The village project has already been experienced three times. The first one was in 1990 and, as now, was a brand new idea for King Alfred School initiated by Stephen. The aim of the Village Project then was to provide an exciting environment, to work from the perspective of self-sufficiency and to encourage Year 8 students to find ways of organizing life amongst themselves. Even though the project was about surviving and living together in huts for a week, it was also about the design and the building. This would involve bringing across the Design and Technology aspect into the curriculum. Although many activities were to be provided, the students didn’t have to do all of them if they didn’t want to - however every pupil had to have produced something at the end of the week that would be a result of their learning. They could if they wanted bring a journal and write about their experiences in the week or they could keep a photographic collection of memories that they hopefully would keep forever. With the help of Bob, me, Grace and Ella decided to make the magazine that you are now reading.

Huge thanks to Stephen and all the many other teachers and visitors that helped to make this such a special experience for us all.

● Elin
The big build-up...

Five Days to go...

The Village is so soon. Today is Wednesday and I can't believe that on Monday we will be entering the Village. Today is a no-school day; it is a day to build our Huts. I walk to the village where I am met by the people in my hut. We are all looking forward to the day but we all know it will be tough and that we have to all work hard to get it finished. We begin with the TILES. They have to go on every side of the hut and we need to make sure that the tiles are close together to not let in a draft.

We work hard and believe that we have finished one side. Well, just then Ed walks up and says that we have done it wrong. We all sigh for we will have to do it again...

It is first break and we haven't finished the tiles. Others in my year have. So we feel a little behind. We carry on until 1 o’clock when it is lunch. We have a nice lunch in the Village and talk about how far we have got up to in the construction of our huts. We still haven't finished the Tiles. After lunch we finally are finished with them and move on to the shelves. Each hut has two shelves placed at the top of the hut. We get the planks of wood and attach them with cable tiles to the ceiling. Then we get cardboard and place it on the ground of our hut. Then we collect rugs and place them over the cardboard to make it comfy.

Two days to go...

Today is Saturday and the village begins on Monday. Yes today we completed the making of our hut, finishing with the carpet and then fitting in the desks we would have inside. I have packed and am ready for Monday.

one Day to go...

24 hours until the Village is full of life. It is the last day for all of us to use technology, heating and home comforts before we step into the heart of the Village Project...

The Village was a whirlwind week that tested us and taught us on how to live in basic conditions. I was cold, starving, exhausted but I wouldn’t have given up my memories for the world. My personal highlights were squishing “homemade clay” with my feet to help make bread ovens, having raves in the gym, chats with Stephen about boys and making a memory with everyone, from chanting creepy Victorian songs to scare olive or bribing Jake to make me a bacon sandwich. One of the hardest bits of the village was washing up - I got so tired of washing up 5 times a day that I stopped eating at one point and when I was insanely hungry I used tiles as plates. I learnt a bit more about my year, had conversations with old friends, made new ones, and got a sense of The King Alfred year 8’s, 2013.

My personal highlights were during the day when I helped create the ovens in the village with this type of cement that used cat litter. Then I finished my clothes were full of this cement except my trousers and socks. There was another time was when I made a pizza and put it in that same oven that I helped make. I also learned to play the didgeridoo! At night I would usually sleep straight away but there was the time were I went stargazing and saw the moon close up, and the time I played blackjack in my hut and when I saw a black and white movie while having hot chocolate. My frustrations were when no one was helping clean-up for our hut or when I cut my thumb with a Swiss army knife and I couldn’t really do any activities. Overall it was amazing.

One of the best memories of the village for me was foraging, it was something I had never done before and was exciting. The main reason I participated in the activity was because the poor man had no one doing his activity which was fairly awkward since he had come from Oxfordshire or something... Anyway I put him out of his misery and joined in with quite a few others. So we walked out the school and the man told us “there you go, have a munch at this, its crunchy!!” Moving forward, we got onto the heath and started collecting and testing plants. It was very fun, he was telling us about the different types of leaves. This I think, personally, is a life skill because it means in theoretical terms you could technically survive on the plants around you.
I have loads of memories that I will never forget. We had a little bit of trouble with cooking, especially the stir fry night. Another meal we had trouble with was the pasta meal. The problem was when Lauren went to pour the pasta in the pot she split half of it on the floor. I will never forget Grace’s face of disbelief and anger. Thinking about it now, I can laugh, but at the time it was anything but funny. I surprised myself when I found out that I do not like leaves and dirt on my bed. This is strange as I am a naturally messy person, I don’t really care about dirt. It just goes to show that the village shows strange sides to you.

Overall my feelings of the village are happiness. I did not want to leave it when it was done. I was talking to my friends and we all agreed that if we could go home for say the weekend, and have a bath and wash my clothes, and then come back, we would.

For me the village was about becoming better friends with people in the year.

My personal highlights were when we all had to perform in the hut performances. My hut joined up with another and did ‘The Love Metre’. It was Hilarious! Some people did songs, others did guessing games but my personal favourite was when Alex T and Darius did an impression of Claire (sports teacher) and Steve (science teacher). It really was amazing.

One thing I really missed was my family. I now realize how much work my mum does around the house. It really is such hard work with all the washing up and cooking and clearing up, not to mention all the sorting of our sleeping bags and just STUFF! What really surprised was how much time it took to prepare meals. One time it took us an hour and a half - in the end I didn’t eat I went off with my very own tuna sandwich instead of eating what we had cooked all because it took way to long! I have learnt sooooo much about responsibility and also independence but most of all I have learnt to be without contact with anyone else in the world except from the people that I am living with.

I think the village was a very special experience that most people can’t experience. My personal highlights were the first night when we stayed up until 4 in the morning in other huts. Then hopping into the amphitheatre in my sleeping bag in the mist of silence, falling over, making everyone burst out with laughter (when they were supposed to be being silent) even the teachers laughing! Also I was surprised at how many leaves and plants you can eat and how easily you can make nettle and flower noodle soup! I had never thought of it before how I didn’t even get bored - I guess whittling was taking up lots of time. Overall I enjoyed the village and enjoyed waking up late.

When thinking back to the Village I believe that it was an amazing and unique experience. I enjoyed living outside in the days and staying in the huts we built at night. I learnt some new skills in candle making, power-chord making, whittling and friendship bracelet making. I didn’t get frustrated at anything to be honest - the draft coming through the door at night was a little annoying because it made the hut quite cold and I suppose the dirt everywhere on our stuff was also a bit irritating. I was quite surprised at how quickly the week went by after weeks and weeks and weeks of planning and building the huts. The camps, where we lived, seemed like a different place than it is every day when I go to school.

It wasn’t at all where I in year six played Wendy in our production of Peter Pan in the amphitheatre. It was like a new Amphitheatre, where every day we had meetings both the morning and afternoon. Overall, it was an experience I will never forget.

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The village was about becoming friends with different people, becoming aware of what I use every day and what I don't need to survive and the luxuries that I use.

Max

I was frustrated at how cold it was at night. It was so cold I couldn't fall asleep.

I was surprised at how if you didn't want to do an activity it wasn't boring because before the hut week all the teachers said you would be really bored. I learnt what plants I can eat and how to cook and how to start a fire.

Overall my feelings about the village are it was a great experience and if someone asked would you do it again. I would say yes.

Xander

The village was very good, but there were different aspects which had different effects on me. The things that surprised me most, was how hard cooking and cleaning was with just a little bit of non-electrical equipment and having to make your own fire. My most memorable moment was either when we did foraging or when after hours we went to the gym and played games with some of the teachers. What surprised me is that Stephan didn't go mad. I learnt a bit from the village like how to cope with others in tough situations, I learnt how to make fire and cook food on the fire which will be useful in later life. I also learnt how to entertain myself without technology at my finger tips. This experience has made an impression on me, it was a one in a life time opportunity and I will be talking about it for the rest of my life.

Leila

My personal highlights were having a big sleepover with 8 other people and then it turned into 14. I was the only person that was meant to be there. I hid under the hut's table and the people in the hut's feet. Stephen never found me!

Overall I had an amazing time and I will never forget it!

Jake

Over all my experience in the village was incredible. I really enjoyed it. Although it was freezing cold and really dirty, I'm glad I did it. It has had an impact on my life and has made me appreciate central heating, my mum and dad's cooking and my bed.

Anna

The village for me was about becoming friends with different people, becoming aware of what I use every day and what I don't need to survive and the luxuries that I use.

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My personal highlights were foraging in the heath and eating different plants, capture the flag and staying up late. The frustrations were when Ade disappeared for 4 hours for no reason, when you couldn't start a fire and waking up to the bitter coldness. What surprised me is that Stephan didn't go mad. I learnt a bit from the village like how to cope with others in tough situations, I learnt how to make fire and cook food on the fire which will be useful in later life. I also learnt how to entertain myself without technology at my finger tips. This experience has made an impression on me, it was a one in a life time opportunity and I will be talking about it for the rest of my life.

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Alex
My highlights of the village is the crazy all-nighters while eating chocolate and hiding from the teachers, whittling many butter knives and wooden stakes, cool activities like African drumming and foraging for food on the heath! My frustrations were the washing up. I mean the washing got muddy after 3 seconds! Making fires was not as hard as I thought. I thought I would burn myself and never make one, but I was wrong. I did not miss my phone or my bed or even my parents. By the end we were soooooooooo tired!!! I think what I took out of the village was the feeling that I can survive on my own and that I do not need my parents to tell me what I need to do. The Village was a very special experience which I will remember for ever!!!

- Jesse

The most memorable things for me was Capture the Flag and "Midnight Raves". My frustrations were the showers and washing up. Food would go all in our shoes and on our clothes. It was awful. What surprised me was how dirty our hut got, I kept on cleaning out the sand but still it never seemed to go away. I had to sleep where the door was and I had the coldest and sandiest bed. What I learnt was that things don't have to be so serious, and that I don't need things as clean and tidy anymore. Overall my feeling about the village was that it was an important learning experience and it was also lots of fun so I'm happy I got to do it.

- Gracy

I loved going into other people huts and staying up all night. I also like that we had the freedom to choose to do the activities if we wanted to. I enjoyed candle making and capture the flag in the evening with everyone (even if I was in the prison most of the time). I also found setting up the fire very interesting. What surprised me was how hard it was to wash up and cook every meal. I learnt how much more I should appreciate my mum for cooking and cleaning and general household things. I also learnt lots of life skills and that even without phones and computers you can have a good time. Overall I really enjoyed my time in the village and will remember this experience and how much fun I had forever.

- Anoushka