

SOUTH MANCHESTER GROUP SUMMER VISIT 2008

The South Manchester Group of the Chernobyl Children's Project UK this summer hosted five young children and their Mums. Sveta aged 4, Daria aged 4, Max aged 4 and Anastasia aged 4 and Catia aged 9. Sveta, Max and Daria are all in remission from cancer. Anastasia has Kabuki Syndrome and Catia was on respite holiday whilst her mother is in hospital in Minsk being treated for Leukemia. For some of this visit the children were joined by Alessia who lives at Rechitsa Boarding school in Belarus and who was being hosted within the group whilst recovering from her successful operation at Alder Hey.

The children and mothers arrived at Manchester Airport on 4th August they appeared a little apprehensive after their journey from Belarus. However the apprehension was soon replaced with smiles and energy after arriving at Alison's house for a lovely buffet and introductions to the families that would be hosting them. The host's families this year were a mixture of experienced and new families.

The programme of events that had been arranged soon got underway. The English weather this year really tested the programme to the full!! The group enjoyed the visit to the local fire station, which was kindly arranged, for the third year running, by Community Fire Officer, Tony Doyle. The children made a relentless effort to turn the hoses on the adults, who managed to escape a drenching.



The muddy feet and soggy shoes did not stop the fun at the maize maze at Red House Farm, where the children enjoyed collecting most of the stamps with in the maize and loved ride on the tractor train, bouncy castle, go karts and diggers.

The usual event of coffee evenings and BBQ's at host's families home where yet again a great success despite the weather and also despite the weather we enjoyed many trips to local parks which the children loved.

The group had a great day at High Ash Farm near Buxton, courtesy of Dennis and the Buxton and Longnor group; the children loved the magic show and the great Morris dancing troop, not to mention the fantastic food.

The trip to Blackpool Zoo was a great day, the children enjoyed the monkeys and the tigers the most and loved the freedom in the dinosaur land. Lido beach was the venue of a day enjoyed by all. It started with the making sandcastles and Wave jumping and many hours later finished with

the hosts trying to get the children and the mums out of the water in the Lido centre were they had spent hours enjoying swimming and going repeatedly on this slide!! A much enjoyed day by all!

The children loved Run of the Mill ball park in Bredbury, again the problem we had here was getting the children to come out of the ball park as they were having so much fun, this was achieved with a promise of a visit to the Chocolate shop later.

Simon and Oliver Dunn made the children feel very welcome at the Wilmslow Chocolate Shop. The children enjoyed watching how the chocolate was made and were delighted when they all had their names written on a lollipop in Russian. They enjoyed eating them with a cup of milkshake to wash it down!!

The highlight of the visit had to be a trip to the Conwyn country show, after enjoying a lovely picnic lunch and watching the children on bouncy slides, funfair rides and enjoying all the stalls. The most enjoyment was watching the mums jumping up and down with excitement and the children watching in amazement as the Red Arrows arrived and performed a spectacular aerial display to close the show. It was fantastic!!!

The leaving party was enjoyed by all with dancing and a return of the birdie song along with Party games, a live band and the visit by Max the rabbit who gave the children a leaving present which had been made up of gifts donated by kindhearted employees of Cheshire police.



There were tears at the airport when the time came to say goodbye, Another year of planning, organization and enjoyment completed. Again all concerned gained a tremendous amount from the experience..

Bring on 2009!!