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THE ULYSSES TRUST

Summer Newsletter

SINCE 1992 WE HAVE SUPPORTED OVER 25,000 CADETS AND RESERVISTS TO UNDERTAKE EXPEDITIONS AND ADVENTUROUS TRAINING THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

And The Winners Are.....

Each year the Ulysses Trust seeks to encourage aspiration by presenting an award to the best expedition to which it has provided support, amongst the Volunteer Reserve, University OTCs, and Cadets. This year is no exception, and what better way to start our first 2015 newsletter by announcing the award winners for the best expeditions of 2014. Full reports of the winning expeditions can be found at the Ulysses Trust website (www.ulysses trust.co.uk), but without further ado...

Best Reserve Expedition - Ex Northern Aoraki Serpent - HQ 2 Medical Brigade (with participants from 12 AMS Reserve Units). The 24-strong team, led by WO1 Ashcroft, comprising 15 Reservists and 9 Regulars, undertook an ambitious programme in the New Zealand Alps between 2nd and 23rd August 2014. It followed a selection and training expedition to the French Alps, as a number were relative novices. Conditions were often trying, well described in the Expedition Report produced by Private (now Corporal) Sara Palmer: *"Once the day was over and the chance for reflection on the tour was provided, it soon became apparent how much we had achieved and how much we had grown through these challenging experiences."* WO1 Ashcroft should be congratulated on an ambitious, well-planned and executed expedition which brought credit to the AMS Reserves, and clear benefit to the participants.

Best UOTC Expedition - Ex Blue Patrouilles des Glaciers - Oxford UOTC. The objective of this project was to compete in the Patrouilles des Glaciers - a demanding and challenging ski-mountaineering competition for three-member rope parties. The Team, comprising Captain Tania Noakes and Officer Cadets Rozzi Martin and Debbie Morgan (see picture) became the first all-female Army team and first OTC team to succeed in what is regarded as one of the toughest team events in the world. They completed the course, which runs from Zermatt to Verbier and comprises 52km and a 4000-meter positive altitude difference, in 14 hours 21 minutes. In her compelling report, Rozzi Martin



wrote: *"The opportunity to be able to be part of this world renowned event was a real honour. Debbie and I are massively indebted to Tania ... her belief in us has given us the confidence to believe that anything is possible!"* The team and Oxford University OTC thoroughly deserve the best OTC expedition award for a demanding, well planned and executed project which concluded with a notable and well-deserved success.

Best Cadet Expedition - In The Footsteps of Lawrence - 2427 (Biggin Hill) Sqn ATC. This imaginative and unusual expedition was the brain child of Flt Lt James Dyer, who led a team of 25, comprising 18 cadets (10 under 16) accompanied by 7 reservist and civilian instructors, to retrace the journey of Lawrence of Arabia through South Jordan. The programme included 2 days desert survival training and a 6-day trek, but also comprised the production of a short film of their experiences and discoveries, and studying extracts from Seven Pillars of Wisdom which they were able to connect to their journey of over 100kms in temperatures up to 42°C. The report stated *"The cadets learnt a lot about themselves, expeditioning, experience of a developing world country and the Bedouin culture, and the ability to survive in such a hostile environment."* This expedition reflects the opportunities available to cadets led by committed staff at their very best who are a credit to the ATC, and well deserve the Best Cadet Expedition award for an outstanding project.



Chairman's Comment

The Charity's Trustees are often asked what they hope to get out of the whole enterprise and the response is largely a slightly vague expression, 'outcomes'. What does that mean you say? Well, whilst the expedition or activity has a direct benefit in its own right, what we are seeking is enhancement of the Reserves' or Cadets' individual characteristics. At the first level, we are looking for improvements in leadership, teamwork and confidence, and, at the second level, we are seeking enhancement in initiative, self-discipline and judgement. Accordingly, we are very keen to see post-exercise reports featuring where these characteristics have been developed, which we can then use to show what the Charity is achieving.

On a personal basis, one is never too old learn! Some of you may be aware that I am a keen rock climber and my rock trips often provide me with suitable learning experiences. Following a recent climbing day on Froggatt in the Peak District, my climbing partner suggested a classic route to finish on, with me carrying up the very heavy excess equipment in my rucksack as the second. I rather wish I hadn't agreed to this, as my legs seriously complained! Note to self, climbing the route was an elegant end to the day but walking out may have been more practical! With the same partner I was pushing my climbing grade at a crag called Burbage North, again in the Peak District, and inevitably I fell off, thankfully with no injury. Not being put off, we reversed positions and completed the route – trying different things often results in success. These events were about shared experiences and led to improved teamwork between us, both climbing and in our normal lives, something I suggest all participants in our Ulysses Trust-supported expeditions benefit from.



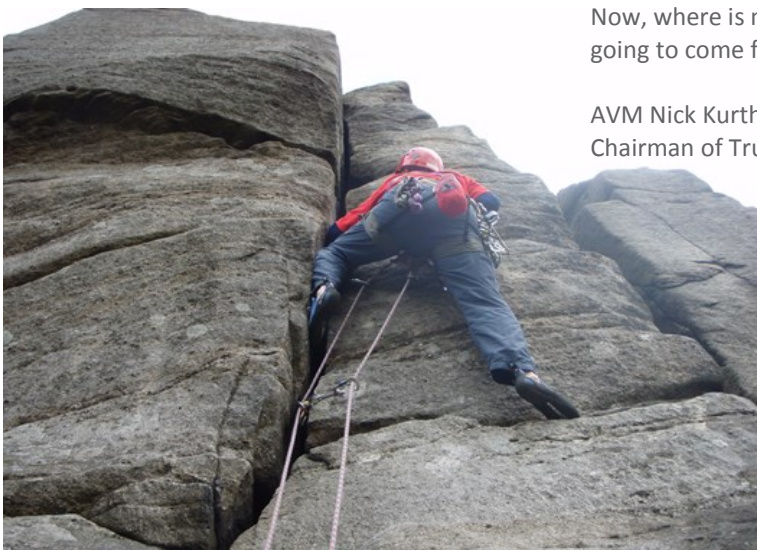
The 'heavy haulage exercise' at Froggatt.

So, if you are considering putting an expedition together, think about how the participants are going to gain from the expedition, not just in terms of outdoor skills but characteristics that will be of use in their day-to-day environments. We are keen to hear from you if you are able to identify instances where Reserves and Cadets have benefitted in this way.

In terms of benefactors, your generous assistance is very much appreciated by both my fellow Trustees and myself. Please, please do continue supporting us. Your help makes a real difference to the lives of young people – many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Now, where is my next learning experience going to come from?

AVM Nick Kurth CBE FRGS
Chairman of Trustees



Shortly before my fall at Burbage North.

Congratulations!!

Many congratulations are due to Lt Col James Cleverley RA TD AM MP for being elected as the successful candidate for the Braintree constituency in the 2015 General Election campaign, and on his recent promotion to Lieutenant Colonel.



James is also a member of the London Assembly for Bexley and Bromley, and is the President of the Ulysses Trust Fundraising Group,

Expedition Reports

If you've been on an expedition that has been funded by the Ulysses Trust, don't forget to send us your expedition report. The report should be between 750 and 1000 words long, should be written in a journalistic style, and include enough high resolution photographs to illustrate what you have been doing.

Not only will your report be published on our website, but if your report is good enough you could be featured in our newsletter. The best photographs could also go on to win one of our prestigious annual photography awards.



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Exercise Northern Lights - 1998 (West Cross) Sqn ATC

In March 2015 a team of fifteen Air Cadets and staff embarked on a 9 day expedition to Kiruna in the north of Sweden, deep in the Arctic Circle wilderness, for a once in a lifetime experience they will never forget.



After almost two years of fund raising and anticipation we were finally on our way to Stockholm the capital city of Sweden. From there we were due to catch the night train all the way to the North of Sweden, a distance of 1450km (950 miles) which was an experience in itself; once settled into our cosy 6 man sleeping berths we began our 17 hour journey to Kiruna.

Arriving in Kiruna later the following morning, we were greeted at the platform by our expedition guides, along with more snow than most of us had ever seen! We travelled along the icy roads into the beautiful forestry of Sweden, arriving at our tour guides camp. Our expedition was planned to be seven days of dog sledging around the Arctic Circle, but it was made clear to us when we arrived that it would have been difficult as the dogs on the camp were ill with a canine flu epidemic and that their work time was limited by the local vets. Despite this, our team leader Christian Wilkins along with our tour guide said they would still get some sledging done along with various arctic survival skills that would be taught in the remote wilderness.

Meeting our tour guide Marcus and his team was our first contact with the Swedish people;



Watch out, they might bite!!

he gave us a full briefing and itinerary as to his expectations for the week; we were also kitted out with thermal coveralls, lined arctic boots and thick mittens to combat the -15 deg C temperatures before we moved into our base camp the next morning.

The next morning we travelled even further north. We had to leave our mini buses and carry our kit a few kilometres through the snow into our basic campsite; this was our home for the next 7 days.

With no heating, electricity or running water we had to provide for ourselves. We had to dig out a fire pit and use the snow to make a wind break and were instructed how to gather materials around the campsite. Being self sufficient was one of the great experiences of our expedition as we really were in the middle of nowhere, gathering our water and ice fishing from a hole in the nearby frozen lake which required the use of 1 metre long 5 inch diameter drill to bore through the ice. Wood had to be gathered and chopped to supply the main cooking fire, as all meals would be taken 'al fresco' out in the open, any temperature, snowing or not!

After we were settled into our camp we began to learn from our guide Marcus a series of survival techniques in the arctic wilderness. Staying in the camp that Ray Mears himself trained in, we learned about the different way to make shelters and the right trees to use for firewood. One of the main activities was building Igloos to live in. We split into two teams and started building up igloos to fit about 7 to 8 persons in each. We left the igloos over night to freeze, dug them out from



Cadet dog teams rest up during sledging expedition.

the inside and took turns in sleeping in them throughout the week. That was one of the best experiences some of the team said they'll bring back, sleeping in an igloo on a frozen lake with the spectacular Aurora Borealis (northern lights) overhead almost every night.

Other activities we did included orienteering through the thick snow (3 feet deep) using snow shoes which we found very physically demanding; Marcus also showed us how to make our own snow shoes with sticks and twine. Another enjoyable but physical activity was a 12 km navex cross country exped skiing over and around lakes Väckärjävi and Piettarasjärvi, which took a lot of bumps and bruises to get used to with the thin skis used for long treks on irregular ground.

In summary, a truly wonderful 9 day experience where all cadets and staff combined as a team, wherein everyone was pushed to their limits, learning new skills in a demanding and unforgiving but beautiful environment that is potentially one of the last unspoilt wildernesses in Northern Europe.

Our thanks go to the Ulysses Trust and the RAF Charitable Trust for supporting this expedition.



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Exercise Alpine Arc 2015

Between January to April 2015, a British Army team traversed the entire European Alpine chain on skis. Tania Noakes, the expedition leader, provides this special report on an historic British military expeditionary achievement.



It is now a month since the final team from Exercise Alpine Arc arrived at the shores of the Mediterranean; successfully completing the final kilometres of an extraordinary ski journey through the European Alps. A journey which began in Puchberg am Schneeberg in Austria before winding its way through 1100kms of snow-locked mountains; accumulating almost 80 thousand metres of ascent and descent before arriving in Menton 82 days later.

The idea for Exercise Alpine Arc 2015 had been inside me for years. As a Reservist Officer with Oxford University Officer's Training Corps I have organised and run a good number of challenging ski-tours, but it wasn't until I qualified as a British Mountain Guide in September 2013 that I found the courage to commit to organising an expedition of this scale.

The aim of the expedition was for a British Army team to traverse the entire European Alpine chain on skis during one winter season. Such a journey has been completed before by other groups, but never by a Military team regardless of nationality. This would prove a considerable challenge, not just physically and mentally for those taking part but also logistically for those involved in making it happen. The practicality of such a long ski traverse crammed into a single winter meant that the majority was conducted during high winter; those months of the year when the snow pack does not stabilise as quickly due to the colder temperatures which meant the constant concern of higher avalanche risk.



SSgt Pete Bale, 22 Sig Sqn, posing for the camera

Fortunately I have a very supportive, positive and forward thinking Commanding Officer in Lt Col Simon Mason who right from the conceptual stages of the expedition backed me one hundred percent. Without his belief, hard work and support behind the scenes Ex Alpine Arc 2015 simply could not have happened.

I was also fortunate to win the support and endorsement of Gen Sir George Norton, who enthusiastically came on board as Patron of the expedition. His firm belief in the value of adventurous training for Service personnel and his quick recognition of the considerable challenge all participants would face helped keep my morale up throughout the 18 months of planning.

I divided the journey into 11 stages of approximately 8-days duration that ran sequentially through the winter. Each stage was undertaken by a different team of 6 skiers, sometimes from the same unit but mostly formed of individuals from different units. 58 British military personnel took part in; 29 Regular Army, 27 Reservists and 2 from the RAF. I planned fixed start and finish points for each stage in order to simplify logistics but within each stage the itinerary was flexed to take account of the weather and prevailing avalanche conditions.

The expedition was supported on the stages in Austria, Switzerland and Italy by a Mountain Guide provided by the respective host nation military. Switzerland provided three IFMGA Mountain Guides proving invaluable with their detailed local knowledge of the terrain, conditions and local history. They assisted our

safe passage through the Swiss mountains despite very difficult conditions, particularly during stage 8 which resulted in many changes to the planned itinerary.

In Italy from the Grand St Bernard Monastery to the border with France Valsavarenche/Vanoise the team enjoyed the good company of energetic Italian Military IFMGA guide Loris Buzi. Keeping up with his fast transitions and enthusiasm for red wine proved a challenge. For the last days in Italy Ettore Taufer joined us, allowing us to benefit from his detailed local knowledge during our passage over the complicated terrain on Mont Rutour and moving us safely into France.

For the final two stages through the Vanoise, Ceres, Queryas and Mercantour, I know these French sections of the Alps rather well and we were able to make a very pure ski-traverse through this area involving practically no road moves at all.

The whole expedition was supported logistically by three young officers to whom I remain indebted for their flexibility, hard-work, professionalism and good humour. Ocdt Sam Davies from Oxford UOTC and 2LT Rupert Knight and Ocdt Simon Prince from Wales UOTC formed the "Support Team". This was the vital beating heart of the expedition, and their responsibilities were many and varied, including picking up each new team from the airport, issuing and maintaining equipment, report writing, food resupply of the main team, updating



Captain Tania Noakes, happy to reach the sea!

the website and Blog and dealing with any and all unforeseen problems.

The three months of Exercise Alpine Arc 2015 now form such a rich and vivid collection of memories for me that it is hard to know where to begin sharing with you what happened.

The hard facts you already know; the distance, the ascent and descent, the days and weeks of effort involved...

And of course we did complete the aim of the expedition, and with fewer significant changes to the itinerary than I had anticipated during the planning process. However there is so much more to the expedition left unsaid. Memories interwoven into such a vast fabric of experiences, and so completely, that it's difficult now to identify a single thread on its own. In fact I can sense a resistance inside me to try to do so.

Moments of great beauty now etched in my memory - fragile images of the mountains in the half-light of dawn; the flickering of the wood burner in the winter refuge; a smile shared with friends in recognition of a challenge overcome; wind-blown snow-devils dancing skyward; a signpost heavy with rime ice; the clean line of our skinning track left behind as evidence of our passage through a vast white ocean. The knowledge that not a single trace of our passage now remains...

The physical effort involved and the deep satisfaction of spending three months engaged in a single challenge. The

feeling that each day we arrived a little closer to this goal. Sensations of warmth and of cold, of excitement and of fear, of satisfaction, success, of frustration and disappointment. All shared with an amazing group of people who largely arrived not knowing each other, worked hard as a team and left as friends. These memories have now become part of who I am and of what drive me forward to meet the future and I'm sure that the same is true of every single person who was part of the expedition.

Every day I learnt something new; about the mountains or about those around me with whom I shared this unique journey and also at times about myself. This stands out in my mind as the best part of the experience as a whole. I have learnt so much during the course of this winter that it has further opened my eyes on just how rich and varied and amazing a world we live in - and how much is to be gained if only you are prepared to take on the challenge.

It seems true that we value most that which we have fought hard to achieve. Exercise Alpine Arc was for me an unspoken dream which I decided to commit to making real. Of course there were risks involved, not just during the expedition itself whilst skiing in the mountains, but also whilst setting the expedition up. Although I had many enthusiastic supporters who backed the project there were also many individuals who were very negative and saw the project as overly ambitious and destined to fail. This is true to all ambition and all challenges in life. Those people

who listen to these detractors and are not prepared to take the risk that they may fail to reach their goal accept immediate defeat by not trying. For my part, I am very glad that we tried and even more satisfied that we succeeded.

I cannot thank the Ulysses Trust enough for their firm and substantial backing, unwavering support and shared adventurous spirit! Their belief and encouragement has been one of the most positive and uplifting aspects of the whole planning process for me.

The full report and more images can be found on the Ulysses Trust website at www.ulysses-trust.org.uk, and the expedition blog and more images can be found at www.alpinearc2015.com.

Each year, the Ulysses Trust supports over 1000 young people to participate in life changing experiences such as this. With your support, we can increase our support to young people. Visit our website for more details. Thank you.



OCdt Tara Parks on the summit of the Wildespitze (stage 5)



Albula Alps, Switzerland



THE ULYSSES TRUST

Ex Northern Atlas 2015 - Scottish and North Irish Yeomanry

In April 2015, a team of 10 Army Reservists and 4 Regulars headed off to the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco. Their mission - to summit Jebel Toubkal, the highest mountain in North Africa (4167m).



On 14th April 2015, our intrepid team boarded flights to begin their journey to the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco. Arriving that evening, it was a quick haggle for a knuckle-whitening taxi ride through the streets of Marrakech, where the Highway Code is less a code and more a collection of optimistic suggestions, to our Hostel in the Medina. Although wearied by the day's travels, there was just time to take in the sights and sounds of the Jemaa el-Fna (central square) before bed. We rose in the morning to the first of many cups of mint tea before being whisked to the small village of Imi Ourhiad in the steppes of the High Atlas Mountains where we met our guides for the trip; two members of the native Berber population named Hassan and Ibrahim.

With the mules loaded with water, kit and equipment; we stepped off East, bound for another small village named Tidli where we would spend the night in a basic hut or 'gite'. Along the way we passed through a number of Berber hamlets, wishing hearty bonojurs to the local children as they turned out to try their luck for sweets and pens. Lunchtime was as much an equally fantastic feast for the eyes as the stomach; mint tea followed by an impressive presentation of curried beans, fresh fruit and vegetables on the banks of the Assif n' Imenane. The entire group enjoyed trying a new cuisine that contrasted heavily their usual ones! After a brief chance to soak up our beautiful surroundings we continued on, arriving at our accommodation in time to watch the sun drift behind the valley walls. The breakfast each morning was a mountaineer's culinary fusion; the familiar

elements of breads and spreads paired with the more adventurous yellow teas and fig jams, the perfect start for another day of trekking.

We hiked up to the village of Oukaimeden, stopping briefly to barter with the locals for snacks and for Corporal Molloy to push his baggage allowance to the limit with geodes and fossils. The chance to interact with individuals from such a different background was an enlightening experience, particularly for those who had never ventured beyond English-speaking countries. We then descended through the Tizi nou Addi pass to Tacheddirt, where we were entertained by our guides and muleteers performing a selection of their traditional singing and dancing, eventually regretting the decision to get the expedition leader involved as he upstaged everyone with his rad shape-cutting. Not to be outdone by their hosts' performance, the expeditionary team returned with an angelic delivery of Wonderwall.

The next three days continued according to our acclimatisation plan; climbing high in the day and sleeping low during the night,



gradually ascending to higher points with each day to get our bodies used to having to work harder in thinner air. We were certainly working harder by day six, strapping on crampons to give some traction in the last of the winter snow as we slogged up the steep incline of the Azib Tamasoult, which we elected to climb as the crow flies for the additional challenge.

On the final day of our expedition, we set out at 5am for the summit of Jebel Toubkal. Our acclimatisation had prepared us well, and the hard work of the previous day made the final ascent much easier. We arrived at the peak to be greeted by stunning Southern views of the Sahara desert. After much hand-shaking and selfie-taking we began our descent by the Northern face back to the valley floor and then on to Imlil where we said an emotional farewell to our Berber companions and returned to Marrakech.

We were all extremely grateful to the Ulysses Trust for their generous support, without which we could not have enjoyed this opportunity to find challenge and build character with such a magnificent selection of new and different experiences.



THE ULYSSES TRUST

Who Do You Think You Are?

In this edition we undertake an investigative procedure on Dr Rod Stables and ask him some searching questions...

What is your role within the Ulysses Trust?

At the very least, I am in a position to provide historical perspective. I worked with Phil Neame (now the Trust Vice Chairman) to establish the charity as part of our preparations for the TA expedition to Everest in Winter – Project DARC STAR. In the early years of the Trust I was active in the applications committee and in 1995 led an expedition to Mont Blanc for Oxford University OTC, supported by the Trust.

More recently I have re-joined as a Trustee. I am keen to support the continued growth and development of the Trust, particularly our plans to expand support for Cadets. Over my first year as a Trustee, I have seen the impact of adventure training for Cadets and I am delighted that the Trust has plans to bring new opportunities to areas and groups, who may – in the past – have had limited support.

What is your favourite outdoor activity?

I like the whole range of mountain activity. I can still tackle the easier 4000m peaks in the Alps, but most of my time is spent in the Lake District or Snowdonia. As a family we like walking, scrambling and wild camping (with a fire!).

Who do you admire and why?

Churchill said that success was the ability to go from one failure to the next with no loss of enthusiasm. I admire this characteristic..

List five others you would like to see at your dinner table.

For me, my wife and my two boys (16, 13) would take up three slots but for the purposes of this answer I will assume that they are already present. I quote Churchill and Oscar Wilde most days and it would be good to acquire some more gems. I admire the work of the popular author Malcom Gladwell who has great insight into human nature and behaviour and Daniel Kahneman (Author of *Thinking Fast and Slow*) for his understanding of the human psyche. Finally, I must declare a fascination for the actress Emily Blunt.

Beer or Champagne?

I will drink either but my preference is for quality wine. I like white burgundy and powerful reds from both the new and old world regions.

If you could be any fictional character in a film or book, who would it be and why?

I do not really want to be anyone else. I think we should all try to make the most of who we are and to be happy with the outcome. If forced however, I could be Aragon in Lord of the Rings.



Rod, age 50 (2010), on the summit of the second easiest 4000m peak in the Alps (Allalinhorn)

Summer rock or snow and ice?

When it comes to the mountains, I have always been more of an endurance plodder than a lycra-clad dynamic athlete. This pushes me to the latter. The DARC STAR selection expedition to Mount McKinley remains one of my favourite trips.

Thanks very much, Doctor. Your test results are clear, and you're free to go.



Dr Rod Stables (right) and Lt Col Phil Neame on the summit of Mount McKinley (6194m) in 1991.

What do you do in your spare time?

I played rugby until I was 50. I am now active as a coach and referee in junior Rugby. I manage to play about 10 rounds of golf a year, but would like more opportunity to develop this great game.

If they made a movie of your life, who would play you and why?

Mark Strong as a Brit or Woody Harrelson if I was to be turned into an American.



Woody Harrelson, yesterday

Help Us To Make A Difference

The Ulysses Trust relies entirely on donations to support Cadets and Reservist expeditions and adventurous training activity.

Without your support many of the expeditions and adventurous training that we have supported, such as the ones reported on within this newsletter, simply wouldn't have gone ahead at all. With this in mind, we would like to thank our supporters both for their generosity and their enthusiasm to enable young people to be all they can be.

In the run up to our 25th anniversary in 2017, we have ambitious plans to treble the impact of the Ulysses Trust, not only by granting more per person than we are currently able to do, but also to expand our reach, to contribute towards greater participation in adventurous training amongst the Cadet and Reserve Forces.

Should you feel that you could help us in making a difference for young people, and particularly in supporting Cadets who often have to scale the largest barriers to participation in adventurous training, please get in touch. Your support will be greatly appreciated.



Corporate Social Responsibility

We are also keen to develop our links with the corporate world and are currently seeking corporate partners with whom we can work to assist you to deliver your Corporate Social Responsibility objectives while in return helping us to achieve our aims and objectives. The net result will be that between us we will be able to support more young people to realise their life ambitions and to participate in life changing experiences that will make them better employees in the future.

If your company would like to work with us in any capacity, we would welcome your call. Our contact details are on our website or in the blue panel on the right of this page.

We are grateful for the generous support of our benefactors, including:

The Worshipful Company of Armourer & Braziers
Army Sports Control Board
Army Support Command
David Benest
Berlin Infantry Brigade Trust Fund
Bryson Corbett Charitable Trust
Capsule CRM
The Connaught Trust
The Lord Faringdon Charitable Trust
The Worshipful Company of Dyers
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The Friends of the Ulysses Trust
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Rt Hon Desmond Swayne TD MP
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Support Us At No Cost

One way that you can support us is through Give As You Live. Visit www.giveasyoulive.com and select the Ulysses Trust as your chosen charity. Every time you shop online, we'll receive a percentage of the transaction.

One of our team has managed to donate almost £150 in the last few months by doing this, and it hasn't cost them a penny.



Social Media

Don't forget that you can also help by following us on social media and sharing our content.

Our Twitter feed is [@ulyssestrust](https://twitter.com/ulyssestrust) - can you help us reach 1000 followers by the end of the summer?

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Reg'd Charity No 1012346



£260,000

The funding target
that the Ulysses Trust
needs to raise in 2015.

Can you help?

Visit www.ulyssestrust.org.uk
to find out how you can help us
to inspire a generation.



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