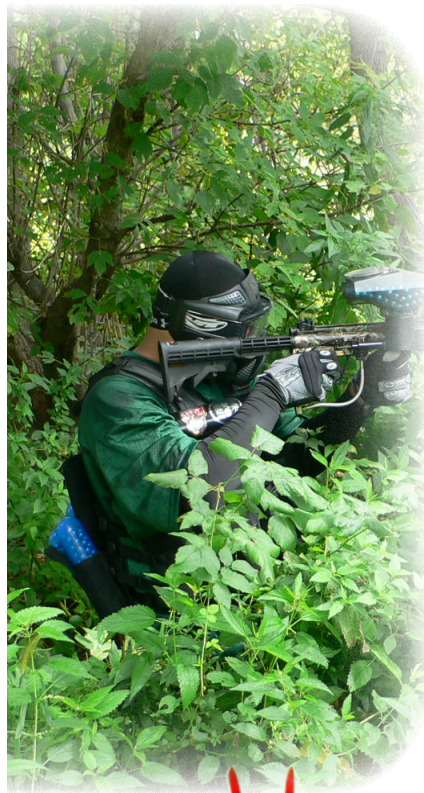


SAM'S Column...

I can see the enemy a few yards away, I begin to creep up on them scuttling behind rubble and barricades. When I am close enough I raise my gun and unleash a volley of shots at the enemy. Red spots appear on his jacket and I hear him yelp and say "ok, ok I'm dead stop shooting."



No, this is not an article about guerrilla warfare in foreign climes it is about paintball in Brailsford. This new and exciting sport is great if you want the biggest adrenalin rush you can get without actually being chased by machete wielding fanatics. It can cost as little as forty pounds for a whole day (twenty five pounds for a half day) and from first hand experience I can tell you it is definitely worth it.

The experience starts off quite sedately when you get your kit handed out for the day, then there is a talk about what wildlife you can see on your rampage through the forest and how you need to watch out for alligators and killer chaffinch, but as soon as you get down to the site of the previous day's battles the whole mood changes.

You are told the best places to shoot the opponents, how best to play each game and how, if you get stuck in the woods overnight, it is best to kill and cook a pigeon for dinner.

The games can get very intense with about twenty people on each team, it is truly a test of whether or not you are a man, who will fight, or a mouse, who just runs away squeaking.

When you first start the day you will probably be timid and want to just hide behind a tree, but after you get your first kill and as soon as the adrenalin starts to rush around your body you want to be there in the thick of the action mowing down anything in your path, with your air powered paintball gun.

In one day you can play approximately eight games, which believe me is enough, and you also get a five minute break in between each game to grab a drink or snack and clean the blood of your enemies from your weapon! In the middle of the day you also get dinner, generously cooked by the wounded from the previous day!

Don't worry if paintball is not your cup of tea, as there are lots of other exciting things you can do there like buggy racing and quad biking.

Younger children are not allowed to participate as the paintballs do hurt sometimes, particularly if fired a little close to the target. However, this is a rare occurrence as the marshals are on hand to make sure everything runs smoothly and are extremely safety conscious.

So if you like what you have heard and you wish to go and butcher Bill from class I.T at a game for real men then get down to Wild Park Leisure at Brailsford, but make sure you book early as the places get snatched up quickly. It is great fun with your mates and even better when you go home and show off your bruises, making you look like Rambo, or at least someone that can take a few paintballs to the leg and not run off crying!

BY SAM GREGORY
Age 15