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THE ULYSSES TRUST

Winter Newsletter

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

New Faces for the Ulysses Trust Board

We are delighted to welcome two new Trustees onto the Board of the Ulysses Trust. Wing Commander Matt Stowers, from Plymouth, has served with Number II Squadron RAF Regiment, the Corps only parachute-capable unit, in a number of capacities including as Flight Commander, Deputy Squadron Commander and Squadron Commander and has recently served in Afghanistan and Iraq. He is a stalwart advocate of the value of adventurous training, saying:

"I have been very fortunate during my time in the Royal Air Force to have had the opportunity to undertake a number of demanding sporting activities. In my early twenties I skied for the Royal Air Force in both the Nordic and Biathlon British Championships, and have maintained an interest in skiing ever since. In 2003, with another Royal Air Force Regiment Officer, I rowed across the Atlantic. The journey was an epic; we expected to complete the crossing in about 55 days - the journey actually took 78 days, 5 hours and 43 minutes. Although the row was both physically and mentally demanding it taught me a lot about 'big trips' and only served to heighten my desire to do even more demanding trips."

"I am delighted to become a Trustee of the Ulysses Trust, and look forward to helping to further the Trust's aims and objectives in supporting the development of young people through adventurous training."



Sophie Fernandes joined the Ulysses Trust in September as the Business Development Trustee. A public affairs professional by trade, Sophie spent her youth exploring the UK through adventure training with 1083 (Uxbridge) Sqn ATC and later as a Civilian Instructor. She is also a Trustee for education charity Sir John Cass's Foundation and elected as a Common Councilman in the City of London.

"Joining the ATC at the age of 13 was quite frankly life-changing. I credit it hugely for what I have achieved in my life since. The adventure training in particular, working as a team and taking on responsibilities increased my confidence and belief in what I could achieve. The Ulysses Trust enables all young people from whatever background this exact opportunity. Expeditions can often be life-changing experiences for young people. It might be as simple as providing a young person an escape from their daily environment to show them - and for them to understand - their potential. Expanding horizons is so much more than academic achievement".

Chairman's Comment

The Newsletter's editor mentioned that the focus for this edition was women engaged in expeditions and adventurous activities – which prompted me to consider this issue further. Thinking back to my time on expeditions and climbing meets over the last 40 years or so, I was always struck that gender did not appear to be a consideration. That said, in the same breath, I acknowledged that numerically there has always been an imbalance in numbers, the quantity of boys being almost always greater than the number of girls participating. I did however wonder whether that situation still prevails. Reflecting on the last 2 RAF Mountaineering Association (RAFMA) meets I attended (in October and November 2015) I came to the conclusion that it was. However, there was scope for some optimism – the girls attending the meets had the skills needed for the outdoors, had the confidence to undertake a range of activities and the enthusiasm to see them through the pursuits.

On balance, it occurred to me that achievement in the outdoors is fairly gender neutral; females largely completing similar attainments as men. Indeed, looking at a variety of listings on the internet, females feature in no small measure – managing some truly inspirational challenges. In recent years, the likes of Ellen Macarthur, Alison Hargreaves and Ann Bancroft come to mind, following the achievements of numerous female explorers of days gone by. However, they are in the minority. So, drawing the discussion together, females have parity when it comes to accomplishments but when standing in a base



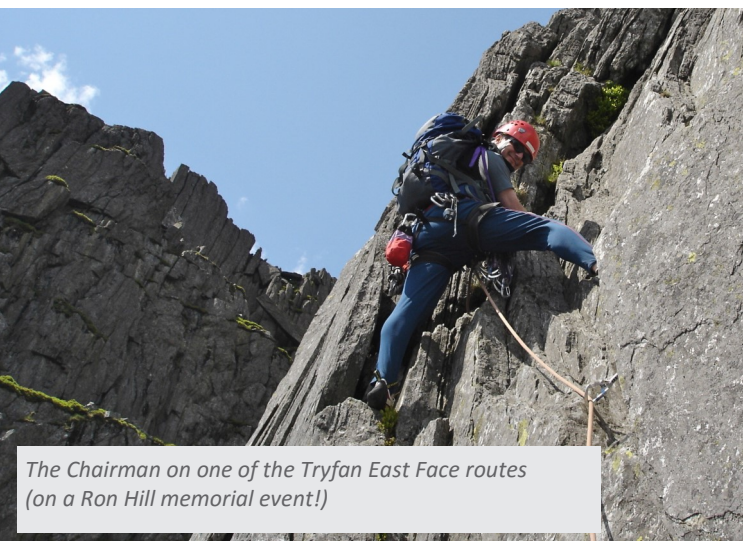
Climbing high up in the Aiguilles Rouge with a female RAFMA colleague leading the ropes.

camp say they are likely to be in a smaller grouping. I imagine though that if you are female and about to take part in your first expedition or adventurous activity, this deduction may seem fairly irrelevant – but it shouldn't be! You are likely to have a similar potential as your male colleagues when it comes to the activity planned and, you never know, in years to come, you may be the next Roz Savage or Helen Skelton.

To conclude, the support provided by the Ulysses Trust towards expeditions and adventurous activities – for both males and females - would not be possible without the

generous assistance of a large range of benefactors. On behalf of my fellow Trustees I should like to thank you for this generous assistance; it makes a real difference to the lives of many young people, a number of whom come from difficult backgrounds.

AVM Nick Kurth CBE FRGS
Chairman of Trustees



The Chairman on one of the Tryfan East Face routes (on a Ron Hill memorial event!)

Grant Applications

We welcome applications from all Reserve, UOTC and Cadet units seeking to undertake adventurous training. Guidance notes and our online grant application form are available on our website which contains information relating to our grant eligibility criteria. While we try to keep the admin to a minimum, there are some points of which you should be aware before you submit your application.

For those of you familiar with our grant application process, it would be worth revisiting this section of our site, as our criteria have recently changed.

Expedition Reports

If your unit has been on an expedition that has been supported by the Ulysses Trust, it is important to remember 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 or within other Trust publications. The best photographs could also go on to win one of our prestigious annual photography awards.

Social Media

You could help us considerably by encouraging all members of your unit to follow us on social media. Help us to spread the message about our support for adventurous training. We're on Twitter @ulysses trust and you can find us on Facebook by searching for Ulysses Trust. Thank you.



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Exercise Atlantic Ubique 2015 - 103 Regt RA

Seven reservists from 103 Regt RA recently set sail on the high seas off the Canary Islands in search of adventure. What they experienced was a baptism of fire, where they learned a lot about sailing, life and themselves.



It all started on the 13th October. Seven intrepid explorers set off in search of adventure. Some of us knew vaguely what to expect, the others had no idea! Later that night we arrived in Lanzarote and finally met our Skipper Russ and First Mate Esh, who was to become our hero in the days to come.

The next morning brought safety briefs, knot tying lessons and familiarisation with the boat. Then it was off to get the shopping for the epic 24 hr sail that awaited us the next day. How little we knew of what was about to befall us!

Day three and it was up early for the big one, a 24 hr sail to Gran Canaria. It started reasonably well, the sun was shining and the sea was calm. However, the increasing swell of the sea and wind were soon to have their vengeance, before long the whole crew was engulfed, sometimes quite literally, by sea sickness. Esh and Russ were amazing and ensured our safe passage. Without a doubt, it was a baptism of fire but we all learned a lot about sailing, life and ourselves.

Although the strong wind had its down points, it had meant we made good time and we arrived in Las Palmas early the next morning. The night before seeming like a bad dream now we were finally able to laugh about it and look back at some of the amazing things we had seen, for example the Dinoflagellates that surrounded the boat all night.

Thursday morning we set sail for Puerto Rico. The wind was good and we seemed to have found our sea legs by the time of our next major passage which saw us leave Gran Canaria and head out to Tenerife. This morning was pretty unbeatable and we all had chance to hone our newly learned skills. As the sun rose behind us with a stunning view of Mount Teide in front, dolphins began to swim alongside us and we spotted a whale a little further out. Carlsberg don't do mornings, but if they did, this is what they would be like.



The next day's sailing was another corker as Jerone spotted a sea turtle and we dropped anchor for a swim and some fender surfing. Nonetheless, the following day the storm came in and we spent 8 hrs sailing through sheet rain like drowned rats. Nevertheless, waterproofs on and morale remained high.

It was beginning to draw nearer to our 24hr journey back to Lanzarote, I was not looking forward to it. However, we had learnt our lesson and our skills and drills were, by now, slick. This sail was a whole different ball game. The sea was calm, the watches were alert and everything that needed to be done had been. After a calm night at sea alternating between motoring but sailing when it was possible, we were blessed when a pod of about 30 dolphins decided to join us for breakfast.

We arrived in Rubicon, a beautiful harbour and enjoyed a first hot shower since we had set sail nearly two weeks ago. Our last sail was back round to where we started from, Puerto Calero. Once we were back in port it was time to clean the boat, check the inventory and catalogue all the food and resources we were passing on to the next crew.

The adventure was coming to an end. It was a sad day saying goodbye to St Babs and the crew, I think we had all learned a lot, setting ourselves new challenges and taking on board new info. We saw new parts of the world, sailed with an array of sea creatures and experienced once in a life time moments. Our adventure at sea would not be forgotten easily.

By OCdt Charlotte Malan, 103 Regt RA



Exercise Bristolian Zeus - Bristol Army Cadet Force

In October 2015 a team of thirteen Army Cadets and staff embarked on a 10 day mountain biking expedition to Cyprus, for a once in a lifetime experience they will never forget.



Bristol ACF conducted Exercise Bristolian Zeus during the back end of October 2015, with the main aim of cycling some of the varied technical and challenging off road routes of Cyprus. From the stunning views along the Cyprus coastlines showing off the deep blue and emerald sea of the Mediterranean, to the craggy and muddy trails of the Troodos Mountains, Bristol ACF were primed and ready to embark on an experience that will remain in the memories of all of those that took part.

This event was to be the first time that Bristol ACF had mounted an overseas adventurous training exercise, so the trails and tracks of the West Country very quickly became our training grounds to help us prepare for what was ahead. After a selection process and many hours of training, the team to go to Cyprus consisted of eight Cadets, three Trail cycle Leaders and a dedicated support team of two experienced driver/medics. At this point I would like to note that no Adult Volunteers had any arms twisted, were tricked or offered bribes during the making of this exercise!

On Oct 21st the advance party flew off to Cyprus to sort out general admin details, whilst the remaining eleven members after a very early start to the day, flew from Birmingham, and finally arrived at Paphos Airport on Oct 24th in what can only be described as a monumental thunderstorm. With the team now complete we headed off to our accommodation in Troodos Station which was to be our home for the



days ahead, arriving in the Troodos Mountains at around midnight, the team was greeted with a misty and cold chilly wind. Welcome to sunny Cyprus.

The following day was dedicated to bike safety checks and tweaking the bikes to fit the rider, and the first day of riding was also included. This involved a moderate ride in the Troodos Mountains designed to gently persuade the legs to get going again, and start thinking about putting all those hours

spent in training into practice. This in fact was achieved, however, the thunder storm from the night before decided to visit the mountains and open the heavens up with rain, the biggest hail stones ever produced, and of course thunder and lightning. We needed to get out of this weather pronto, and

the team then attempted to break the land speed record to the nearest shelter. After the storm passed the ride continued successfully and comments of "I thought Cyprus was supposed to be sunny" could be heard at almost every twist and turn of the rugged mountain trails.

The next day saw a cultural visit to the archaeological site of Kourion, situated along the Akrotiri Peninsula, where, upon arrival, the cadets conducted their own guided tour of the site by each cadet delivering a 3 minute talk on individual aspects of the area, the cadets researched the information prior to the exercise and included areas such as the House of The Gladiators, The House of Achilles and the main Theatre. The whole site dates to c.484 – 426 B.C.

The day ended with a trip to the local main town of Paphos to take in the sights and experience some of the excellent locally prepared food and ice cream.



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Moving on to a ride that took place within the confines of RAF Akrotiri, saw a good chance to ride some great coastline, ride to the fantastic area of Dreamers Bay and take on 20kms of challenging undulating trails and tracks.

To date the cadets had experienced plenty of bad weather and today showed just how hot it can get within a matter of minutes of the rain drying up. The sun had its hat on and was coming out to play. During all rides on the exercise the cadets were encouraged to ride to the front of the group and choose good lines for the rest of the group to follow, one cadet however decided to follow his own line and displayed how to get gravel rash by falling off your bike in one easy movement! Thankfully he was back in the saddle the next day after getting his wounds dressed and dusting himself down, feeling a little sore he carried on to complete the rest of the exercise with a smile on his face.

The next ride was the jewel in the crown for any off road cyclist, although short (18km return trip) the route was littered with steep hill climbs and descents, large rock gardens, overall very technical terrain, rutty, dusty and muddy trails and views that were absolutely outstanding from every angle. This ride certainly tested all the cadets and demanded respect, all the previous training came into play to get through this very demanding route and even asked questions of the fittest members of the group. A most exhilarating ride that challenged everyone without exception.



Our final day of riding took place along the coastline of the western part of Cyprus, proving just how diverse the terrain could be on this fantastic Island. The ride started off along a nice piece of tarmac, the road then disappeared and quickly became a very bumpy and rutty dirt road with short but very steep hills thrown in to create an even more challenging ride. It was on this day that I was to become another victim of bad line choice, although coming off my bike was not planned, I can at least report that I was not injured and fell off with grace and finesse and, can also boast we were on sand at the time of my demise. After two hours of riding during the hottest day so far, we turned back on our 36km route and headed

back to our safe haven of the shade and headed back up to the Mountain tops of Troodos.

In summary, Exercise Bristolian Zeus was a huge success. Everyone was able to develop leadership skills and apply technical ability on a Mountain Bike, appreciate the importance of being a team member, and I saw tons of personal confidence grow within the cadets on a daily basis. Ample opportunities to hone other skills also came to the fore, from repairing one of the fourteen tyre punctures we encountered to conquering saddle-sore!

All participants on the exercise would like to take this opportunity to thank, RAF Akrotiri for the loan of bikes and transport, the Ulysses Trust and Wessex Reserve Forces and Cadets Association for the generous financial support which enabled this exercise to be such a great success.

Lt Gary Forder, Exercise Leader.
Bristol Army Cadet Force.



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Exercise Dragon - Arctic Heights, Cambridge UOTC

Earlier this year a team of Officer Cadets from Cambridge University Officers' Training Corps travelled to the remote Lyngen Alps in Arctic Norway to undertake downhill skiing the hard way.



The Lyngen Alps rise from the Arctic Ocean at the North Norwegian coast, forming a steep sided peninsula flanked on either side by open water. Lyngen is one of Norway's least populous regions; a single town and a few isolated hamlets cling to the mountains, perched above the sea. Winters here are long, and rich in snowfall from the saturated ocean air. Because the mountains are deep inside the Arctic Circle, conditions at sea level mimic those at the very highest altitudes in the Alps, creating stunning skiing from the summits to the shore.

The team of Cambridge officer cadets that travelled out to Lyngen were skiers of some experience, but all were new to the demands of ski touring. Thus the first challenge was to pick up the skills, like skinning (skiing uphill, gripping with a "skin" attached to the bottom of the ski), route finding, avalanche rescue and much more besides, that would enable us to conquer the peaks and access their legendary descents. For this we turned to Ski Mountaineering Instructor Sgt Rob Brown, veteran of Bavaria's Alpine Training Centre and expert in all things winter. Rob took us through a patient programme of day tours, gradually introducing new techniques and capping some of Lyngen's smaller peaks along the way.

Once the team had gained competence and confidence in the basics of ski touring, it was time to take on some of the peninsula's more meaty challenges. Skiing from sea level in an area without lifts brings its own difficulties – unlike in the Alps, every vertical metre of descent must be climbed first, every turn earned. So tackling mountains in excess of 1500m high, starting from the beach, was

physically demanding work. The upside of this, though, was the immense reward of the downhill, and it is this contrast between slow, steady climbing and swooping descent that makes ski touring so appealing.

Nowhere was this more apparent to our group than on Daltinden. Standing in the shadow of Jiehkkevarri, Lyngen's highest mountain, but no less imposing at 1533m, it gave us the biggest day of the trip, both in terms of mileage and vertical distance. The approach to Daltinden's North couloir is up a long river valley, crossing back and forth over the stream on the thick ice and snow bridges formed above its surface. Eventually leaving the stream, one is confronted with the mountain's daunting North face, an almost unbroken 30° slope rising one and a half vertical kilometres. It was a hard slog up. Sweating even in the freezing temperatures, we slowly skinned, kick-turned and grunted our way up the hill. Standing on the top, for those few precious moments before wind chill and numbness drove us off again, the hard work and hunger melted into sun, sea, and snow-capped perfection, the staggering beauty only mountaineers know. This is why we climb. Skiing down the hill is a bonus.

But what a magnificent bonus. Daltinden's North couloir is a broad, open valley, catching just enough cross-blown snow to give us a beautiful powder descent, smooth and flowing for every one of the metres we had climbed.

The rest of the two week expedition continued in much the same vein. We managed to summit many of the touring peaks on the Lyngen peninsula, as well as some across the



Team Arctic Heights on the summit of Giilavari

fjords. Sometimes we weren't so lucky; storms blow up quickly in the Arctic, and on several occasions high winds and poor visibility meant we had to abandon summit attempts. These experiences provided a true test, taking expedition members well outside their comfort zones, and forcing them to make good decisions under a high degree of pressure and discomfort.

Exercise Dragon - Arctic Heights was an extremely valuable experience for all concerned. As well as being physically tough, the expedition had serious elements of mental challenge, and made everyone confront difficult situations. The team has benefited from this in terms of character and in terms of skills and experience gained – several members intend to take this on towards instructor qualifications. We also hope this expedition might add to the diversity of Army adventure training. This was the first Forces expedition to Lyngen; we hope it will encourage others to visit this truly special place.

Many thanks to the Ulysses Trust for supporting this expedition; we are all extremely grateful.

SUO William Lancashire



Sgt Rob Brown skis powder above Lyngenfjord



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Adventurous Training and the Pursuit of Confidence

In this our first guest article, Captain Tania Noakes from Oxford UOTC explores the important role that adventurous training has in developing confidence amongst women.

“To dare is to lose one’s footing momentarily. To not dare is to lose one’s self.” Kierkegaard 1813-1855

I have now served in the Regular Army and Reserves for almost 20 years and throughout that time have been actively involved with Adventurous Training. I have both participated in, and organised a wealth of expeditions and introduced hundreds of Service personnel to AT’s character shaping benefits. Reflecting on this reminds me how quickly our time passes, turning experiences into memories from which we draw strength and lessons to help us in all spheres of our lives, service or civilian.

I have witnessed on innumerable occasions the very real benefits of Services’ AT. In positively shaping character, building team-work skills and organisational ability, creating resilience, perseverance and flexibility in the face of set-backs, and nurturing a “get up and go” positive mind-set which helps get things done. What better attributes for military personnel?

But adventure training also helps to develop confidence. Richard Petty, a psychology professor at the University of Ohio suggests that confidence is “... *the stuff that turns thoughts into actions*”. It is rooted in self-awareness, even self-belief.

Many psychologists believe that risk taking, failure and perseverance are essential to confidence building. In addition, different

research has shown that physical exercise and sport also play a vital role in building confidence. These two areas of risk taking and physical pursuits have historically been viewed as more masculine activities. In this sense AT can be of particular benefit to women, specifically young women.

For many young women confidence is a difficult and complicated issue. It has not always been seen as a primary feminine trait. Overtly confident women are labelled “bossy”, subconsciously eliciting a more hostile reception than a similarly confident male would. For a young woman in our minefield of modern culture with its potentially damaging gender expectations, developing a strong sense of self-identity is not an easy process.

The time-layered pressure of our culture has also contributed to women asking less often for opportunities than their male counterparts. Unwilling to risk rejection; concerned about an uncomfortable “no”; or even holding a naive belief that everyone gets their fair turn. The natural consequence of not putting yourself forward is that you generate fewer opportunities to succeed. Yes you also reduce your negative outcomes; however dealing appropriately with failure, rejection and loss, is an important lesson on the path towards ultimate success.

Well conducted AT that demands commitment, determination and tenacity to accomplish nurture self-belief. From self-belief we grow confidence. The “...if I can do that then I can do anything...” feeling.

Confidence drives us to our feet to ask, it turns thoughts into actions and it prepares us to take a measured risk. Whether psychological or physical; rising from a fear of failure or of injury or of loss, sometimes we have to take a risk to move forward. So we act, and we build confidence and we spiral upwards.



Capt Cath H-W and Capt Noakes summit the Piztaler Eis-Express in Piztal, Austria

As Unit Adventurous Training Officer (UATO) and an IFMGA Mountain Guide serving with Oxford University Officer Training Corps I take an active interest in the personal development of our young officers. I know that there are some very clear and important messages conveyed to both male and female students when they are guided by a female AT instructor, particularly one operating at the top of their profession. It demonstrates that there are no barriers to what you can achieve, male or female. It shows guys that girls can, and girls that they can too.

In summarising this short piece on the search for confidence I would encourage any servicewoman out there reading this who hasn’t already got involved in AT to get stuck in. These opportunities are real and they are for you! They will bring so many useful and transferable skills to your life so please find the courage to believe and take the first step. I also hope that all Cadet Forces, Officer Training Corps and Reserve units will hear this rallying call and take a proactive role in encouraging more of their female recruits to participate in their AT program.



Capt Noakes crossing the Merced near Muir Trail Ranch
John Muir Trail 2003



Your Role In Our Fundraising

Since 1992, the Ulysses Trust has supported over 2,000 expeditions involving over 25,000 individual participants. Over half of these expeditions are organised by Cadet units involving Army, Air and Sea Cadets, the majority of whom are under the age of 18. For the younger members of the Cadets, this is very often the first time these people have ever been away from home.

In the last calendar year, our grants supported expeditions to all corners of the world, from desert to jungle, on land and sea, providing life changing opportunities for young people, many of whom would not have been able to participate had we not financially supported the expedition.

Ulysses Trust grants are limited to the amount of funds that we ourselves have to allocate, and we have a priority to support those young people from disadvantaged backgrounds such that participation is open to everyone, regardless of their circumstances. Often it is those who are the most disadvantaged that benefit the most from the kind of life-changing opportunity that adventurous training provides.

We need your help to support these young people. Our contact details are on the right of this page, and your donation will make a difference.

Give As You Live

Over 4,000 leading stores will donate to us at no cost to you when you shop online. All you have to do is visit the Give As You Live website at www.giveasyoulive.com and follow the instructions, and you can make a difference to us without it costing you a penny.

The scheme involves major brands, including:



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Be More Social in 2016!!

We'd like to hear from you on social media next year. What is your unit up to, where have you been, who are the personalities we should know about? Share your news and we'll do likewise, telling you about the expeditions we've supported, and perhaps inspiring you for your next odyssey.



Our Twitter feed is [@ulyssesrust](https://twitter.com/ulyssesrust) - at the time of going to press, we only need another 135 followers to reach our next major milestone. Can you help?



And we're also on Facebook—just search for Ulysses Trust, and you'll find a vast gallery of images of past expeditions, and some of them could feature you!

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£260,000

The funding target
that the Ulysses Trust
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