'...Through the Kensington and Chelsea Foundation, we have been supporting ECYC for a number of years. One of our 3 priority themes is improving opportunities for Children and Young People. We recently funded ECYC's 'Summer to Remember and Inspire'. Also, last summer we funded 'Bike-ability', which was a program geared towards giving young people brand new bikes, to help keep them active during the lockdown period.'

-What's the best thing about our community?

'...It's diversity and vibrancy! During the COVID pandemic this community demonstrated incredible resilience; coming together to ensure those most vulnerable during isolation, were never truly alone.'

-What's the most rewarding part of your job?

'...Visiting the many projects we support, and seeing first-hand how our work helps those we seek to empower.'

-As we slowly plan for a post-COVID reality, what is the course for Kensington and Chelsea Foundation, going forward?

'...In autumn 2021, we will have completed a research project into the needs of our community and this will shape our priorities for the next 3 to 5 years. We also became very aware during the pandemic of the digital divide in Kensington and Chelsea which affected all age groups including young people and their families. We have been trying to address this by offering over 100 laptops to youth groups in the borough to allow their young people access to learning resources.'

-Finally, how were you able to fund such an ambitious project, in 'A Summer to Remember and Inspire' ?

'...We were very concerned about the impact of the past 18 months on young people's social skills, resilience and mental health. We partnered with The Kusuma Trust to offer funding for summer programmes which take young people out of their comfort zones to have fun and adventure while addressing some of these challenges. ECYC's programme was ambitious and inspiring, helping young people to get away from screens and enjoy the outdoors through memorable activities outside of London. We were very pleased to be able to support it.'

*Kensington
+ Chelsea
Foundation*

A better life together



Conclusion

33 days, 20 trips, a million memories.

In land, sea, and air...the friends, families and members of ECYC left their mark on a spectacular summer that brought with it spills, thrills, highs, and occasional, lows.

But it was, and is, a summer to remember and inspire!

We remembered the great outdoors- how there indeed exists a world beyond our doorstep, one of wonder and natural beauty, free of crowds, noise and smog.

We remembered the buzz of being active, trying new things, testing our nerves, daring ourselves to step out our comfort zones.

We remembered the joy of being among wider company, be they old friends, or new acquaintances.

We remembered despite a pandemic and lockdown, life can, and will go on.

As for inspiration, we trust there are many, and are sure the experience will live long with our members- who shall manifest them into bright and delightful things in the not so distant future.

Again, we thank the partners who funded our programme- without their support none of this would be possible. We also thank the staff and team of ECYC who worked tirelessly to ensure each trip and outing ran as smoothly as possible.

And lastly, our members and their families who helped make this experience memorable and inspirational!



"very fun experience
I wish it could
always be summer"
- Ranya

"really enjoyable and provided
many opportunities"
- Liara

"Fun experience that
I haven't been through
before"
- Ryan

It was great
and a good way
to spend summer
Baskar

"It was very fun"
- Isha

"Fun" - Husayn

"fun and excellent
hard work because of
Ben

"Fun first
time
experience"
- dora

"Amazing
experience
- mainly
to eye
because of
all the nara
were they put
in for us."
- sayden

"fun experience"
- Jessica Zuzi

"Amazingly fun activities thanks to
the beautiful diverse
youthful staff"
- Selim Zuzi

"Excellent and fun experience"
- Tamer

"amazing and unique
experience"
- Lina Z.

So lucky
got to
get ski
and really
enjoyed
the
summer

"Writings on the wall.....till next time."

