

Killary

Waking at such an early hour would, on most occasions, be an unwanted task. This morning would be a different story though; a three day adventure at Killary Adventure Centre lay ahead. Heading out from home in the pitch black October morning to Rathdrum to get the bus at half five in order to catch the train on time at Hueston Station there was a great sense of excitement and anticipation.

The train journey was a long monotonous ordeal across the country, passing through places such as Clara, Roscommon, Castlerea and finally Westport, where we got a bus to our final destination. The trip to the adventure centre was quiet scenic; the road meandered around the fjord of Killary Harbour, offering great views of the sea and the mountains which populated the skyline.

On arrival at the centre we left our bags to be searched and went to the dining area as our rooms were not ready yet. In the dining area Killary instructors ran us through the rules and the running of the place, as you would expect. After that we were able to head into the rooms. In each room there were three sets of bunk beds to accommodate six people. The rooms also boasted a bathroom which had no lock, a wardrobe which was blocked from opening fully by one of the bunk beds and a window!

There wasn't much time to wander around the rooms as we had to get changed for the first set of activities; we were broken up into 6 different groups with ten people in each group and eleven in some. We got to do five activities in total over the three days which were:

“The Giant Swing and Laser Combat” which was really two activities spilt up in the 3 hour section. The giant swing was basically a giant mechanical swing in which two people sat and got hoisted up to a fair height, then gravity took control.

For laser combat we were given laser guns and sensors which had to be placed on the cap which you also received, then you're let loose in a half boggy woodland area to do battle!

“Turf Challenge” consisted of wading through a number of knee to neck deep bogs and running up a hill side cleverly named “Heartbreak hill”. These just a few of the challenges in the task which left you wishing for a warm shower and fresh, clean clothes.

“Raft Building and Ringo Rides” was similar to the Giant Swing and Laser Combat as the activities were split. Raft Building consisted of tires, wood, rope and barrels – all of which had point prices, and had to be purchased with the 100 points you were given to create what you hoped to be a floating raft.

If being pulled by a speedboat in an inflatable rubber tire at high speeds sounds like your cup of tea then the ringo rides are just what you've been looking for! As you get to hold on and be slung around the Killary Fjord.

“Kayaking & Gorge Walking” consisted of playing games and doing challenges with kayaks, which usually left you falling into the water as you tried to balanced on them whilst standing up!

Taking on a river is exactly what gorge walking is! You ascend up a rushing river, trying not to slip on the slime infested rocks, in hopes of making it to the top and back to dry land.

“High Ropes and Zip Wire” The High Ropes were a number of climbing challenges which included an eighteen metre high climbing wall and a trapeze jump.

While two hundred metre long wires made up the zip wire as you leaped off the platform at the top and gliding down on the zip line to the bottom.

The Killary Staff also brought us out on a night walk in which we walked for around 4 hours in the dark on the first night. Then on the second night we did what’s known as “Miss Killary”, where a few of the boys dressed up as girls and tried win the prestigious title of Miss Killary. Not only did they have to look good but they also had to show off a talent and answer some tricky questions. It was a closely contested battle, which saw “Penelope Plunket” aka Patrick Byrne take the title.

If leaving Killary was not bad enough the thoughts of the endless train journey back did not help soften the blow, but even though the rooms were small and cramped, the food was terrible and the journey was as long as a trans Atlantic flight, Killary was still a highly enjoyable experience and I would love to do it all again!

Aaron Canning, Trans 1