

Llandudno 2019 coaches report – What a camp

We have just safely returned from our annual swimming development camp in Llandudno. This year we took the same number of swimmers as last year (55) including a group of new swimmers who not only have not attended a camp before, but some hadn't been away from home before.

New to camp this year were Keira, Lily, Enoch, Aiden, Jaiyden, Adrian, Ethan (little cutie pie) Ethan G (big Ethan), Noah L, Rowan, Rohan, Aran, Ofri, Gabriel, Kai, Luke, Lukas, Anya, Clara, Ruth, Hannah, Arnav, Emma, Armin

Returning were Alex (girl Alex) Fabian, Sam, Lana, Teigan, Chloe, Grace, Jamie, Daniel (Big Dan), Anna, Emily with a tail, Daniel (little Dan) Scott, Joshua, Vernon, Alex (Boy Alex), Alice, Georgina (George), Violet, Phoebe, Bobbie, Sarah, Elliot, Saoirse, Caitlyn, Noah R,

The youngest swimmers were aged 6 years old and the oldest 55 years old. Quite a range.

Staff this year, were Karen, Steve, Pam, Heather, Emma. George. Helpers were Grace, Alice, Sarah and Girl Alex. Boy Alex helped out with coaching. All the helpers also swam and trained at the sessions and at land training. Steve and I managed one session in the water this year and at the end of it, seemed to be the victims of a major splashing frenzy.

This year's camp had a lot of positives but also very hard work, with a few problems and issues arising that I had not anticipated. Of course, managing that amount of people from very early until very late is tiring, so all the staff knew we would be coming back pretty exhausted but some of the problems could have been avoided if parents had kept to the rules

The camp itself has been very successful, with some very hard work being demonstrated in the pool, and some very well-behaved young people who were a pleasure to look after.

Swimming sessions and land training

We had seven swim sessions over 5 days and a land training at every session. Each swim session was divided into 4 lanes, with a training programme specifically written for each of the four lanes. Some sessions were just under 2 hours, some sessions one and half hours and one session being just one hour. Lane 3 swimmers were split over the session time, with squad Purple swimming for about 45 minutes and then Squad Orange swimming for 45 minutes depending on the length of the session. Lane 4 had specific individual plans per swimmer. Prior to getting into the pool, we had a short land training session, using the rollers. Helping on poolside with dressing and changing was Emma, Pam, Heather, whilst Steve and I took on the coaching. Steve had a bit of a challenge just trying to get the swimmers to go in the right direction and not to swim down the middle of the lane and to only overtake when there was room to do so. Alex coached some lane 4 swimmers, delivering the planning that was in place.

All 4 helpers had a teaching session, supporting some of our younger swimmers with breaststroke and backstroke. Alex and Grace and Emma all helped with Tapping for our sight impaired. Grace also supported Dan E (big Dan) around poolside.

Sessions focused on different technique, speed and stamina, and specific stroke technique was implemented, where a swimmer had a particular weakness area

We had one late evening session, which has always proved to be successful from previous camp experience, focusing on just starts, turns and finishes, with every staff member (yes including Steve) taking part from in the water. We all worked hard but had some fun too. The walk back in the dark also proved to be interesting and hot chocolate was waiting for us upon our return.

After each session, one swimmer was acknowledged per lane for their hard work and these are names below

Session 1

Lane 1 – Lukas (got moved up a lane)

Lane 2 – Ofri (got moved up a lane)

Lane 3 – Clara (got moved up a lane)

Lane 4 – Phoebe

Session 2

Lane 1 – Scott

Lane 2 – Lana (got moved up a lane)

Lane 3 – Little Dan (got moved up a lane)

Lane 4 – Fabian

Session 3

Lane 1 – Jamie

Lane 2 – Sam

Lane 3 – Big Ethan

Lane 4 – Aran (overcame the cold water in a faster time)

Session 4 (Swimmers were starting to feel it by now so hard work was required)

Lane 1 – Alice

Lane 2 – Grace

Lane 3 – Keira

Lane 4 – Georgina

Session 5 (starts, turns and finishes)

Lane 1 – Adrian/ Caitlyn

Lane 2 – Violet/ Saoirse

Lane 3 – Teigan/ Elliott

Lane 4 – Vernon / Rowan

Session 6 was a dive session. We divided the swimmers into 3 groups – those who could dive and those who were struggling. Those who could already dive, completed sprint sets from a dive, looking at competitive starts and faster starts, whilst lane 3 had swimmers who needed to build their confidence. Steve and I got very wet, but I had remembered my change of clothes, Steve had not. Phoebe, Noah R, and Violet also joined us for this session, and moved from lane 4 to lane 3. The following swimmers moved from lane 3 into lane 2. Lily, Saoirse, Aiden, Fabian

Lane 4 had a small group of swimmers for their fun session as it would be their last session due to not taking part in relays.

Session 7 was our relay session. For this session, each team was given a captain, Scott, Alice, and Grace. There was some great encouragement shown. Only the more confident swimmers took part in this session, and well done to Violet, Rohan and Keira who proved themselves worthy of a relay place, alongside our competitive swimmers.

Secret Mission

The swimmers not taking part in the relays went on a secret mission with Georgina and Heather to see if they could find us a new hotel for next year. Whilst we absolutely love this hotel and the service is very good, it is just proving to be too expensive, so by walking the prom and checking out the other hotels, we were hopeful of finding a new, cheaper alternative, willing to take on our squad (not an easy feat) . They also sneaked in a visit to the rock shop.

Entertainment

We had trips to the beach, sandcastle building, seashell hunting, walks on the pier, trips to the shops, trips to the amusement arcade, walks on the promenade, exploring the town, as well as the 4-6 times a day walk to and from the pool. We went for a walk in the dark to look at the stars, and to watch the waves from the sea in the lights from the promenade.

In the evening, we were all entertained by the singers, dancers and musicians with everyone joining in. We had a disco night where everyone dressed up, we had a singing night, musical night, and a general entertainer who did all sorts from dancing and singing, playing instruments and a bit of magic. Whilst the entertainment took place, younger swimmers were settled in their rooms for the night. Just to say how lovely Violet looked all dressed up in her pretty dress. What a beautiful young lady.

Well done – a credit to your parents

Most of our swimmers demonstrated positive behaviours throughout our camp with some young people whose behaviour totally outshone everyone else's including mine. (Yes, I got a bit grumpy in the morning and a bit short tempered before my cup of tea) They were a total pleasure and a well-deserved mentioned in this report so acknowledgement goes to Anya, Ruth, Scott, Josh, Sam, Little Dan, Kai, Clara,

Gabriel, Lukas, Teigan, Caitlyn, Jamie, Hannah, Keira and Rohan. I am not saying that the others not mentioned here did not behave, just that these people demonstrated such over and above positive behaviours that they need a mention. Parents – they did you proud. The conduct of our swimmers was commented on by the pool staff and the hotel staff, and even members of the public who saw us walking on the promenade asked who we were and what we were doing and again commented on the behaviour of the squad. So well done guys.

Sunny Weather

We had some of the best weather we ever had this year. Dry throughout, and one afternoon with just t-shirts on the beach. Very brisk at 7am but by the time we walked back after swimming the sun was out and the temperature came up. We went swimming in the sea at one point, granted with all our clothes on, but it was fun and clothes dry out. We had a great afternoon paddling in the waves – even I got wet up to my waist with my clothes on.

Storage space

This year the pool allocated us some storage space so we were able to store the kit bags and land training equipment at the pool, which meant we did not have to load and unload the car every day – yeaay. However, the kit had to be collected every session and returned to the storage at the end of session. Thank you to Scott, Emma, Pam, Teigan, Clara, Lukas, Noah R, Big Ethan, Gabriel and Sam who helped with this every day. It certainly made life a lot easier and it meant swimmers had less to carry to and from the pool every day. A large thank you goes to the pool staff. I have always found the pool staff very helpful and they look after Emily with a tail really well too.

Problem and issues

There were a couple of issues that arose. Firstly, we had parents who failed to adhere to the rules of the camp. One parent hid medication in their child's suitcase and informed the child not to tell the staff and to keep it a secret. Fortunately, the child came and told staff and we were able to act before any major problems arose. However, we were unable to administer as we had no consent and no declaration. We had a parent sending lots of crisps, sweets and biscuits etc in their child's suitcase, despite the information being clear. It meant that a swimmer who was on strict dietary requirement had access to food that they were not supposed to be eating. It also resulted in one child refusing to eat meals and would only eat a very small portion after a lot of encouragement. Young people cannot swim 7 sessions in such a short period of time without eating a suitable balanced diet. It was only later that we found around 10 packets of Wotsits crisps, sweets, lollipops, fizzy drinks, chocolate biscuits and other items all hidden away. The child concerned admitted she had been eating these foods instead of her meals.

We had another child become sick and vomiting during the night and through into the following morning, who was in the same room. We suspect through eating the unsuitable foods that were found.

We had some incidents of challenging behaviours that had to be dealt with. Nearly all of swimmers were very well behaved and this has been reflected within this report.

This is the first camp I have run in over 9 years where we had to deal with unwanted and unacceptable behaviours to this degree and I am aware that some innocent bystanders did witness the behaviour and fighting and heard some of the language used. Staff did try and clear the room as fast as possible, and that at no time was anyone else in danger of getting hurt. I am just really sorry that some people saw it and it was upsetting for some of the younger people who really did not understand what was going on. I can only sincerely apologise to everyone.

Packing

Packing this year was fun. We had 4 swimmers who were sent back to their rooms four times to re pack, having had the room checked after packing and more items found. Even after the fourth time, I received an email from a parent querying where some items of clothing were, as they had not come back with the swimmer. Fortunately, Clare has volunteered to take on the task of returning lost property, so anything missing please speak to Clare (Luke's mum) If she does not have it, then no one does. As I was looking after the person who had been in the night (see above) and all morning, the tasks of overseeing the packing came down to the swimmers themselves, with the helpers supporting the younger people. If your swimmer was aged 8 years or above, they had to do their own packing, unless physically unable to do so by themselves. I could not leave a child who was ill and all staff were already supporting with other roles including assisting with the breakfast, toileting and other daily routines that I usually carry out myself. It was very busy and we had limited time. All rooms were checked but briefly before loading the coach. I personally had less than 6 minutes to pack my own suitcase before leaving. (yes, I was timed)

Planning and organising

I would like to thank everyone who helped with the organising of this camp. I have to say that the build up to this camp was difficult for many reasons. I was ill, Steve was ill, Pam was ill, Georgina was ill, and then we had swimmers dropping out at the last minute, parents who wanted make alternative arrangements for collections and dropping off, parents who wanted to drive down half way through the camp and pick up their child and take them off the for the day and then bring them back and other reasons. It won't be allowed next time – too difficult to organise and too complicated–pick up and drop off from Langley only. If unable to do that then the child does not go. Simple.

The organising started way back early last year, and yes it does take that long, to ensure the bookings are correct, the transport is correct, the accommodation is correct and that the staffing levels are correct. Staff have to complete mandatory training before they can attend, giving up their free time over and above the half term week time (with the majority having to book annual leave to attend), and a lot of paperwork including the risk assessments for each person/ swimmer/ session/ activity/ travel/ food/medication etc has to be completed. The risk assessments alone this year took many hours to complete and we are talking 2-3 hours every evening over several months just filling out the forms. I started the risk assessments in October last year and didn't finish them until end of January, with them having to be updated every time someone had a change of medication or change of circumstances etc. I had to chase payments from late payers, chase up consent forms, chase up replies from

communications etc several times. At one point I was personally out of pocket by over a £1000 waiting for payments to come in, as the costs had to be covered. Next year, I am afraid the places will have to be paid for in full at the time of confirming, as there is no way I am going through the chasing up difficulties again. I suspect it may result in some people being unable to afford the cost so be warned now, if you think your child is likely to want to go again next year and is likely to be offered a place as they have attended this year, then perhaps you may wish to start to put some monies aside now. The invites for next year camp will start to go out around April/May time.

Planning can be just as hard work as the actual camp itself but it is worth every minute and this year was the first time, I questioned my own sanity as to whether I wanted to run it again. However, now rested and recovered and conversed with the staff, we have all agreed to do it again. Perhaps I am not the only person who is completely bonkers, after all.

Thank you

I would like to firstly thank Heather. We had fewer swimmers on medications this year than last year but we also had some complicated medication routes that required a lot of organising. That takes a lot of managing. Heather rarely got a hot meal, as by the time the medication was checked, recorded and administered her meal had gone cold. Without her, some of your swimmers would not have had their medication on time, or be creamed sufficiently. I have to say that this year, I was not required at all with Heather implementing the cream routines all the time. I think it helped that our swimmers who require creaming routines were that much older this year and therefore, capable of completing the tasks themselves with just a little support and promoting. With some swimmers having to have cream applied both before and after swimming at every session, first thing in the morning and before bedtime that's not a quick task. Along with medications also being administered several times a day, morning, bedtime, and one set to be given at midnight, it requires organisation and implementing effectively and the routines were completed very efficiently. Well done Heather as its not easy but you make it look so easy.

Thank you to all the helpers who supported me greatly. I will get around to giving you all a reward as you all deserve it. On the Wednesday, Pam and Steve had to leave us for a short while for personal reasons, and this meant I had to rely greatly on the support from the helpers. They rose to the occasion and took on that extra responsibility for which I am very grateful. I did thank each of them individually but thank you again.

A huge thank you to Pam, who watched all the swimmers with dietary requirements, monitored and checked everything several times, to ensure safe eating. Not an easy job with so many swimmers on specific requirements. She liased with the chef and ensured that all needs were met. Pam herself was not too well so a large thank you is due.

Thank you to Emma on her first camp as a helper. She has been helping out at Orange Squad for a little while now, and understands the importance of my cups of tea. She tapped for Anna and supported with walking to and from the pool, assisted with food

and drink and chaperoned for many swimmers. She helped with Luke, and with the dressing of the younger ones, and Adrian liked to chat away to her. There again Adrian liked to chat away to everyone and anyone!

Thank you to Georgina, who mastered the art of juggling 10 tasks at once. Georgina also supported with transporting swimmers, assisted with food and drink, putting swimmers into beds, went on a secret mission and for being there when needed.

A very special thank you to Steve and his suburb coaching skills that allowed the achievements of the main aims. He also drove there and back, which meant we were able to take the number of swimmers we had, as the transport coach could only accommodate 49 people, He has the knack of keeping me sane (not an easy job as I must be stark raving mad in the first place) and he lent me his shoulder to cry on. He is also very good at giving out hugs when required – trust me I needed a big hug.

A thank you goes to Orion committee who supported the camp and provided payment for the pool hire and coach and other extras. Without the support of the committee, the amount the swimmers pay would have been a lot higher.

Well done Alex D for turning up to training on Sunday. Yes, I was also there. I had about 13 hours sleep in total this year, so more than last year but then I am a year older so need the extra.

Highs and Lows of the week – I know this list won't mean a lot to some people and only those who were there at the time will appreciate some of this, but it's worth a read and hopefully will bring back some fond memories for all who attended, some memories we would all rather forget and a smile to those who did not attend but probably wished they did.

No Parking ticket for Karen – that's 2 years running. 2 out of 9 – still wrong ratio.

Adrian please go to sleep, so I can go to sleep,

Adrian please stop talking so I can talk

Pam paying 60p @ truck stop using credit card as the machine did not work

Steve's serviettes blowing out of car. He chased them down the street

Arrived safely at Llandudno, no detour like last year.

Adrian forgot his lunch so we got him a jam sandwich.

Adrian is going to die as he is starving to death

Adrian did not stop eating – how much food can one little boy eat?? We found out, an awful lot.

Kids on coach are in in Wales yet.

Kids on coach – are we in Great Britain yet? I really hope so otherwise the coach has taken the wrong turn somewhere.

Violet's back pack was really heavy, couldn't get everything in.

Violet having medication, Adrian asked if he could have one too as he was starving to death.

Adrian and Ethan P setting emergency alarm off not once but twice.

Alex J setting off the alarm in the night – more disturbed sleep. How did Armin sleep through it?

Grace dietary requirement should have been Vegan not Vegetarian. Well done chef for sorting for us. Well done Grace for being patience with us whilst we sorted it out.

Karen ate Heather's Mushroom soup. It was going cold.

Karen ate Daniel B (little Dan) pudding. He didn't want it

Karen ate Chloe's pudding – it was cake and I like cake and Chloe didn't want it

Karen ate Heather's bread – it was sitting there not being eaten

Karen ate Heather's grapes – I like grapes

Steve using 2 forks for dinner. He will learn to use a knife and fork one day.

Steve pinched Karen's Salmon off her plate. I did notice Steve.

Luke said is that Pam Singing or a cat?

Luke singing.

Video toothbrushes. -who invented video playing toothbrushes? – they need shooting. Toothbrushes are for cleaning teeth not playing video games. Last year we had laser light toothbrushes, this year we had video playing toothbrushes. Whatever next?

Adrian's excuse me, hundred times a day

Rocks on beach brought back to hotel. The hotel staff are getting used to finding rocks in the bedrooms, in the day rooms, in the dining rooms, in the bathrooms, in the corridors, in the lift, in the shower rooms, in reception.

Metal armbands. Invented by Fabian but used by many

No running in dining room. Did anyone take any notice?

Steve lost his car keys - Can't remember where they were found now

Karen lost her car keys – they were on the end of her finger
Heather lost her car keys – they were in Karen's house on the hook

Alex watching Karen's purse. Adrian watching Alex watching Karen's purse, Luke watching Adrian, watching Alex watching Karen's purse. I had to keep them all busy.

Kids in sea up to waist with clothes on.

Violet wanting to know if we had ever laughed that much that we passed wind.

Elliott, Ruth, Dan B, Ethan G, Adrian, Aran swimming in sea with clothes on

Karen going in sea after Adrian and Dan B, up to her middle with her clothes on ensuring that Dan and Adrian did not go too deep. It was cold.

Adrian's better option.

One teapot full of Tea, just enough for Karen's Large mug. Karen brought the largest mug she could find to ensure she got a cup of tea. It had her name on. The only problem is I think I have left it at the hotel, ready for next year.

Trips to and from Birmingham to Llandudno. Steve and Pam had to return home and then return back to Llandudno. What timing though, they returned for evening meal.

Karen making 2 mistakes in 1 day. I sat down, that was one mistake I regretted. I had to get up again

Karen made 3 mistakes in 4 days and owned up to them. It says in the rule book of being a coach and team manager that I can make a mistake. Nothing in the rule book about assistant coaches or helpers or chaperones making mistakes though.

Ofri, Clara, Lukas, Lana, Little Dan all changing lanes by swimming really well.

Luke doing roller work really well.

Hannah doing roller work really well

Ethan P, cutie pie doing roller work really well

Noah R doing roller work really well.

Fabian doing roller work really well.

Candle for cakes, no lighter.

Caitlyn and Keira's birthday cake, trying not to get them squashed getting them out of the packaging.

Balloon pump that did not work – well done Jamie on blowing up the balloons for Keira Birthday

Good time over arcade.

Rounded everyone up when trying to leave the arcade – I need a shepherd's hook and a sheep dog!

Chloe's indecision – could not make her mind up what to exchange her tickets for in the Arcade, took that long that we went back the next day so she could think about it overnight.

No mobile phones – what do we need to do to make it any more clearer – there is a no phone policy and you will survive without a phone for a few days. I know it is hard to believe but trust me you will survive. You will continue to breath in and out without having a phone on the end of your arm.

Arnav bump. What a bruise. He limped back to the hotel and poor Arnav had to be iced with leg elevated following the fall. Had to phone dad and fill in accident reports. He fine now, thank goodness.

Keira tumble. More bruises

Chloe strange bruise that appeared from nowhere and no idea how, why, where it had come from – probably from climbing out of the pool.

Anna bruise in her leg – probably from climbing out of the pool

Aran did not want to cross the road, had to carried across.

No Leaky teapots. Just poured the whole lot into Karen's mug

Salt in sugar. Only discovered after Steve put the sugar into his tea and Georgina had covered her Rice Krispies with sugar. Thanks Chloe, Bobbie and Noah L for that – it made me laugh, I used the other sugar pot.

Georgina making mushy peas. She is not really over keen on peas but everyone had to eat something green that day.

Name plates on the tables, good idea.

Girls forgot swim stuff, well done to organised Chloe. Chloe brought spare costumes in her bag so the other girls borrowed Chloe's so they could swim.

Several swimmers forgetting swimming bags, having to go back and fetch them.

Rowan J forgot trunks had to swim in pants. There is always one every year who ends up swimming in pants.

Scott locked in men's toilets. Had to be rescued.

Toilets out of use at the swimming pool, what a nuisance that was. Boys had to use the girls., older boys had to use disabled, very old boys had to use reception toilets.

Ethan's trunks that needed tying up.

Aran's trunks that got tied into a tight knot that took ages to undo. Had to get nail file in the end to tease the knot loose.

Little Ethan Cutie Pie deciding to strip off his trunks on poolside, we had to wrap him in a towel.

Dan E nose bleeds in pool, not once but twice.

Elliott says he was allergic to sea water, (Why Elliott, Because it's too cold).

Fabian stating his trousers taste salty – why are you eating your trousers Fabian?

Karen name changing yet another mistake.

Georgina seal swimming in the sea.

Ge Ge arrived.

Handsome police divers on the beach, search and rescue team. Pam, Georgina, Sarah, Alice, Karen and Heather all doing the diet Coke advert routine, watching out of the window, leaving Steve to watch the swimmers.

Alex J slipping out his wheelchair on way back from pool and lying on the floor. Georgina got the sack as the main pusher of the wheelchair, having hit the pot hole, causing Alex to slip out. Swapped roles for Josh. Yes, Alex was strapped in but he slipped under the strap – it would appear to have been too loose – sack the belt doer up person too (Heather)

Adrian's Rock and more Rock.

Medication not declared and hidden in suitcase

Sweets and chocolates, biscuits and crisps and packets of Wotsits hidden in the bedroom.

Karen lost the will. (several times)

Drama and acting session on Friday afternoon – Jack and the Beanstalk and Goldilocks and the three bears. Lots of giggles.

Ethan with the giggles.

Fish that looked like Dinosaur then changed to a sea horse. Come on guys use your imaginations

Steve's tea leaf reading – did Wales win the Rugby haven't seen the results yet?

Brain cells not working – they are still not working. Will they ever work again?

Karen's 3 puddings. I liked the look of all 3 puddings so couldn't chose, so had all 3 , plus chocolate sauce, ice cream and fresh cream– my eyes were bigger than my belly though and couldn't eat it all.

4 lads pillow fighting on the beds. Rowan, Rohan, Noah R, Jaiyden – think Noah R won.

5 trips to rock shop. Shop keeper was highly amused.

Swimmer being ill, mop and bucket in COSHH cupboard, blocked by all the suitcases ready to be loaded onto the coach. By the time we managed to access the mop and bucket, we needed a bigger bucket!!

Weather Great, hot and sunny and dry.

Some swimmers thought it was acceptable to get out games and activities and to leave them on the tables without putting them away afterwards.

Some swimmers thought it was acceptable to just drop their coats along with a swimming bag in the middle of the floor and walk off and leave it for someone else to pick up and move. Well done Ruth and Sarah who picked up 2 coats that had just been dropped.

Waffle brick helmets

Lego – I do not need to say anything else – just Lego. It was everywhere.

Yellow Bingo balls – the staff will know this one without me having to say anything else

Land markers when walking – they could run to the land marks and then wait for everyone to catch up. Every land mark seemed to have a large pile of rocks next to it that grew every day. I suspect the street cleaners were putting them there, as the swimmers denied all knowledge of the growing piles of rocks being stacked against the poles.

Noah and Little Dan being traffic wardens.

Pants on poolside – Its ok Ofri I won't embarrass you by telling everyone that they were yours.

Violets beautiful dress.

Sarah's beautiful outfit

Lego shop closed until Saturday – yippee

Our last day is Saturday, so we will be able to go to the Lego shop when it is open, can you tell the coach to wait for us while you take us there please?

Luke's washing in my car

Chloe lunch box in my car – seem to recall Chloe's lunch box being in my car last year for about 3 weeks after camp.

Gabriel left his swimming bag at the pool after the last session – had to go back and fetch it. Last year it was Jamie who left his coat after the last session, so wonder what will be left next year? Emily with a tail perhaps?

How much luggage – see photos

Rowan split swimming bag

Ethan's split swimming bag (Big Ethan)

Aiden's split swimming bag – I had run out of spare swimming bags by that time

Hi Vis vests – gathering them in, giving them out, folding and unfolding, could not find my number, putting the wrong one on. They were very useful though.

How on earth did Lukas manage to get Phoebe's Hi Vis vest on – its 3 sizes smaller than he is.

Hiding the remote control to the TV – I hate TV on in the morning. Told you I was grumpy in the morning before my cup of tea.

Missing tiny milk cartons – would seem some swimmers like to drink the milk out of the cartons that are for the coffee machine.

Missing 30-40 little biscuits packets

Lots of untied shoe laces. Next year can we have swimmers who can either tie their own laces or lots of Velcro shoes please?

Fantastic swimming sessions even when the tiredness crept in

The walk to and from the pool, looking at the moon and the stars in the dark

Scott and Emma helping Luke and Ethan and Aran and Adrian to put their swimming bags away at the end of the sessions

Untidiest room award goes to Fabian and Noah, closely followed by Heather, closely followed by Jaiyden room, closely followed by Georgina room, closely followed by Adrian's and Ethan's room, closely followed by Enoch, Aiden and Arnav room.

Tidiest room award goes to Violet and Phoebe Room, closely followed by Elliot, Ethan and Little Dan room, closely followed by Caitlyn and Saoirse room, followed by Karen's room yeaaaa. I managed to keep my room tidy. Well actually I didn't find time to unpack so everything was in my suitcase for days, hence a tidy room, just a very messy suitcase.

Steve and Pam's and Georgina's and Heather's sleeping arrangements – Georgina changed rooms with Heather, who then changed rooms with Pam and Steve, who then changed room with Heather again. I lost track as to whom was in what room.

Steve not seeing his bedroom until midnight on the first night as didn't get time to even go upstairs to take his suitcase up

Luke wearing Phoebe's sweatshirt – thank goodness they are named.

Bat out of Hell – all 9 minutes!!

How many chips at Truck stop?

Georgina's sausages. Very similar to last year

Vegetarian sausages that apparently tasted meaty – we doubled checked and definitely veggie guys.

I have locked myself out of my room – again and again and again and again, and again, and again, and again. Put your door on the latch, yes Karen, is it on the latch, yes Karen, I cant get in Karen, I forgot to put it on the latch, Karen.

Why are you not wearing a coat Bobbie – I locked myself out of the room and couldn't get my coat. I forgot to put the door on the latch. Had to go back and fetch it with Georgina.

Got stuck at the right hand turn at Chester again. I either get stuck on the way there or on the way home – it was on the way home this time

Got caught hiding Heather's breakfast

Emily with a tail in the sea – one wet dog.

The Mere Green garden centre wee stop.

Using the toilet on the coach was very interesting – you fell off the toilet seat every time the coach went around the corner, and there are a lot of corners on the A41. The stairs down to the toilet are pretty steep as well so very difficult to keep balanced, holding a swimmer, without falling down. You also have to open the door towards you, whilst balancing on the stairs and holding a swimmer, without falling over when the coach goes around the corner. Very interesting indeed. When Adrian wants to use the toilet, you take all just mentioned into account but add in, he doesn't stop talking and giggling and he can't reach the door handle or the rail and needs two hands to adjust his clothing – that's very interesting too. Add in that there was a small hole in

the floor in the toilet area, just the right size to poke things down and that's very interesting too.

So, if you use the toilet on the coach and the coach is moving and you flush it, does the water and everything else go down the hole and onto the road outside? Where does it go then?

The shower party – that was so much fun. We were struggling to get everyone showered after swimming on the Wednesday (Pam and Steve had to leave us) so we took the group back without the shower. We then took the youngest ones – Ethan, Adrian, Aran, Phoebe, and put them into the shower together with their underwear on and had a party. They all got washed and hair washed, whilst dancing and singing. I got soaked but the aim was achieved – little people all washed and clean.

Hot hotel rooms – too blinking hot. Unable to open the windows in case anyone decided to climb out so top floor swimmers cooked!

Early mornings – everyone was up and ready on time – not an easy feat. The last morning, I was still in my dressing gown when the everyone arrived downstairs (I had been up in the night) The swimmers thought it was very funny to see me in my dressing gown, half asleep. No Jamie, I was not just wrapped up in a towel, it was my towelling dressing gown.

Ruth and Ofri and Violet helped with the hand washing routine before meal times. Ofri particularly helped with Luke as he didn't like the hand dryer so needed to use paper towels and the container was too high for him to reach.

Toast, squash and tea in the morning. Lots of tea.

Hot chocolate top ups in the evening – we kept running out.

Bruises that just appeared for no apparent reason.

Adrian and Ethan playing games at 4am. They did go back to sleep eventually, for about 30 minutes.

Diving and the resulting showers that soaked Steve and I. Some good starts though.

Violet's relay breaststroke leg – what an effort.

The last leg of the 50m free relay, with Scott, Alice, Sarah, Grace all competing against each other. Grace won.

Luke and Aran sitting on Luke's bed reading a story together

Karen's bad back – needed pain killers. Had this trouble last year, came to the conclusion the chairs are not suitable for my back.

Georgina's hair plaiting session.

Elliot having his finger nails painted.

Luke's toilet filling exercise.

Filling in the menu sheets every session. (with disappearing pens)

Hand washing – why do some people find this so difficult to do and to understand.

Swimmers who needed reminding to wash their hands after using the toilet – that became a bone of contention for some people, when they sent back to wash.

Disabled toilets that wash your backside after use – everyone had to go and investigate that one.

Updating the web page every evening, uploading the photos and tweeting out. It was still time consuming but certainly better than receiving loads of texts and phone messages.

It is to stop me getting constipated – I really cannot remember which person announced this at the dinner table but someone did

Steve announcing to the whole of the Truckstop that George was going to the toilet

My 16 pens – I took 16 pens with me and within 24 hours I could not find a single one

Violet helping to get a straw for Alex to have a drink. May seem like a simple thing, but it meant staff could finish their meal, instead of having to get up and fetch the straw but it is kindness and consideration like this that makes us a team and helps us to bond as a group.

Next time

We do plan to return next year. There will hopefully be an invite going to the majority who attended this year again. We are looking for a cheaper hotel so if anyone has any ideas let me know. I am sure that there will be some parents who have stayed at Llandudno that may be able to recommend a hotel to me that would meet our needs at a cheaper price. Just email me any details and I am happy to make enquiries – my email is on the web site.

I will also be looking for some young volunteer helpers next year. They will need to be 14-17 years old, not embarrassed easily, ready to jump up and help out, able to use their own initiative, able to follow very brisk and direct instructions (I do not always have time to be polite) and have lots of stamina. Our young helpers this year, were the best we have ever had but most of them will be moving on next year or taking their exams, so unlikely to be able to attend. They will be greatly missed. Helpers do have to pay to attend but they get the opportunity to swim as well.

This has been one of the most challenging swim camps we have run, and there were a few problems and issues that will need to be ironed out, and it gave me a short-lived

doubt as to whether to do it again. However, when looking at the positives and the thank you's that have poured in, and the comments from the swimmers, and the support I have from the staff, has convinced me that yes, go for it. Two of the volunteers stated that this was the best camp they have been on, so something must have worked and we must have done something right.

I hope that the swimmers this year really enjoyed their swim sessions, the activities and the camp itself. Invites for next year's camp will start to go out around May time but be warned, places will need to be paid for in full at the time of booking, so start to put those monies away, if you want to go again.

Karen.