

# ARCTIC ANTS PROJECT CHALLENGE WINTER 2009

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## Training Schedule Winter Group 2009

<b>Tuesday</b>	Fit4Life (physical fitness), Navigation
<b>Wednesday</b>	Hill Day
<b>Thursday</b>	First Aid, miscellaneous
<b>Friday</b>	E2E Review by appointment/Snowlife Skiing Award
<b>Numeracy/Literacy</b>	Incorporated throughout training programme
<b>Target Setting</b>	Monthly reviews, weekly action plans ongoing
<b>HSE 1<sup>ST</sup> Aid at Work</b>	8, 9 January 2009
<b>IOSH Working Safely</b>	11 December 2008
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Residential</b>	12, 13, 14 November 2008
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Residential</b>	15, 16, 17, 18 December 2008
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Residential</b>	3 - 5 February 2009
<b>Main Journey</b>	25 February - 11 March 2009
<b>Duke of Edinburgh Bronze</b>	2 day expedition on 3 <sup>rd</sup> Residential Ongoing first aid training, physical fitness training and computer skills Service, Physical Fitness & Skills sections
<b>Duke of Edinburgh Gold Expedition</b>	Incorporated into Project Challenge Expedition
<b>Employability Project</b>	After Project Challenge Expedition and in conjunction with PH2K, Marshalls, HBOS and Calderdale Cares
<b>Presentation Evening</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> April 2009
<b>Job Search/</b>	Ongoing

## The Team

Jade Bona

Joshua Brennan

Ashley Connor

Richard Gray

Nathan Hoyle

James Kendall

Steven Priestley

Stephen Rhodes

Nathan Royles

Nicky Taylor

## The Expedition Staff Team

Pete Dawber

Trudy McLaughlin

Michael Cumbes (DNT Guide - Norway)

## Training Programme Including comments from Young Peoples Log books

The first day is a mixture of apprehension and anticipation. Everyone is really quiet until they get to know each other. The dreaded induction runs smoothly and they can't wait to start the 'real' training. Before we know it the first residential is upon us.

### 1st Residential - Selside, Yorkshire Dales

The group arrive on time, excited at the prospect of going away. Nicola, our newest member of staff steps in at the last minute - Sophie is ill. We send her home to get some things - give her Sophie's rucksack and we are away. We go on a short walk before driving to Selside. Finding our accommodation turns out to be a bit like a treasure hunt. We are trying a new Bunkhouse out and have to pick the key up from a post box at someone's house, then follow basic instructions in the pitch black to find the place. The young people wonder what's going on. Aren't the staff supposed to know what they are doing?

After tea it's night nav. The young people walk unaccompanied in 2 teams to develop their navigating and team working skills while staff watch on from a distance at checkpoints. One young person climbs over a gate. In the darkness Pete yells out "GET OFF THE FENCE!!!!" He is so shocked he falls off it.

It's a 7am wake-up call the next day and some young people don't realise there are two 7o'clocks in one day. Today we are walking 16km up Pen-y-Ghent. On the way up one young person leaves his map behind on a break. He is gutted when he has to go back to find it. We reach the top and don't hang about, visibility is Zero and it's wet and wild. Our route down is via a lesser used path and eventually it disappears into a bog. Pete and Trudy have to navigate using their compasses. This delays us and as darkness falls we put our head torches on. With the poor visibility people are falling in bogs everywhere, and navigating decisions are time consuming. We arrive back at 9am weary, wet, muddy and hungry. The drying room is full to capacity with all our wet clothes.

It was fine at first but as we got higher and higher up Pen-y-Ghent the fog got worse and worse. It was an amazing feeling when we got to the top although then we had hell ahead of us.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Residential - Howgill, Yorkshire Dales

The whole group arrive on time again with their kit and can't wait to set off. We drive to Malham and do a circular walk to get used to carrying heavier rucksacks. Some have not been to Malham before and learn about how the Cove used to be a waterfall which now runs underground. During night nav, both Pete and Trudy overhear much more discussion within the groups about navigating decisions.

In the morning, one young person wants to go home. There is no changing her mind so Sophie drives her back to Halifax. The rest of the group walk up Pen-y-Ghent via a different route this time. As we approach the top, there is masses of snow, and the group can't resist having snowball fights and throwing themselves around in the snow, doing flipovers and jumping into snowdrifts. One young person attracts a deluge of snowballs as he is ambushed by the entire group. He takes it in good spirits as we continue on our revised route back down to solid ground. We go through a field with horses in. One young person is terrified of horses and doesn't want to be there, another says "I like horses". He approaches a very big horse and lifts his hand up to it. The horse rears, he runs faster than anybody has ever seen him move, yelling "Open the \*\*\*\*ing gate." The horse follows him, cutting off the exit for the rest of the group. Everyone who has seen it laughs - once we are all to safety, of course. That evening one young person rings home who has an ill relative and goes home.

The following day we go up Whernside. One of the group is not feeling very well and turns back with Pete. The rest of the group continue, and again there is lots of snow. We don't stay long at the summit as it is too cold, and descend to meet Pete at the road.

The weather has been against us this residential, and we spend the evening doing First Aid training in preparation for the HSE 1<sup>st</sup> Aid at Work after Xmas. On the last day we pack up, the group do an unaccompanied walk out and then we set off back to Halifax stopping off for a well earned "Full Monty" breakfast.

..then it was packing and going out again for a good days walking. A few people even tried hiding their sleeping bags and clothes so not to carry them but Pete and Trudy have been in this game too long for mini tricks like that.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Residential - Lake District and the D of E Bronze Expedition

There's heavy snowfall across Britain and the country is at a standstill! It is not sensible to set off as planned to travel to the Lakes even though we have 100% attendance and everyone is eager to go. Instead we start avalanche and transceiver training, at base. The roads are clear on Tuesday and we set off. We do our usual walk when we get there - but the group cannot go unaccompanied - a member of staff must accompany them because of the snow and possible ice and it may be unsafe. It's not a good start as they miss the first path junction and start to descend instead of ascending, but once they realise they get back on track and enjoy the walk.

We drive to our accommodation for the first night, and it's a bit of a shock. It is a bunk barn that has been converted from a cow barn. Very basic - and cold! We cook using camping gas stoves for the first time on a concrete slab. The group gets stuck in making brews and cooking pasta'n sauce or noodles, before going out to practice avalanche transceiver and emergency rescue training in the outdoors, searching for a casualty and dealing with them until help arrives. Then it's back indoors to prep for tomorrow's D of E Bronze expedition.

It is 7am. One young person doesn't want to get out of his sleeping bag. It's warm in there and freezing in the barn. Eventually he is 'helped out' by one of his team. This is the first time that they have had to get up, pack, and clean up ready to leave, and all by 9am. The majority of the group are really efficient and ready to set off on time, which impresses the staff as they are so enthusiastic.

Unfortunately, snow and ice cover Catbells so they must avoid the summit and take the alternative route. We have two groups walking the same route in different directions so the staff are kept busy monitoring their progress. Both groups complete the first day and reach their destinations on target. But tonight the accommodation is in converted pig barns, equally as basic - and cold!

More snow is forecast, so after the groups have set off on their second day of the expedition, the staff decide to pack up ready to return to Halifax that night. We stop off for fish and chips, which is a big success and celebrate the teams' successes at passing their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze expedition.

...we had to prepare our route cards. And we all took it in turns to complete all the sections and took it in turn to count our contour lines and measure out the distances we would be travelling.

... we did meet some random walkers who said they was very happy to see such young people enjoying the outdoors

..then totally disheartened when we realized how hard it was going to be to get a cup of tea or something to eat as if you wanted any hot water it was boiling it on the stove or do without!

When we got to the top of the forest the view was brilliant it looked over a massive lake and we could see the 2 snowy peaks of 2 mountains across from us which looked ace

When we was picked up on the bus Pete said we had all passed, this made me feel pleased with myself and the rest of the group.

The training continues. The main focus is on the expedition, and the Snowlife Skiing awards at Ploughcroft. Gill is going to assess them on their last session. Project Challenge has a new member of staff, Guy, who is going on the expedition. What an induction! He goes to Ploughcroft 'to get his ski legs back'. It was supposed to be like riding a bike - you never forget. Unfortunately, Guy slipped and the matting caught his thumb. After a shaky few moments Guy was taken to A & E. It was the worst news possible. Guy had broken the end digit of his thumb in 6, YES 6 places. We considered every scenario - but at the end of the day, a thumb with a broken digit in 6 places was better than no thumb digit at all - FROSTBITE Aaaargh! So safety, as always, must, and did come first. This meant that Guy had to stay in Halifax and complete a more traditional induction. Pete, Trudy and the group were gutted for him.

We went up to the skislope today for our last training session we got a ski for life level 3 award and I feel proud of myself.

..we also shared out food and other bits of extra kit and weight. These were the final few days before going to Norway I believed all the staff were a bit dizzy to be honest!

## The Main Journey

It's the day of the expedition and we arrange to meet at 10pm. Ten young people, the most we have ever taken on expedition, arrive early - some are excited, some nervous, many both. Either way they can't wait to set off and put all their training into action, knowing that it will be nearly a full 24 hours before we reach our destination in Norway. We meet up with Mike our DNT Guide in Oslo, and help him with his pulk (a long sledge for carrying equipment).

After the last accommodation in the Lakes, the group are pleasantly surprised with the cabins. We cook a quick meal of Lapscuss (Norwegian stew) which everyone eats very quickly. Some young people just relax and shower; others build a snow cave and can't sleep. When Pete goes into one room to tell them to be quiet, the room is full of smoke when he turns the light on. Not good when you're sleeping in a log cabin! It's a pair of gloves on the radiator, and the rubber is melting. Eventually everyone gets to sleep ready for the first of many PPP breakfasts - Pete's Perfect Porridge.

In the morning Mike puts the group through their Cross Country ski training and is very impressed with their enthusiasm. One young person though has difficulty staying upright in the snow and it takes him a bit of getting used to. But they quickly learn how vital their equipment is, and how they must adjust their clothing to suit the weather conditions and their body temperature.

Once we got through security (airport) first thing I saw was the police with massive guns some people got a bit nervous but ,I just thought of them as they were protecting me.

...and on the first hill I went down arse over tit and did a head plant into the snow and it was horrible coz i forgot my hat and gloves.

I learned how to glide, turn and FALL!!

### Hageseter - Grimsdalshytta. 15km

We wake up at 7am and get ready to leave the security of our cabins and head off into the mountains. We retrace our route upwards from yesterday hoping that our tracks will still be there. They aren't. It snowed overnight, and we must path break in the deep snow all the way to the top, zig zagging our way up to pick the easiest route. We have a break every hour, and the pace is very good, even though it is hard work lifting your skis out of the snow with every

step. The group pushes forward, the training over the last 5 months clearly paying off. One young person is still struggling with the deep snow and gets frustrated as he falls in the snow, and has to pull himself up, and continue upwards. At last, we reach the top and it is lunchtime.

After a couple of hours skiing along the top we start to descend. There are two options - option 2 adds an extra 5km to our route - so we decide on option 1. Straight down the valley. When it gets too steep to ski we take our skis off and walk down. Once everyone is down - we select a route for the next section - sliding down holding our skis. The last ones whizz down as the track gets compacted down. Kendall caught his eye on his ski which started to bleed. Mike has to come down carefully as he normally PULLS his pulk, however, he has to hang on and slide down behind it. Interesting!

We ski along the valley bottom, the river appearing out of the snow every now and again guiding us along. We kick and glide in the fantastic snow conditions until we reach a short, but steep climb up which we must negotiate, side-stepping and herringboning up cautiously. Then, facing us is a cornice (an overhanging ledge of snow) which we have to get over. Pete is there first, and as he stabs his ski pole in the snow to support himself, it disappears down and snaps. Everyone climbs or drags themselves over the ledge and skis up to the DNT cabin.

But the cabin is a bit of a shock. It lives up to its name. Grim! After the luxury of electricity and running water over the last few days, reality hits home. It is dark and damp, and we fetch snow to melt for water, light fires, candles and generally share chores amongst us. One young person asks where the toilet is. When she gets back we ask her if she found it alright.

"Well, I found a piece of wood with a hole in it" she replied.

Later a group of 7 Norwegians come to the cabin, and we make the most of the cramped conditions as they cook their meal.

Well what can I say - hard work, definitely different, a right culture shock! F\*\*\*ing hard! They did say the first three days would be the hardest; there was loads of uphill a bit of downhill and plenty of falling over.

Oh and PPP stands for Pete's Puke Porridge!

Set off from hageseter at 8:30am it was horrible I fell over loads

I struggled a lot with the uphill bits and the downhill bits as I kept falling over and because the snow was so deep it was really hard to get up and I got in a pretty bad mood with it all.

### Grimsdalshytta - Fallet. 20km

Our intentions of an early start are scuppered. When Pete gets up to make porridge there is no water. It has all been used. He has to get snow to melt before we can do anything. But every cloud has a silver lining. We are treated to PPP in bed. We set off late but we are not too concerned as today is a long, flat ski, along what seems to be, a neverending road. The sun is shining, and there is no uphill. We still have to path break as the skis sink in the snow up to our knees in sections, rubbing heels inside boots aggravating the blisters that have appeared for some. We have a 'foot clinic' during one break and pad peoples' feet.

At last we reach Fallet and there is an interesting little downhill to the cabin. It's a two storey cabin, and after sorting out who's sleeping where, we cook tea, make pancakes, plan a route card for the following day and agree a chores rota. Mike has pre-ordered some bread, which we collect and freeze down in his pulk overnight. We will use this for sandwiches over the next few days.

I have learnt all the jobs that needed doing in the cabin once we get in, the difference between a hard day and easy day skiing, and how blisters hurt no matter how much you pad them!

There was electricity and it was good because i was able to get a shower

### Fallet - Doralseter. 18km

We leave Fallet, and ski through the horse paddock, carefully unhooking the electric fence. After a short distance through the wood we stop to put skins on our skis. These will stop us sliding backwards up the next steep section, and save time and energy. We hear a rumbling in the distance and as we struggle to get off the track a ski mobile flies past. One young person is up to his thighs in snow as he stepped into loose snow. The more he struggled, the deeper in he got.

The temperature is warming up to around -2°C and the snow begins to "ball up" under our skis. This is really frustrating as it stops you sliding along the snow.

Everyone is stomping and stamping their skis around, trying to get the snow off. Later there is more rumbling and we dive out of the way again. This time it is the Red Cross. Mike finds out that they are looking for the Norwegian group we met earlier. They ignored our advice and took an inappropriate route getting into difficulty. They return with all the group who had had to dig in overnight and sleep in a snow shelter.

This meant that we had tracks for the rest of the way to the cabin and first choice of the rooms when we got there. The rota kicks in and everyone knows exactly what they need to do. We learn by our mistakes and make sure that we take pans of melted snow into our rooms for PPP the following morning.

The snow mobiles the rescuers were on had made good tracks in such deep snow. "A Right Doo!"

I led most of the way and ive been told I do this really well because I keep looking back to make sure the rest of the group are behind me. I like leading the way and pushing myself to get fit.

### Doralseter - Rondvassbu. 16km

We get up at 7am as we have agreed with the other occupants and have first shot in the kitchen. We work efficiently and pack up and leave. We make good time as we ski out of the valley and up into the mountains ready to descend down another valley to a 3.5km lake that we will ski across to reach our next destination. At lunchtime, the sun is shining and we have stopped at the top of our descent into the valley. Most of the group have a fantastic time skiing down a big slope, without their rucksacks, getting more and more adventurous as they try to jump off a section with a snow ledge at the top landing in virgin snow and flying down to the bottom. There are many 'headplants' as they lose their balance and land head first into the deep snow. It lightens everyone's spirits and we look forward to skiing down into the valley.

We follow an existing track along the lake, some young people are quite nervous that they are skiing over water. Rondvassbu cabin is at the end of the lake and it is a manned DNT cabin which means you have to eat the food they provide. You can't cook your own. We settle down that evening to real food. It tastes

fantastic! Later we relax and catch up with logbooks, write postcards, play board games or just talk.

While on this lake it was lovely - it echo's when you shout, and we saw frozen water that was just coming out of the rocks. I took a few pictures yet couldn't wait to get off the lake, frozen or not!

I really enjoyed it especially the dinner when we was allowed to play on the slope which was fun

I learnt people do cross country skiing for fun (weirdo's)

Woke up at 7am, couldn't be bothered to get up and wanted to go home but sort of knew I didn't have a choice so had to get up

This is a fantastic cabin to start off with Pete bought me a coffee with real milk and water. Not that sort of water which we have previously been drinking because it's been melted snow.

### Rondvassbu - Eldabu. 21km

There's no PPP today. Instead we enjoy a breakfast buffet and make sandwiches for lunch with our choice of filling. Luxury! We have a hard day ahead of us. Visibility is poor, and we have no marked route to follow. We must navigate across open and remote terrain, ascending gradually and contouring around until we reach a wide open plateau. Today is also the first day of the Duke of Edinburgh Gold expedition. As we gradually ascend, the group follow each other in a long line path breaking. They take it in turns to lead to save energy. At one point, they have to spread out leaving a wide gap in between each other. This is because there is so much loose snow that there is an avalanche risk. By spreading out there is less risk to the whole group, and less chance of starting an avalanche. It is a long, hard process. Visibility is still poor and path breaking takes its toll. Just as we estimate that we are near the plateau a small patch of blue sky appears. The clouds gradually disappear and the sun shines, opening up a fantastic view of a vast snow desert stretching as far as the eye can see.

When we get to the cabin, the group know what their jobs are. Water should be easier as they don't have to melt snow. The only problem is the water source is at the bottom of the hill, and carrying buckets of water back up it in deep snow is a bit tricky.

..it was a buffet so we could have anything as much as we wanted as well. Even orange juice it was like rocket fuel.

I set off up a mountain we had to do a compass bearing and path break which was difficult and knackered it seemed to last forever

The weather was not on our side though. We set off ok but soon had to use compass bearings using a method called man in front. We had learnt this in our training though so all good. Path breaking in these conditions were a bit scary but thats only because I thought I was going to fall off the edge of nothingness!

We also had our first experience of a white out for around an hour until we saw a break in the clouds and saw the magnificent view.

..we were on the side of a mountain and we got caught in a white out but we did a compass bearing and found our way out of it.

### Eldabu - Grahogdabu 16km

The group get up at 7am and pack up all their kit. There is no bread left now so lunch today will be Ryecrisps. They all expect the worst and that it will be horrible. It is a windy and cold morning with the snow whipping around everywhere so visibility is poor again. But today is a tracked route, and the group sets off, with their heads down, to tackle the tricky woody start to the day. As the day continues, the weather gets worse. The path breaking is relentless but some of the group respond fantastically, and show natural leadership skills.

Lunch turns out to be a pleasant surprise. Ryecrisp is not as bad as everyone thought. Or is it just that everyone's starving because of all the hard work!

We reach the road, and the staff know that from here it is a long, long, long pull up 3km to the cabin. We continue up, and one young person offers to pull Mike's pulk up the hill, so he can stay at the back. He soon regrets it, as the pulk pulls him back. But he perseveres and gets to the cabin - shattered!

Unfortunately, there are 4 people already in the cabin. This means that many of us will have to sleep on the floor. It is a bit crowded, but we work together taking it in turns to cook, fetch snow to melt for water, fetching logs for the fire and generally keeping the cabin tidy.

As we sit around talking in the evening the group talked about a name for their journey. Richard suggested Arctic Ants as he said he thought we were like an army of ants in a vast open space.

That night Trudy, Pete and Mike realise that Trudy must pull out of the expedition as her feet have got infected. Mike speaks Norwegian and arranges for a taxi to meet her down at the road 3km away in the morning at 11am.

The terrain was mainly uphill and the weather was S\*\*\*! Cold snowy and very windy like a blizzard.

My right shoulder and neck is in pain from the heavy rucksack. - O well only a week to go and I'll be back in England.

### Grahogdabu - Jammersdahlsbu. 18km

There is a Dutch person in the cabin, he is an older man and chats to the group. He said that he would clean the cabin in the morning so we could set off early. We set off in deep snow and start trail breaking for the first hour then a piste basher came along and put in a nice compact trail. The group are kicking and gliding really well and on the new cut track pick up a good pace and maintain this for the rest of the day. Nicky has a go at pulling the pulk and soon finds it's not as easy as it looks but doesn't complain and keeps going.

We eventually arrive at Jammersdahlsbu and there is a couple already there who had made the cabin very homely - they obviously didn't expect a group to arrive. They move to a smaller cabin even though we say they are welcome to stay.

The group start their jobs - collecting snow, cooking food and looking at the next day's route. There is a good feeling in the cabin as they know that there is only four days left of the journey. Two Norwegians arrive who speak good English and are impressed at how far the group have skied. They have some bananas and dish them out around the group. They are delicious.

We got up at 7.00am AGAIN!!!! \*\*

We got about 4km away and started to climb up hill, this was hard but I could do it plus Pete had given me even more tape for my toes so they weren't rubbing anymore.

### Jammersdahlsbu - Vetabua. 18km

It is Nathan's birthday today and we have a surprise for the group when we get to the next cabin.

Pete's porridge is not on the menu this morning, there is no oatmeal in the cabin. We have stew instead and the group think it's great. We set off and after only 1km there is a downhill and everyone has a great whizzy time with only a couple of wipeouts in the snow. At the bottom we have to put skins on to go up the hill at the other side. There is a lot of snow but we are fortunate that two people have skied in front of the group which means no need to trail break - Yippee! It is a steady days skiing and the group are soon at the cabin. They are happy there is no-one else there, and we don't have to melt snow - there is a water pump.

During the day, the group keeps asking Pete what they are going to do for Nathans birthday. Pete plays it down. "Well, we'll have some pancakes shall we?" We get the pancakes on and for tea it's Lapscuss followed by tinned fruit and condensed milk for Nathans birthday. Everyone is happy and then it's time for the surprise - Mike has been skiing with a chocolate cake in his pulk. Mike walks into the room with the cake and one candle everybody sings Happy Birthday, Nathan is speechless. It was the best cake in the world and everyone soon gobbled it up.

Since it was Nathans birthday we got pancakes, fruit cocktail, and condensed milk in that, then this best chocolate cake in the world. (Either that or we was that sugar deprived it just tasted fantastic.)

We woke up in Jammersdahlsbu at 7am and had some stew for breakfast which made a change

### Vetabua - Djupslia. 15km

In the morning we're up, have breakfast and ski to Djupslia at a very quick pace and soon arrive at the cabin. The next day is a rest day and everyone is looking forward to the rest. We have unpacked our kit and start to cook food when three Norwegians arrive. All the beds are full so they will have to sleep on the

floor on a mattress. The three men think that some of the group should sleep on the floor because they are younger. Pete and Mike say "No" and explain they have skied 160km without a rest day. The men are surprised and start to ask where we are from and where we started the journey.

"How many years have you been doing this" they ask Pete.

"17" says Pete

"Have you ever been rescued?"

"No." The three are very impressed and think that what the group have done is fantastic. They sleep on the floor.

### Rest day

The three men leave early and Pete and Mike are up. Some of the group lie in, but not for long as they have got into the routine of getting up early. They're not happy because they are awake. Some of the group decide to dig a snow hole but the snow is fresh and soft - the wrong type of snow. They start to dig and get so far in then it collapses and Ash has a bit of a panic. They have a second attempt and it collapses again on Steve who also has a panic. Pete knows it's safe because its soft fluffy snow not hard packed and heavy which is what you need to build a good snow cave. Two of the group dig a tunnel in hard snow and that stays up. Josh and Nick are chuffed with their tunnel.

...then it collapsed with me ash and jade in it. I was the last to get out and couldn't breath and was gettin crushed by about 3 foot of snow.

We built a massive snow cave that fit about 6 people in it and it collapsed on me and ste p. I was the first out then I had to dig out ste coz the snow trapped him.

Had tea (not bad), did log book, then pre-rolled cigs for the 28km ski tomorrow. Arghhh!

Early night tonight got to get up early at 5.00am for 28km ski.

### Djupslia - Hafjell. 28km

Pete and Mike are up at 4.30am to put the water on because today we eat the emergency rations we have carried. Everyone has them for breakfast but at 5am some struggle to eat but they have a 28km ski to do so shove as much down as possible.

We set off in the dark and the snow is deep so we start trail breaking. Because the snow is so deep Pete only gives everyone 5 minute stints, then change. The group get into a rhythm and soon knock off the kilometres. There is a strong wind blowing and it is cold, but as we get lower down the wind drops, the mood lightens and everyone is laughing and joking. We arrive at the finish and meet Trudy. Everyone gets a shower and eats sausages, eggs, cheese, chips and drink bottles of coke.

They have skied 185k - the expedition is done, however there is an optional 25k they can ski tomorrow to Lillehammer which is nearly all downhill. Some would really love to ski, but cannot face another days skiing because of their blisters and sore feet. Four of the group definitely decides to go with Pete and Mike. The others will go with Trudy on the bus.

After tea Mike sees each of the group individually to give them feedback for the Duke of Edinburgh Gold expedition. Everyone passes and they all emerge from their meeting feeling proud and happy. The rest of the evening is spent chatting and watching television - they also appreciate the flushing toilet instead of a hole in the ground, and running water.

It was that dark when we set off we needed our head torches, there was also a lot of path breaking to do ... We took it in turns to path break and when we did have breaks everyone was coughing and wheezing, due to Pete and ash sharing a coughing disease. (Nice one)

This is also around the time when I saw Mike last and he said I had passed my D of E gold and that I was a very hard working organized young person with great potential.

### Hafjell - Lillehammer. 25km Optional

In the morning negotiations take place. "Carry my rucksack and I'll give you a fiver". So the bus crew gains 3 rucksacks and a pulk to transport back to Lillehammer.

The ski to Lillehammer is good fun with a couple of crashes and a couple of headplants in the snow. The group soon arrive in the Olympic Stadium, bruised but still in one piece and BUZZING from all the down hills.

..I chose to ski down.It was the best day of the expedition there was lots of hills to go down andI was going down them at like 50mph















..four of us took the chance to ski an extra 25km from Falset to Lillehammer-it was proper brilliant.It took us 40 mins to do the first 7km up and flat then it was all downhill from there

..we skied to the winter Olympic stadium which was unreal. We saw some Olympic skiers practising rifling and skiing. We then dropped down in to Lillehammer which was sheet ice and we reached 50 mph. That day was one of the best of my life I was buzzin and I'll never forget Norway.

The Arctic Ants expedition is over. It has been a unique experience and one they will all never forget. Some enjoyed every minute of it, and all rose to the challenge and surpassed even their own expectations. They have grown in confidence and are aware that they can do anything they put their minds to and continue their own personal journey.

# Achievements

## The 'Arctic Ants' Team Achievements

	JB	JBr	AC	RG	NH	JK	SP	NR	SR	NT
 BHF										
 HSE										
 IOSHWS										
 MH										
 FW										
 NNAS B										
 IMP										
 F4L										
 AA exp										
 D of E B										
 D of E G										
 FMP										
 E2E										
 SL	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3

### KEY

BHF	British Heart Foundation Heartstart Award
HSE	HSE First Aid at Work
IOSHWS	IOSH Working Safely
MH	Manual Handling Operations
FW	Fire Warden Course in association with Marshalls
NNAS B	National Navigation Award Scheme Bronze
IMP	Improvised Rescue Training
F4L	Fit4Life Fitness Training Programme Certificate
AA exp	Arctic Ants Expedition Certificate
D of E B	Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award
D of E G	Duke of Edinburgh Gold Expedition Section
FMP	E2E Film & Media DVD Project
E2E	Completion of E2E Training Course
SL	Snowlife Skiing Award

# Young People's Evaluations

I am writing to evaluate my time at Project Challenge. I have really enjoyed my time here it has been brilliant from day One...hill days, boxercise and ski'in...the residentials were very stressful and we stayed in some really rubbish places but that's part of life. The ski lessons were very helpful and all the staff was brilliant. I would like to thank project for giving me the opportunity to change my life around and give me the chance for a good job and good prospects in life. I have enjoyed going on the expedition and I have met a few brilliant friends that hopefully I will stay in contact with and spend time with after project.

When I first started project challenge I really didn't know what to expect but I am really glad that I got through it all coz eventho it was the hardest thing I have ever done Project Challenge has really help me with a lot. I am abit more confidant with myself and if I can do Norway I can do anything if I put my mind on it.

I feel that Project Challenge is great, it has really changed my life and it is something that I will always remember. It's a once in a lifetime experience and I think that everyone should have that opportunity. The staff are really good and I got on well with them all. All the qualifications are great and I feel that they will really help me to get a job. Thank you to everyone at Project for helping me.

**Project challenge has changed my life around and the staff are so encouraging towards me.**

**I will miss everyone once I leave but ill still pop in and see them.**

**I loved every minute of it and every day, it was hard but worth it in the end.**

**It's a once in a lifetime thing to do so if you're thinking about it then go ahead what's stopping you, nothing stopped Me!!!**

I think that Project Challenge has helped me a lot. I suggest Project Challenge to anyone who hasn't a job or is just dossing.

It's kept me off the streets and it has prepared me a lot with going into the army with things like the living arrangements and carrying a lot of kit which I will need to carry on the training. I just hope there's better food in the army.

I really enjoyed this course and I think it has helped me a lot. I have come a long way since I started mentally and physically. I can do a lot more stuff such as first aid and I have got more qualifications and so on. I am proud that I have completed project and am a bit gutted at the same time because it has been a lot of fun and I will miss some of the people who was on it with me. Now I can't wait to carry on with my life and get a job and actually do something with my life instead of nothing. So all in all the experience is a once in a life time opportunity and I would definitely recommend it to everybody who was in the same boat as me

**I WOULD LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE AT PROJECT FOR GIVING ME THIS ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY IT HAS KEPT ME FROM GOING DOWN THE WRONG ROAD IN LIFE AND KEPT ME ON THE RAILS**

Project challenge has given me an awful lot since I started in October 2008. It has given me an opportunity to enhance a lot of my skills that I have previously learnt like my navigation skills that I learnt at school, also my first aid skills that I did whilst my time at St.John Ambulance. I have also learnt how to cope with all kinds of weather like heavy snow, really windy conditions. I have also gained a lot of confidence with working with other people and also working individually. I have also gained more confidence in talking within a group. I have gained a lot more qualifications with Project Challenge like IOSH working safely, Fire Warden Training and also Manual Handling. I have enjoyed most things like going away on various residential and learning how to live off rations. Also learning how to ski and gaining a qualification in skiing, which I never thought I'd do. The most rewarding thing I feel that Project Challenge done for me is helping me complete the Expedition in Norway which when I started I never thought I'd make it. However with the help from the boxercise sessions I completed it.

*I found out about project challenge when my brother started it. So when I started project I thought it would be easy and then I found out*

*that it wasn't. The training was not as easy as I thought it would be, I found boxercise fun but hard and some of the hill days was a killer but some was ok. But when we got to ski I loved it I fell but just got back up and tried again and again and in the end up I become a level 3 skier and the expedition was very good. some days was hard and some easy just like good days and bad days*

I heard about Project Challenge through a mate who did it previously , yet never really understood what it was all about and how much young people like myself could get out of it . I started late on Project Challenge in between the first and second residential; I was thrown straight in with the group and basically just got on with it. I had never done anything like Project Challenge before and just couldn't believe there was something so hands on and with so many opportunities at the end. I loved everything about Project, and would totally recommend it to others. The people I met and worked with while also learning to live and share stuff with are some of the most entertaining people ever. All the Boxercise, hill days, residential, navigation skills and first aid were hard to learn and keep up with at first, but the staff keep you so up to date with everything while helping in any way they can.

Now Norway was the best experience of my life. It taught me so much and put in to practice everything we had been training for except for the toilets Eww! So much enjoyment overall!

My future looks much clearer now and I know I'll find it easier to get a job with all the new qualifications not to mention my bran spanking new CV. Finally I'm so grateful to Project for everything you have done for me now I'm going to prove you haven't wasted your energy and make you proud.

Thank you!

## Thank You's

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