

## Jamboree Experience – South Korea (July/August 2023)

Starting at the Liverpool World Museum on the 26th of July, Unit 54 of the 25th World Scout Jamboree left for South Korea with the trip of a lifetime ahead. A total of 36 hours later, we arrived at 7 AM on the 28th of July.

For the first few days, we were allowed to explore Seoul, see all the sights, and experience the culture. On the first day, we took the metro to the Gyeongbokgun Palace, where we hired the traditional clothes “hanbok” to appreciate the rich Korean culture. We also got to meet many other international scouts who chose to visit the palace that day!

After this, we visited a Korean art museum and tried the well-known Korean delicacy called Topokki. The next day, we went to the National Museum of Korea which taught us a lot about Korean heritage this was followed by a night trip up the N-Seoul Tower where we saw beautiful views of the entire city lit up from above.

On the 1st of August, we had planned to set off for the Jamboree, but this was postponed due to the site not being completely ready. Nevertheless, we enjoyed one extra day in Seoul, where we decided to visit the Lotte World Amusement Park and we had so much fun!! The following day, we set off towards the Jamboree site in Saemangeum, just in time to make it to the opening ceremony, seeing lots of K-Pop stars and the Chief Scout Bear Grylls.

The next day, we were able to explore the Jamboree site and meet lots of other scouts from all over the world whilst getting to grips with battling the everyday heat. On day 3 of the Jamboree, we were all taken off-site to do an experience at the 119 Centre (the National Emergency Service Centre), where we did lots of simulations for different disasters and what we should do in them such as a car overturn, an earthquake and even a tsunami.

Later, that day, we found out that the UK contingent would no longer be participating in the Jamboree due to sanitary issues, the typhoon and lack of organisation so we spent the night and the next morning saying our goodbyes, meeting more friends, and trading our last badges.

Thankfully, we were able to stay in Korea and instead got sent to a hotel, and for the time that we had left in Korea, we were able to carry on exploring and visit lots of new places.

On one of the days, we went to the Bongeunsa Temple, which was amazing to see the traditional temples and feel at peace surrounded by tranquillity. As well as this, the Korean government opened the Blue House for all the Jamboree scouts to look around which was amazing to be so lucky to see. Another way we were able to experience Korean culture was through the food, going to a couple of different food markets and trying the different authentic dishes, for example, dumplings, Gamja-jeon (a type of potato pancake), and Korean fried chicken.

On one of the final days, went to Legoland which was fun to go on all the rides and have fun with my friends.

Another once-in-a-lifetime opportunity was our trip to the DMZ (the Demilitarised Zone), where we saw into North Korea, it was a very interesting experience.

To finish off our magnificent trip, we had the closing ceremony at the Seoul World Cup Stadium, where we saw many world-famous K-Pop stars with everyone from the Jamboree, it truly was fantastic.

To conclude my World Scout Jamboree adventure, it was the best 3 weeks of my life and so much better than I ever thought it would be despite some difficulties that there was. The people in Korea were incredibly kind to all of us and the food was delicious wherever we went.

If anyone has the chance to be a part of the Jamboree, I recommend it with all my heart, it was worth all the fundraising and really was the opportunity of a lifetime. The friends I have made are my friends for life and am so glad to have been given this privilege.

***By: Harry Woodcock (15<sup>th</sup> Fairfield Scout Group- Liverpool North)***