



**Ali : A Greenbelt first timer; a fresh pair of eyes I suppose. The festival that every URC Youther seemed to look forward to but so far, I had managed to avoid it. The opportunity to be Greenbelt URC Youth Ambassador, though, changed that a little, giving me a role and a purpose to be there, that without I still would never ventured to Greenbelt. So I headed to Kettering, opened minded and rather excited I guess.**

**Whilst on shift in the URC tent, I was very much in my element. I was allowed to chat away, something I am very good at, to people who shared the same values as me on a scale I had never really experienced before. Craft activities surrounded me, and children flocked to the tent. As my hands became a colouring book and I read the same story for the thirteenth time, it clicked why I had ended up at Greenbelt, me putting my interpretation of faith into reality.**

**People always make events for me, the Youth Ambassador team were a class group of people, that I don't think would ever have come together otherwise. As the weekend rolled on we grew as a little team, gaining much from the time we spent together. However, the young people who stated what they believed in, to a group of pretty random people from all over the place during Cake and Debate, were the people who made Greenbelt for me. Seeing this would inspire anyone, because those individuals are going to shake up this country. Amazed to say the least.**



**There is something about Greenbelt; I am still struggling to decide what, or even how to describe it. I thought I was well cultured and then I went to Greenbelt. I defiantly was not. There were styles of performance I had never even heard of before, ways of expressing yourself I had thought daft and people who challenged my stereotypes. But at Greenbelt it was okay, welcomed even. You were you and that was completely and utterly fine. I loved that.**

**I flipping love camping, but Greenbelt is much more. Next year I will return, a little more prepared and a lot more eager.**



**I will defiantly tell every soul I know about Greenbelt. I can't quite help it. I just kind of erupts out of me when people ask about my summer.**

**I work with children and young people in most aspects of my life currently, often being their advocate or facilitator for them to achieve most commonly better health or to make a change within their community and world. Cake and Debate knocked me back little and showed me that actually for young people to correct many of the wrongs in the world. they have the passion and motivation to do it themselves. It has changed the way to will support many of the young people and children I work with, I feel I can take a back-seat role and let the next world changers step forward.**

Amanda: I was a little nervous prior to the trip because I knew there would be a lot of talking to strangers, which is not something I am very good at. When I had my first shift in the tent, this nervousness immediately disappeared. Making fork flowers, I soon talked to lots of children and young people, and some adults. Many hadn't heard of the URC, so I had fun explaining to people what URC stands for and what we do as a church. I also really enjoyed the cake and debate sessions, because we were able to give all the young people a chance to speak their minds, and although there were disagreements and differing opinions, there were no arguments. The feedback that we were given from these sessions was very positive, and this was really pleasing to hear. After having spoken to many people about the impact of the church, I feel more confident in my own faith.



**What will you do/act upon as a result of your trip?**

Let other people know about Greenbelt and encourage them to attend. Book next year's ticket!

*Bethany : I was extremely honoured to be a youth ambassador. It was such a great experience. One where I got to meet lots of new people and come to worship God. I made friends with Ally, Joanna, Isaac, Jacob, Amy, Amanda and Reuben.*

*The first day was a good chance to get to know everyone and set everything up. I went over to the URC tent and helped sew on loads of flowers, every flower was made by churches all over the URC across the UK. It's incredible to think of how many different churches decided to make flowers.*



*My duties in the tent involved me in talking to young people, helping them with activities such as drawing on stones, making more flowers, created peg people and had some interesting conversations.*

*I was also involved with 'Cake and debate' sessions when about 25 young people came each evening. We covered subjects: Refugees; Pressures of exams and Social Media.*



*I listened to some of the concerts like we are Scientists and Martin Joseph. I went to the Communion when Issac was involved in the bible reading. We shared communion in our group and I learnt some new and different songs.*

*I enjoyed the breakfast together and had time to wander browsing some of the stalls and shops. I enjoyed the crepes that I had for lunches and appreciated the support I was given by those around me. I did find the evenings difficult as being under 18 I was not permitted in some of the venues and found myself alone.*

*Overall the experience is one I would recommend to other young people. Greenbelt I have been going to for many years with my family, but being part of the youth URC team gave me an opportunity to talk and work alongside other young people. It really helped build up my confidence because I spoke to so many people from around the URC*

Isaac : I went to Greenbelt Festival for the first time this year a few weeks ago as I was asked by the United Reformed Church to be a Youth Ambassador representing the URC Youth and by volunteering in the tent after attending General Assembly back in July.

For many years I heard about Greenbelt Festival as members of my church always came back and spoke highly about it. So as the opportunity came I decided to



take it and it was an experience which did take me out of my comfort zone a lot and that doesn't happen very often as I am one to be already out of my comfort zone because I am open to doing new things but this was different. I am not one to really work with children however my role required me to so I took a deep breath and just did it. It was not easy but I managed to do it and it really made me feel more confident in that field of volunteering now, something I never thought I would gain from an event like this. So for that I was grateful!

I also had a chance to meet a whole load of new people and hear great stories from a vast majority of people from different cultures and backgrounds. And a great chance to talk and share about my faith with like-minded and open-minded individuals which was a nice experience. I was able to eat food from almost around the world, hands down loved the Cuban chips and chicken which I probably wouldn't have tried unless I went to Cuba!

Another great experience was sharing the Youth Ambassador role with other great young people and getting to hang out and learn more about each other. Thought it was a great idea and I thought it really did work! I really do thank them for being considerate during certain situations and making me feel part of a team!

I will continue to do the good work in the world and tell others about the good time I had at Greenbelt!



*Jo : Greenbelt was an experience I will never forget. I loved every moment of it. The idea of being submerged in arts is honestly my idea of heaven. The talks were informative and so many chances for discussion which was something that I found very useful for engaging conversation with others.*

*Being a music student something I was in awe of was the musicians who played there. Especially a group called Collective X. Their avant-garde Jazz was completely and totally improvised. One person would write a lead sheet about something or an experience and then the musicians would seamlessly and effortlessly create such beautiful harmonies from that. It was really amazing. A song that really caught my attention was about a girl who was brutally murdered by her father and brother after being given the right to stay in the UK. The music created such an emotional atmosphere I just was in complete and utter amazement of them and the music they created.*



*Over the weekend Lorraine Webb challenged us to do something every day that was out of our comfort zones and these are the things that I did.*

- 1. I tried plantain for the very first time. It was odd and I wasn't too sure at first but my gosh was it possibly one of the nicest things on this planet, yes. Yes it was.*
- 2. I spoke to some of the speakers who spoke at the "Refugee Talks" session; it was engaging and I learnt lots of unfair things about Refugees and what they go through.*
- 3. I went to one of the comedy improv workshops. I am someone who doesn't consider themselves to be naturally funny so I decided to go and try to be funny. Spoiler alert, I wasn't funny at all.*
- 4. And last but definitely not least I attended some things from the Red Tent. The feminist and empowering conversations that were had definitely got me thinking about what it means to be a woman and the "disadvantages" if you will of being one and how as females we can overcome this.*

*All in all, my greenbelt was awesome and I cannot wait to go back next year.*



**Reuben : Greenbelt 2018 was an experience that will keep with me for the rest of my life. This was my first year of camping at Kettering and attending GB, so, I did not know really what to expect but from what other members of the URC have told me, I knew it was going to be an experience to remember.**

**Having arrived on Friday to the Garden tent of the URC, I knew straight away that it was going to be a good week.**

**This tent was going to be filled with 100's of people both Christian and non who I would get a chance to speak to, get to know and most of all grow in a relationship with them all. I also would get to improve on my fork making flower skills, colour several stones as well as listen to Tim Lowe's rendition of Paddington bear! It was fascinating to talk to so many people during the 4 days, both young and old and here about the stories they were able to tell. This part was a highlight of GB.**

**At GB, we were also able to experience the rest of the festival. One thing that I made sure to go and listen to was the talk by Vicky Beeching, this women is an inspiration and someone who I have had an interested in since about the age of 10. Having been a well-known Christian singer and song-writer, she decided a couple of years ago to come out as gay. This was to send shockwaves out to many of the churches who sang her songs as many of those were against same-sex marriage and relationships. For this reason, many of those churches decided to stop playing her songs in protest. If you ever get the chance, make sure you read her book titled 'Undivided'.**

**I was also able to attend several spoken word events, music as well as the Communion, which was powerful.**

**Having been brought up in the URC and taken to events such as Soul Survivor and Spring Harvest. I personally thought Greenbelt was different to both of these events. The chilled back approach of Greenbelt made me feel a lot closer to God as I was able to spend my own time with him as opposed to being constantly surrounded by 10,000 people.**

**Truthfully though, I do not think I would have got the same out of Greenbelt, faith-wise, had it not of been for the family event that happened the Saturday of GB. It wasn't until this event that I realised that I needed to spend more time alone with God. I am with no doubt pleased that during this event that I was surrounded by some of the most amazing people in the world in the form of the URC ambassadors plus the other members of the URC. They were a massive help and guidance for me.**

**I am going to aim to visit churches in a joint capacity as Synod Youth Rep as well as Greenbelt Ambassador. I am going to try and get a slot at my Synod meeting to speak about GB and to try and encourage others to join me in 2019 for wit and wisdom.**

