

## BGS Bushcraft Day



### By Ashminder Rehlon (Year 7)

Year 7 Bushcraft Day was about team building, cooperation, and most importantly, survival skills. When we arrived at Cople Fields, we separated into three groups and began our activities almost immediately. To begin with, our group did the fire activity, where we investigated different ways to create fire.

We started with flint and steel, which when knocked together created a shower of sparks. Then, we used wooden sticks and blocks; each block had several different holes, and you had to put a stick into one of them, and rub it quite vigorously. The goal was for the friction between both pieces of wood to emit a sharp, high pitched sound that was not unlike the scratching of a chalkboard. Eventually, there would be a small amount of black powder

(embers) at the bottom of the hole. This activity required one person only, but it was cooperation in itself to learn to take turns in a potentially “dangerous environment”.

Next, we made that method slightly easier and less tiring by adding a rope. The equipment then consisted of two small wooden blocks attached to either end of a rope, a wooden stick, a small wooden block with a slot in it for the stick, and a slightly larger version of the latter. We placed the large block on the ground and stepped on it firmly to keep it from moving. We twisted the rope with the two blocks round the stick and then we placed the smaller block on top of the stick and pressed down to keep it secure. This particular activity was excellent for teamwork, as it required at least three people: one to step on the large block and to hold the small one down, and two people to pull the rope back and forth, holding the blocks at either end. This created an effect identical to the one before, but it was more efficient and less time consuming.

After a short break, we started the next activity, which was learning to build a shelter with only a few materials. We used a tarpaulin, some twigs, a couple of pegs, and some thin ropes. We separated into groups of four or five, and in my opinion, this activity was the best for developing team work, as we all had to play our part. After spending a significant amount of time building the shelter, it was time for a durability test from the instructors. This consisted of testing if it would survive wind and rain. Each group had to go under their shelters. One of the instructors held the edge of the tarpaulin and then shook the shelter gently to see if it was sturdy enough. Next, the instructor got a jug of water and poured it over the shelter from every angle. If the water passed through, the shelters weren't durable. All of our shelters passed the durability test.

The last activity was to learn to purify water using natural materials. We used charcoal and sand. First, we got a plastic bottle and cut it in half. We then put the top half of the bottle in the bottom half: this was our makeshift filter. Thirdly, we got a small cotton ball and used it as a sort of plug for the water. We put a paper coffee filter inside the top half of the bottle. Next we got some sticks of charcoal and ground them up into a powder and put it into the top half of the bottle. We used charcoal because the pores within the charcoal removes the bacteria and chemicals in the water. Finally, we poured dirty water into the filter and then added some sand to help remove the pollutants in the water. It seemed very miraculous that using the power of science, we poured in dirty water and clean water came out. The whole group felt a sense of pride after this activity, and pride for our learning throughout the day.