

## **CAMP REPORT BY PAUL INNES**

**St John's father and son camping weekend at Dimalachite – 07 - 09 May 10**

**ORGANISER: Paul Innes**

**JOINT ORGANISERS: Ryan Diesel and Steve Milton**

Despite many nay-sayers' predictions of a wet weekend, we left the storm behind us in Jo'burg and travelled the highway to Dimalachite under sunny skies.

By sunset on the Friday night, over 70 tents were set up, by midnight, nearly 80. Though how some of them did it in the dark, with a brand new tent amazed me. We started handing out plates and cups (Thank you the Buckle Family!) to those that we could. There was a Night March on Friday for those that could only stay one night – but what a cold night. Many Fathers had a visitor into their sleeping bag before the morning came.

It started out as a glorious day. Streaming sunshine soon warmed the aching bones of the Dads, and the air was filled with the smell of burning bacon and coffee.

The boys soon became accustomed to shouts of 'Stay away from the edge of the river!' and 'Where are you? Your mother's on the phone!'. But they were oblivious as they couldn't believe their luck. They were allowed to ride bikes without helmets, eat what they wanted when they wanted, had all their mates with them as well as water, mud, jungle gyms, swimming pool, paintball, quad bikes, river rafting, fishing, melted marsh-mallows...

On Saturday and Sunday, the staff at Dimalachite took groups on the river in virtually unsinkable canoes. The Dads and Lads rafted down the river and through some rapids (not too serious); emerging slightly wetter than when they first got in – and certainly more exhausted for those Dads that had avoided the gym for a while.

There was paintball target shooting for the kids available all day. Some of the Dads took their sons on quad bikes as well. There was some rain in the afternoon (about 20 minutes worth), but nothing much.

Come the early evening the Dads were tired, but the kids seems to have an inexhaustible supply of energy. Braais were lit and the older generation started quenching their understandable thirst. At 19h00 the Night march provided a peaceful (if slightly muddy) break.

Back to the camp (where there were now over 120 tents) and time for bed for the kids. Then some serious networking got underway...

Early the next day some were striking camp early (Mothers' Day guilt), while others had a lazy breakfast first, and maybe a second canoe in the river.

From comments received at the time, and afterwards, it seemed a very successful camp overall, with some not willing to wait until next year for the next camp!

My thanks to Ryan Diesel and Steve Milton as joint organisers – well done guys; as well as to Hannes and Elmarie at Dimalachite for a superb venue.

Cheers,

Paul Innes.

