

ARCTIC WARRIORS 2007

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Training Programme

Including excerpts from young peoples logbooks (italics)

Starting a new training programme when you are 16/17 years old and don't know anyone can be very daunting, and for some of the young people who started Project Challenge in October 2006 this was exactly the case. The mix of young people varied from quiet and shy, to noisy and bouncing off the walls! So for some, in the beginning, they wondered what on earth they were doing - but nevertheless they got on with the training, and didn't give in - watching with bemusement and disbelief, the dynamics of the group as the battle for who could shout the loudest commenced.

As the training progressed, the ad hoc lifestyles along with the challenges of the training and the escalation of the effort required proved too much for some. The final preparations for the first residential were underway and our group of 13 reduced to 8.

I enjoyed Boxercise training, I feel as though I am getting fitter already! Navigation lesson was O.K I enjoy learning new things.

Paperwork- This was the usual time sapping tedious work we have to do on a Thursday afternoon so I didn't enjoy it.

Boxercise- easier this week I improved on my circuit training and got a better score in all of the exercises. It was fun and enjoyable.

We went on a walk to Errington Moor and it was ... eventful to say the least. We had to do boxing and pacing and I finished it and Julian nicked my bottle and I had to do it all over again. Buggar.

1st Aid- Conscious and unconscious heart attack casualties, and bandage scenario. This was fun and I learnt how to deal with the heart attack. We have learnt how to bandage someone and prevent them going into shock.

1st Residential Yorkshire Dales

The rucksacks were finally packed with all the kit and the food, and the group complained at the weight of them. How were they supposed to walk when they had to carry THEM? We drove to Malham Tarn for the trial and tested 8km 'walk in'. The group may have been smaller but if we wanted to get a good night's rest we still needed to pack as much training in as possible to keep everyone busy. The weather was good and the walk successful. Everyone was in high spirits, so it was on to the barn for a brew and some pasta 'n sauce.

Not everyone knew how to cook, so for some it was a new experience and they needed support from staff, and surprise surprise the 'magic' cleaners didn't arrive to clean up after the cooking. So following some mumbling and grumbling, with everyone claiming **they** had washed up so the pots couldn't be theirs, the necessity of teamwork was re-enforced.

After tea it's back out for night nav. When the group recovered from the shock after realising that they would be walking in 2 teams, on their own, (no staff), in the dark, both teams completed their routes and were chuffed at their success. We returned to the barn for a brew and the evenings' entertainment of a newly devised ball game, bouncing a soft ball on the back of your hand before passing it on to someone else. Oh well, the things you get up to when you can't watch TV!

It's an early start, and now the culinary challenge is Oats so Simple. We have decided to walk up Ingleborough, so head torches are a must as we know it will be late when we get back. It is a 13 km round trip walk. There's not too much complaining at the weight of the rucksacks today - most of the kit is being worn because of the weather. But still, some of the group disregard all their training and don't carry water, much to the frustration of the staff.

Ingleborough is covered in clag, so the young people have no clue as to how high and how far they have to walk, which is probably a good thing as Ingleborough is 723m high. The wind drives the rain at us as and frustration mounts because each time we come to the top of a steep section they can't believe that we haven't reached the top. The young people think the staff are crazy for taking them there, and that they are going to die! But it is very

safe, and eventually we reach the summit, the first of many for only 3 young people from this group, who will go on to complete the expedition.

As predicted it is a late finish and it is too much for one young person who throws her rucksack on the floor and yells she is not moving. Another young persons legs have a bit of a wobble on the last stepping stone across a river and he gets wet feet. Eventually we reach the minibus and later that night its Improvised Rescue, ropework and learning how to make an alpine basket.

It's an early start again, the barn is cleaned, and the group set off for their short 'walk out', unaccompanied by staff. When they get back to the minibus, its rucksacks on the roof, and we're off for a well deserved 'full monty' breakfast on the way home.

1st Day- A short walk. It was very boring and the bag was heavy so I was extremely grumpy. That night we did night navigation, which was pretty easy and I enjoyed it. I was very tired after all the walking so I slept well.

2nd Day- We did a very long walk up to the summit of Ingleborough and back down to the van. This was very tiring and the entire group were tired and grumpy. That night we did 1st Aid and learnt the alpine basket this was fun and easy so I enjoyed it.

Woke at 7 am and went on a day long walk. This was our first real test and was quite difficult especially with the rucksack on.

2nd Residential - Snowdonia

10 young people set off to Wales, and for half of them it is their first residential. The barn is on a working farm at the base of the rugged and impressive Tryfan. It is more basic than the first, with working dogs that barked incessantly in the night, but it still has electricity even though the toilets are outside across the yard.

When we arrive at Bethesda we offload the group for the customary 'walk in' and within a few yards of setting off Andrew - our Apprentice member of staff, twists his knee and is unable to carry on.

The next day we are up at 7am and set off for Mount Snowdon - the highest mountain in Wales at 1085m high. We select the safest route due to the winter conditions - A long pull up from Llanberis. The pace is steady - it is the first time that anyone in the group has ever experienced anything like it, and some struggle with the concept of climbing anything so long and big. When most of the hard work has been done, and the summit suddenly seems achievable we have to turn back for safety reasons.

We had walked 6km and climbed 800m, so not surprisingly some are gutted. They are so close to 'bagging' their first mountain - not just any mountain, but Snowdon - the biggest in Wales. Others are just glad to be going back down.

That night one young person is adamant she wants to go home, so Pete takes her home with Andrew, who has been confined to the barn with his knee.

Next day we walk from the barn up the side of Tryfan to Y Foel Goch at 805m, a lesser known peak, and along an undulating ridge to Capel Curig. Some rise to the challenge and have a fantastic day, enjoying the amazing views and the experience. But for others the ascent is too long, and their willpower is low. Bodies and legs ache, but that isn't the problem. It is the mental attitude that proves to be the hardest, and a gap opens splitting the group into two, mentally and physically. A very weary group arrives back at the barn after walking 14.5 km some 8-9 hours later.

That evening, after many brew's and some pasta'n sauce, the group's spirits are revived and it's back out for Improvised Rescue training. They learn how to carry out a sweep search for a casualty followed by Improvised Rescue training. The evening session proves to be just as challenging, not least because the perpetrators of the day turn into the first aiders of the night, and the backchat - well it's someone else's turn now.

This residential was difficult for many of the group. If it wasn't the walking, it was the disappointment of turning back up Mount Snowdon. One person choosing to return home unsettled others, but most of all the realisation of what was ahead was apparent. It was a significant milestone!

Today we walked up mount Snowden the highest mountain in Wales. But we had to turn back because of the icy path. I was a bit disappointed that we couldn't walk to the top but in another way glad because I were getting a bit unsure about the height an the drop off the path I found it hard but a great experience.

... when we got half way up the mountain we could see the top of Snowdon and was determined to get to the top as we got further up it was getting icy and very cold we got to 800 meters and Steve and Pete had to assess to see if it was safe to carry on as it was very slippery when Steve and Pete came back down it was too dangerous to carry on so we had to turn back.

Walked from barn up the side of Tryfan and up Y Foel Goch at 805 metres. This walk took 8 hours and eventually got back but it was dark. This day was very tiring and unbelievably hard. We did improvised rescue that night and learnt how to do a sweep search.

...then did improvised rescue which were okay but need a little work on some things.

First aid night navigation was easy enough but made harder by peoples reactions to what we had to do.

We cleaned up the barn to leave but it didn't go well at all so we must improve on the individual duties of cleaning.

3rd Residential - Lake District and the D of E Bronze Expedition

The preparation is complete, the route cards finished, and the group are ready for the challenge ahead. They set off for a 'practice' walk in, shadowed by Andrew as they don't know the area. It doesn't bode well as they miss a path and end up walking higher and longer than they should have. They blame Andrew for not correcting them! However, the staff can see the benefits - they will concentrate on their navigation skills and teamwork for the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze expedition more seriously.

It's not just the walking, and being away from home, that will be a challenge this residential. The accommodation is different each night and they are totally reliant on each other. They must unpack each night, only to pack up and clean up before setting off each day. Break times cause a bit of tension

too as there are too many 'fag breaks'. One young person keeps throwing himself on the floor with 'exhaustion', which doesn't go down too well with the rest of the group, but they rally round and make him keep going.

At the end of the two days the young people are excited about their achievements, and are rightly proud of themselves. They await their feedback from Pete who is assessing them. Their navigation and teamwork have been excellent, it is only their domestic duties that need a bit of improvement. The young people are deservedly proud of themselves, and pass their D of E expedition. For some it is the hardest thing they have done, but what they don't know is that tomorrow we will set off on the longest (20km) and highest walk to date up Pillar at 892m.

It is a struggle waking everyone up, but eventually we succeed. Headtorches are a must today. Everyone keeps asking 'which one is Pillar?' But the bad news is that we can't see it yet. It is behind the peaks surrounding us. Two of the group find themselves a walking stick which seems to motivate them into going faster.

As we start the ascent up Black Sail Pass, the clouds swirl around us and the clag moves in. We keep climbing, relentlessly, in the clag, and the staff are disappointed for the group that they will not be able to see anything when we reach the top of Pillar. But we can't believe our eyes - the cloud separates and the most fantastic cloud inversion that any young person has ever seen in their lives is before us. Clouds swirled across us, above us, and below us. It was fantastic! We walked along the ridge, still enjoying the spectacular scenery.

The descent was long and hard and just as our food supplies were diminished, and we were about to start the last soul destroying ascent, Pete shared out his Mars bar. Chocolate - fantastic. What a star!

The walk got off to a bad start when we took a wrong turn and made the walk twice as hard as it should have been, as to rectify the situation we had to walk up a big hill to get back on track.

We set off late from our barn as we took too long getting ready and cleaning the barn.

The first day of D of E. It was well hard cos our bags were well heavy but it built muscle and I look like a builder. We were on our way up cat bells and we had an incentive to go up because there was an all girls school on a field trip. When we got to the top Pete was dancing like a monkey.

We set off on a 12 km walk to the barn we will be sleeping in that night, the walk was long and tough as most of the walk was uphill, we took too many breaks and this made us get behind time.

We packed immediately for our second day of our Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award, we cleaned the barn and set off, once again later than planned, as we were slow in packing and cleaning the barn. I found the walk harder than the previous day, maybe not because of the route but because of the previous two days of walking. I also feel we worked much better as a team for the second day, as we all contributed to reading the map and navigating, we also took less breaks which resulted in us finishing the walk in a much shorter time. We had our second transceiver lesson when we arrived at the barn; it was another easy lesson just getting familiar with locating a lost transceiver.

I wasn't looking forward to this day, as it was a mental and physical test for us all. It was a full days walk and I mean full day as in 12 hours. I found it difficult but at the same time fun and very challenging. When we got to the peak of Pillar we were all proud and had a great feeling of achievement. When we had finished we were all exhausted and when I got back I made my tea and went straight to bed.

Main Journey

Six young people have completed their training and are ready to leave for Norway. It is the usual nail-biting run up to the expedition, with the last passport arriving AFTER the rucksacks had meticulously been packed and weighed, the day before we leave. We travel from Liverpool Airport and arrive at Mysuseter in Norway at 3am the following morning, having met Mike Cumbes our winter guide at Oslo rail station. There has been a massive snowfall across Norway up to 3 metres deep. Thankfully this doesn't affect the public transport system, however, the drive up to Mysuseter is a little hairy.

After lunch, (well it was 3am when we arrived) it is time for the young people to put on their cross country skis for their first training session with Mike - an entirely different experience to the downhill ones they are used to. They have never seen so much snow in their life and can't wait to get started. It is a great start to the journey, lots of laughter, and falls, as they compete in relay races, various challenges and generally get used to skiing, and falling, in the deep snow.

We got up had our breakfast and went skiing. It was excellent. Mike is a fantastic man. He taught us a lot that day. When it came to tea time, me, James & Mike cooked tea, it was amazing it tasted gorgeous. Then me, Kyle, Danny & James went out skiing again, had a fag & went to bed.

Mysusetter to Rondvassbu - 13km

We have eaten well and slept well, and from now on we depend on the food we carry and that in the cabins. As for beds, we may have to sleep on the floor every now and again, because a space must be found for everyone needing to stay in the cabins due to their remoteness and the freezing temperatures.

We set off after having put the 'skins' on the bottom of the skis. The first part of the journey is a long uphill, and they will stop us slipping back down. It is a fantastic day, sunny with clear blue skies but already one of the group says he can't do it. The rucksack is too heavy, his shoulders hurt. The staff encourage him and he keeps going. We follow the caned route steadily, while the locals zoom past us - without heavy rucksacks on of course.

In the afternoon we stop for a break, and an impromptu training session develops down a long hill. Mike demonstrates the correct technique (with a bit of a wobble I may say) down a steepish section. The young people think it is great. One young person does a fantastic headplant as he tries to follow, and one after another they crash and burn as they go down the hill, but still gain more confidence (or is it bravado) as they find more challenging routes to try and stay upright on and try their skills on.

Our beds for the night are in a large dormitory style room, and we are joined by a Dutch couple who have done our journey in reverse. They tell us that today has been the only day when they could 'see' anything. The rest of the journey has been in a whiteout. We hope that the weather is changing for the better.

That evening we tucked into a heartwarming meal with soup and pork chops. Rondvassbu had just opened as catered accommodation for the summer season. This meant we could fill our boots for the next day or two.

We got up skied forever to Rondvassbu. We found it hard but we found a bit of a hill with a bit of a drop. We started to go up and down it. James fell head first in to the snow and we then set off

Woke up at 7.30 then packed our kit and ate breakfast we got our skis on to start our day skiing to Rondvassbu cabin the ski was 12km which were fun and just before the end we had a little play down some hills where I did a big fall headfirst which were very cold.

Rondvassbu - 10km

Breakfast was at 8.30am so it was a relatively late start. We set off for a full days trail breaking for the following day, as our route is going through the mountains and we must carve our own path through. It is also the first day of the Duke of Edinburgh Gold expedition.

Trail breaking is a technique that shares the task of making a path in deep snow using minimum effort. The group travels in a line, with the first person breaking the trail. The people behind compact the trail, making it easier for those further down the line. The leader then drops to the back, and the next person goes to the front thereby conserving energy within the group.

We stop for lunch at a cabin and enjoy our packed lunch in the sun. But even though the sun is shining the temperature is still freezing. Mike sets the group the task of digging a snowhole that they think they could survive in in an emergency. Meanwhile, Trudy and Pete build a bigger snowcave, in the snowbanking at the side of the cabin.

A snowball fight erupts, but it is a bit one-sided and Trudy comes off worst. Then it's back to the business in hand and Mike gives the group some tips before comparing their snowhole with the snowcave. After trying them all out the group take great pleasure in destroying Trudy and Pete's snowcave.

Today was another training day, we learned to break trail, and partly making our track for the next proper day skiing, we also tried digging some snow caves, but mine was really poor. Then we had some fun destroying the snow cave made by the staff, which I managed to fall straight through.

Day Four. Rondvassbu to Eldabu - 22km

We set off at just after 9am with the biggest packed lunches ever. We anticipate it will be a long, hard day. We follow the trail we made yesterday until it runs out, then we take it in turn to trail break. The views are stunning, with mountains covered in deep snow surrounding us. Mike comments that Norway is the last desert on earth - which is exactly how it feels as we ski along not meeting a soul all day.

Later in the day the sun disappeared and the weather changed to a near whiteout. One young person who was at the front trail breaking nearly ski's into a gap in the snow where the river is running below it. We all crumple like dominoes, and the young person's heart skips a beat. We have to pick our route very carefully, and Pete leads prodding the snow to ensure it safe and solid.

Eventually we reach Eldabu at around 8pm. But there's no rest yet. Chores have to be done. There's no heat until we light the fire, no water to make a brew until we get buckets of water from the water point. We sort out sleeping arrangements; eat tea, which two young people offer to make, and then its time for bed.

Travelled from Rondvassbu to Eldabu. We set off at 9.00am for a 12-hour ski, which I found tiring but coped with it. Everyone found it hard but we all helped each other we did our second day of our Duke of Edinburgh

gold part 1 it was 22km which was a very long day it got to about 6.00pm and started to get dark and it was very hard to see the track. When we arrived at Eldabu at 8.00 we got our sleeping arrangements done then me and Carlton went to get some water from the lake, which were not easy while Danny sorted the fire out and James, and Carly made tea which were nice.

The weather was pretty cold but we warmed up straight away. We got to a long flat section and the sun came out which was good. After we got over the cold the weather got worse and went into a total flatlight and I nearly fell into a gully, which was pretty scary and I was really tired.

..We went on the track we made yesterday and it was a long hard day we had to go over a huge plain that took us about 3 hours to get across. Then we were getting closer to Eldabu and Danny nearly fell to his doom.

Day Five. Eldabu to Grohagdabu - 17km

We hoped the weather would clear, but unfortunately it didn't. After a later start than anticipated due to lack of co-ordination with barn duties we set off in a long line again. We had hoped once we hit the caned route that tracks would have been put in. But due to the recent heavy snowfall this wasn't so. We continued trail breaking, and it got harder and harder mentally and physically for the group after the big day yesterday.

Today we have made our own packed lunch with the bread we bought in Mysuseter. Mike is carrying it in his pulk (A long type of sledge). The bread naturally freezes down, and each night remove what we need for it to thaw out for the following day. We have brought tuna twists and squeazy cheese from England for the filling which we have to use sparingly.

Another young person was having a really bad day and doubted his ability to carry on. Saying he wasn't strong enough and was having a real problem with his shoulders. We keep telling him he is strong enough, and he is just having a bad day - everyone gets them.

The caned routes are marked on the Norwegian maps as a winter route. But sometimes they change them slightly. Today we had to be really vigilant with our navigation as it became evident that the route had changed from that on the map. We diverted off the track by some electricity pylons intending to cut across country to the road. After consulting the GPS we had to travel a bit further before we could cut across. This proved to be too much for some and their heads went down. The snow was really deep and we had to go down a slope. There were bodies everywhere, and it takes some getting up when you fall in deep snow with a heavy rucksack on! Morale was low.

Eventually we reach the road, and the weather has closed in even worse and we are in a whiteout. Pete leads the way on a compass bearing up to the cabin, and we approximate how long it will take incase we miss it. We give ourselves 1 1/2 hours. That's how bad the visibility was. Just when you really started to question what on earth you are doing there, shrieks of relief can be heard at the front as a dark shape comes into sight. We have reached Grohagdabu, and in only 1 hour.

There are other people in the barn - 2 couples from France. They are just finishing their meal, and have brought snow in for melting and the fire is lit. What a relief. But it also means that there aren't enough beds for us all. Mike sleeps in the storeroom and others sleep on the floor or the seats.

Today we did a 17k ski. We got up and got our breakfast which wasn't nice as I don't like oat so simple. It was a really hard and tiring day we had a hard uphill at the end. As soon as I saw the barn I had a sudden burst of energy and caught up to the ones at the front and my feet hurt like hell. I was aching all over. We made tea, got our stuff sorted and went to bed

Today we had a 17 km ski, we had breakfast, which was just porridge. The ski was one of the hardest yet and quite frustrating for me during the day but everything was suddenly better once we reached the cabin. The cabin was nice and we also had other people staying there with us

...it got to about 11.00 and I was in a bit of a mood and down coz my shoulders were hurting and I was tired and wanted to go home. I've had enough but there was no way or chance I was going anywhere. Further

on in the day I was getting more stressed and annoyed but kept on going thanks to Trudy encouraging me it got to about 5.45 and we could see the barn and it felt good.

Grohagdabu to Jammersdahlsbu - 17km

It is Carly's 18th birthday and we all sing Happy Birthday to her. Pete has saved a Mars bar for her as a present, and her eyes light up. But we have a journey to do, so after breakfast it's business as usual, packing up and cleaning the barn.

The weather still hasn't improved. It is snowing and it is freezing cold. We hope that the track cutter has been along our route for the day, but we soon find out that's not the case. It stops snowing and gets really warm. We are boiling hot with the effort of cutting our own tracks, and for one young person the effort of putting one foot in front of the other is agonizing and he doesn't believe he will make it to the next barn.

To make matters worse, it starts to snow really heavily. Progress is even slower and we arrive at Jammersdahlsbu in the dark.

The French people have arrived before us, but they have gone into the small cabin, leaving the big cabin to ourselves. We hoped that no one else would arrive as the atmosphere is more relaxed when you have the place to yourself. It is a newish cabin, one of the nicest and the group are impressed.

After cooking tea, we have a surprise. Unbeknown to Carly, Mike has been carrying a large chocolate cake that we had requested at Rondvassbu. We sing Happy Birthday again, and Carly is gobsmacked. So after a tear or two we tuck into the slightly frozen cake.

We woke up at 7.00am feeling like crap after a rough night on the floor coz there wasn't enough room in the cabin.

Today we had to ski from Grohagdabu to Jammerdalsbu, today was a really hard ski which was made even harder by the rubbish weather, the

ski seemed to be the longest day just because of how hard the ski was, the arrival at the barn was a massive relief, I had tea then went to sleep.

It was a long hard day with a hard uphill climb at the end. I really struggled but I pulled through thanks to Trudy and the others. I even cried I was in so much pain and stress. I was so relieved when I saw the barn but I couldn't go any faster I was so exhausted. The barn felt as if it was miles away but I am glad I got there.

Jammersdahlsbu

Today, another training day has been planned. The group prepare route cards for the rest of the journey using their new skills and knowledge of distance traveled per hour. Then we put the ski's on, without rucksacks, and we step out, into the sun - at last, up the huge hill behind us. When we reach the top there is a stone with a book in and a pen. It is a visiting book, and we all write our names in and hope we will win the competition. Apparently, all the names of the people who visit go into a draw and the winner receives a prize!

After the long pull up the hill, Mike demonstrates the proper downhill technique and we all follow - some more cautiously than others. Morale improves again, and there are lots of smiles as everyone learns to improve their technique and go downhill. A couple of the group chase Pete to try and push him over because he hasn't fallen yet. He outruns them, much to the amusement of everyone - including the French people who have also decided to stay there.

Suddenly the session is cut short as Mike races back to the cabin. He has spotted a group in the distance, and he wants to make sure that we keep our beds. We are going to have company.

The group are from the armed forces, and our young people are pleased to hear people who can speak English. We have an early tea, and then some of the lads, who are suddenly full of energy, decide to build a snow cave in the snow banking by the cabin. They convince the staff they want to sleep in it. Unfortunately, or fortunately for Pete and Mike, they didn't listen to Mike's advice and cut too high into the snow and the roof fell in. You could see the relief on Pete's face as he would have had to sleep in it as well.

It was quite a good day today because we were allowed a sleep in but strangely we all got up early .

Today we had a training day, we did route cards for our next day skiing. Then we went for a short ski to test our technique going down hill on skis. When we got back to the cabin we were joined by a group of people from the army, who had to sleep on the floor because we had all the rooms

.....went out after tea and dug a big snow cave and 2hours of digging and we were doing the roof and it caved in.

Day Eight. Jammersdahlsbu to Vetibua - 17km

It's another nice day and the sun is shining. We let the military group get ready first and so we are late leaving. As we leave the cabin Mike stops to give the group some advice about the long downhill stretch that lies before us. We have learnt from past experience that setting off down the hill like lemmings isn't advisable. Another lesson that we have learnt on this journey is that when you are trail cutting on downhill sections, the people at the back go much faster because the track is deeper and smoother. So we want to avoid another pile-up.

Everyone's spirits start to lift because the sun is shining, and we put sun lotion on to stop getting burned.

Later in the day we hear a tractor heading towards us cutting the tracks. After showering us with snow - we set off and at last we could ski alongside each other and chat as we went along. We quickly made up time, but still got there after the military group and found that the French group would be staying in the same cabin as us. But they were very friendly, and we were getting used to each other by now. They were pulling out the following day and asked Mike for his advice on the best route._

Woke up at 7.00am once again had breakfast which were more porridge made by Pete we were supposed to be on our skis at 9.30am but we were all tired and didn't set of until 10.30 but later on in the day we did 5km in an hour so that caught time up a bit the weather was great sun

was shining got a little bit of a colour on my face. Today was an easy day we did 17km in 5 hours when we got to the cabin me and Dan made tea we made meatballs and pasta and pineapple slices for desert. After tea we played yatzee and I won.

Vetibua to Djupslia - 18km

It is bitterly cold again as we leave Vetibua after getting up at 7am. The wind is freezing and visibility is poor again at the start. It is a relatively easy day until we approach the cabin. The snow is really deep and it starts to get dark as we reach the cabin. It is a tricky little winding track up to the cabin, which is in the middle of a wood, so you can't see it until you literally are in front of it. It's not the best cabin, but its home for the next two days.

That evening we are joined by a group of Germans. One of the women seems to take a bit of a shine to one of our group. He soon emerges from his room changed and smelling of lynx. Shortly after his mate joins him and the rest of us laugh our heads off.

When we got there we met some germans. They were cool because they gave us chocolate alcoholic thingumyjiggies. One of them was eyeing James and Kyle up.

Day Eleven. Djupslia to Hafjell - 23km

Pete has prepared the porridge the night before, because today we get the group up at 4am. We need to leave as soon as possible because todays destination is a proper ski resort and we need to book accommodation. We depart with our head torches on, as the sun is rising and the sky is a fantastic bright pinky orange.

The weather is warm, too warm and the snow starts sticking to our ski's. This is a really weird feeling because it makes you feel that you are ski-ing on stilts, and there's no chance of gliding along the track.

The group are now more skilled at pacing themselves, and aware of distance travelled. It is a relatively easy day until we reach the ski-resort and a big

never-ending hill is before us. Mike starts to struggle with his pulk because his skis are different from ours. One of the group offers to pull it for him - which I think he starts to regret after a while.

When we get into our chalet, the group go in search of the shop and stock up on chocolate, chocolate and more chocolate. Then, after sausage and mash, its time for a shower - the first in 9 days. Boy, did it feel good to wash our hair.

We woke up at half past 4 in the morning and had loads of porridge and managed to leave the barn by about 6 am, the day was a 22km ski to Hafjell, which is a proper ski resort. The day was pretty easy overall, apart from about an hour of the ski, which was mostly uphill. We finally had a proper meal mash, sausage, egg and beans which James and Kyle made. Carly let us use her bank card to buy loads of chocolate from the shop, we gave her the money though. We all had a shower for the first time in nearly two weeks, which felt brilliant although mine was mostly cold, but it didn't bother me. We went to bed earlyish again because we had to be up at 6am for our very last day of skiing.

Woke up at 4.15 to set of to Hafjell ski resort it was a nice steady day the weather was okay today was a good day for skiing I pulled mikes paulk for 5km which were hard but got used to it after a bit we had sausage mash beans and egg. After tea I ate loads of chocolate, which I bought, from the shop. In the room there was a shower which were the best shower we haven't had a shower for 9 days so it was rewarding I went to bed about 11.00 to get up at 6.00am it was our last day skiing tmz. YES!!

Day Twelve. Hafjell to Lillehammer - 18km

Early mornings are no longer a problem. Everyone is usually awake when the alarm goes. Today was no exception as this was the last day of the expedition.

The young people are keen to get started, especially as they have been promised lots of down hill skiing. Some of us though haven't quite mastered the art of stopping whilst careering out of control in the down hill tracks, and there are many wipe-outs. We stop at a café at Nordseter and Mike insists

on buying us a cake as a treat. Some of the group can't wait to set off - their adrenalin is pumping. Others leave with a feeling of trepidation and dread as they know they are just going to keep on falling. There are many spectacular wipe-outs along the way. Some of us have more falls today than we have had during the entire expedition.

As we approach the Stadium the group have mixed feelings. They are all glad the expedition is finished, but sad that they won't be skiing anymore. One thing they all have in common though is the thought that they won't have to carry a rucksack anymore.

Mike gives all the young people their feedback from the The Duke of Edinburgh Gold Expedition and they listen intently to his comments. Then it's time to say goodbye to Mike and suddenly they realise it really is all over. The young people have achieved more than they ever dreamed possible, and now a whole new future awaits them. If they can achieve this then they can do anything they put their minds to, and they are already looking ahead to a positive future.

Woke up at 6.00am to start our last day skiing for a 22km from Hefjell to Lillehammer where we are stopping for two nights. Today was mostly downhill which were a fantastic day there was one big hill which everyone enjoyed at the bottom there was a café where we had our break mike bought a pear cake which were nice. After we filled our stomachs we set off again to Lillehammer Olympic ski stadium when we arrived at lillhammer early mike was going home so he gave us our reports and mine was very positive. The skiing was over but what a fantastic **experience**.

We woke up today at 6 am for our very last day skiing, we are going to Lillehammer which will be our last resort we will be staying at, we will stop there for 2 nights then home! The ski was by far the best ski day we have done it was mostly downhill and at lunchtime we stopped off at a café where I had hot chocolate and a big cookie. We finished the last ski day at the Olympic stadium. And got a taxi to our very last resort and then said goodbye to Mike who went home. I was relieved but also kind of sad to have finished the skiing, especially as today was the most enjoyable day skiing.

Arctic Warriors Expedition 2006

Kyle Armstrong

Carlton Battye

James Cocker

Carly Hoggarth

Daniel Jones

James McCullough

The Expedition Staff Team

Pete Dawber

Trudy McLaughlin
Michael Cumbes (DNT guide - Norway)

Young Peoples Evaluations

At the beginning I didn't think I would finish Project Challenge. I enjoyed the physical training but struggled sometimes with 1st aid and navigation. I have learned a lot from Project Challenge. The residentials were great I enjoyed them a lot. The expedition was the best and I didn't think I could do it but I proved myself wrong. We all worked really well as a team.

Thanks Project Challenge

I

Loved

It!!!!

I liked Project Challenge a lot it was very enjoyable I rather enjoyed it. I felt happy most of the time but sometimes I got stressed with the walking. I enjoyed learning 1st Aid it was fun and largely amusing. The ASDAN section was just paperwork and I hate paperwork so I didn't enjoy it so much. Boxercise was fun and I enjoyed all the tasks, I enjoyed it because I enjoy watching boxing and I enjoyed learning the basics. The skiing was cool I liked learning the basics to go to Norway and know how to ski properly. I think that the last residential is the decider of who gets a place and who can handle the mental and physical pressure

of the long days. The main expedition is a hard mental test and is an amazing experience you will never see anything more amazing in your life. Overall it is a fantastic place to be. The staff are cool and funny when Pete decides to dance. Trudy just stresses too much but is cool and Steve is just Steve. Andy is just mental and awesome.

My thoughts of project challenge are mixed, at times I have absolutely enjoyed myself and at times I found it physically and mentally challenging. I'm not saying that's a bad thing; project challenge has been a life changing experience for me, as I feel more self-sufficient. And now I have come to the end of my time at project challenge, it doesn't feel like I have just completed a course. I will always feel like I have friends ready to help me with any problems I may have. Thank you project challenge!

When I first started project challenge I wasn't prepared for the tests I would face both physically and mentally, at the start both the walking and boxercise left me burnt out at the end of the week, and I felt like quitting early on. As the weeks progressed I began to get used to the physicality of the training, and began enjoying it a lot more, and as I started getting to know people more, it made it easier to cope with the training as I always had someone to talk to.

I really enjoyed the overall experience of Project Challenge, although there was some aspects of the training I didn't enjoy, Project Challenge is a life changing experience and I am very grateful for the opportunity.

I think project challenge is a great place to go and has a lot of facilities that are amazing. The whole of the project challenge training was wonderful because I have made some great friends. The training is very rewarding because it is training us to be respectable members of society and moreover training us for the big skiing or walking expedition in Norway and the Pyrenees mountains. The residentials are a great way for building team skills, and when you go on the expedition we feel closer as a team.

I've enjoyed myself on project challenge I've learnt a lot. It has changed me in many ways. I've done really well on project and I've achieved a lot. The best part is boxercise the most boring part is when you have to do logbooks. The first aid part is good when you get your certificate. The staff is fantastic, the residential were good, but the best part was Norway, which was an amazing experience

Achievements

The 'Arctic Warriors' Team Achievements

	KA	CB	JC	CH	DJ	JMc
BHF	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ITC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HSE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
IOSHWS	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
NNAS B	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
IMP	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
F4L	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
AW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
D of E B	✓	✓	✓	3/4	✓	✓
D of E G	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
D of E GR					✓	
FMP	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E2E	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E2ES+E	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ASD IOL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ASD PS		✓	✓		✓	
ASD WWO	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

KEY

BHF	British Heart Foundation Heartstart Award
ITC	2 day Immediate Temporary Care First Aid
HSE	HSE First Aid at Work
IOSHWS	IOSH Working Safely
NNAS B	National Navigation Award Scheme Bronze
IMP	Improvised Rescue Training
F4L	Fit4Life Fitness Training Programme Certificate
AW	Arctic Warriors Expedition Certificate
D of E B	Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award
D of E G	Duke of Edinburgh Gold Expedition Section
D of E GR	Duke of Edinburgh Gold Residential

FMP	E2E Film & Media DVD Project
E2E	E2E Training Course
E2ES+E	E2E Showcase PLUS exhibition participation
ASD IOL	ASDAN Improving Own Learning Level 1
ASD PSS	ASDAN Problem Solving Skills Level 1
ASD WWO	ASDAN Working With Others Level 1

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