



Attending an international Guiding event had long been an ambition of mine so I was very excited to learn, late November 2009, that I had been accepted as one of the New Zealand contingent to attend Kilke 2010 in Finland, along with Prue Fraser from Te Anau (Leader) and Jessica Gibbs from Upper Hutt (Ranger). The next 7 and a half months flew by as we emailed and phoned each other and made travel plans, as well as communicating with our contacts from the camp in Finland.

July 2010 and our adventure begins! It was great to finally meet Jess in Wellington, then Prue in Auckland and the journey to London (our first stop) gave us plenty of time to get to know each other a little better. We had three days sightseeing in London together on our way to camp. As we were an official Girl Guiding contingent I had been able to pre-arrange (through Girl Guiding UK) for our group (all three of us) to watch the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace from inside the gates, which gave us a great view of the splendour. Armed with a map of the Underground (mainly Jess doing the navigating) we were able to see lots of places in our short time in this amazing city. Places we visited include Madam Tussaud's Wax Museum, Tower Bridge, Harrods, the Science Museum, Shakespeare Globe Theatre, St Pauls Cathedral and Pax Lodge (where we were given a tour and made very welcome). We also went for a 'flight' on the London Eye, had lunch in several beautiful parks and saw many other sights around the city. On our last night in London we went to see "Wicked", which was stunning!

Then we were on our way to Helsinki, Finland where we were met by our host, Emilia, and taken to spend the night at the home of her parents before joining the Kouvola Scout and Guide group (our hosts at camp) on their bus to the Kilke camp site. Finland is a land with many forests and lakes. The Kilke camp site (Evo) was situated in a forest of very tall thin trees with a lake at each end of camp.



Forest at camp



NZ contingent at Kilke

With slightly over 10,000 campers Kilke was a busy place. The campsite was divided into four subcamps with 2000 to 3000 campers in each. There was also a subcamp for families with young children attending and another for those doing the service activities at camp. Subcamps were divided into 'savu' or units for each troupe. There were two kitchen areas in each subcamp providing four meals a day. There was also a café for each subcamp (where you could buy coffee, sweets, chippies and yummy pastries or sticky buns) as well as several ice cream stalls. Along the main 'street' of camp there was a Scout Shop, a Kilke Souvenir Shop, a general store, a newspaper office, an International Office and an internet café, as well as flags from the 30 countries who had contingents attending.



There were numerous activities provided in the Air, Fire, Earth and Water valleys as well as an overnight hike. Prue and I were assigned to work in the Water Valley on an activity where campers explored the organisms in the lake water with microscopes. In Finland school children start to learn English in Year 3 so most of the people can understand English but they are often shy and not very confident about speaking it. However, once they realised how bad our Finnish was they became more confident and were very patient teachers. During one session at the water valley I was asked to act as interpreter as the German group spoke English but they were having trouble understanding Henna's accent. Many Finnish words are quite long (e.g.: their word for pen is four syllables long) so they would issue instructions in Finnish for ages and we only got a couple of sentences in English to explain the same instructions.

It was light until about 11pm so the days were very long. Quiet time between 11 and 12 pm was a good time for everyone to settle for the night. Facilities were similar to those at our jamborees with portaloos, but showers were communal and the water was pumped straight from the lake. The Finns like to build large structures at camp and many seemed to be still building when it was time to start taking it all apart again.



Each subcamp held an International night during which Finnish campers were able to glimpse other cultures through activities, food, songs or dance. We taught campers how to make poi, play stick games, weave and had a small display about NZ.



The temperatures were very hot, with the coldest day being around 25 degrees C and the hottest was about 34 degrees C. Even the locals were finding the heat a bit oppressive. We also experienced a couple of thunder storms, with strong winds, very loud thunder and bright lightening as well as some heavy rain for a short period. We caught the edge of both storms which caused quite a bit of damage in the areas around camp, felling trees and lifting roofs etc so we were lucky the storms went around us. From camp we were able to take two day trips to nearby areas, the first to explore an island on Finland's second largest lake and the second to visit a 13<sup>th</sup> century castle at Hameenlinna.

After camp we had the opportunity to experience a home stay with a Finnish family or take a short tour of Southern Finland. Jess, Prue and I took part in the tour. It was interesting to see some of Finland's towns and historic places. It was also a great way to meet and spend time with some of the other international participants.

Being part of Kilke 2010 Finnjamboree was an amazing experience and I would encourage anyone who has the opportunity to represent GirlGuiding NZ at an international event to grab hold with both hands. I am sure you will meet some wonderful people and have an absolutely awesome time, as I did. A big 'Thank you' to all those who played a part in my being able to attend this event. Thanks also to my travelling companions, Jess and Prue for their company and friendship.