



THE ULYSSES TRUST

Impact Report

Building Confidence and Resilience through Challenge and Adventure



SINCE 1992 WE HAVE SUPPORTED OVER 44,000 CADETS
AND RESERVISTS TO UNDERTAKE EXPEDITIONS AND
ADVENTUROUS TRAINING THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

EDITION 33



THE ULYSSES TRUST

MISSION, BENEFITS AND VISION



EX: Winchester SCC DofE Bronze Expedition 2024 | Location: Herts
Unit: Winchester Sea Cadet Corps

OUR MISSION

To provide financial assistance, encouragement, and guidance to support challenging expeditions and adventurous activities planned and undertaken by the Volunteer Reserve and Cadet Forces of the United Kingdom.



EX: Alps Crusade 2024 | Location: France
Unit: Northern Ireland UAS

THE BENEFITS

Confidence and resilience arise from challenge and adventure. **Teamwork and leadership** skills develop, along with **self-awareness and personal values**. Being outdoors in the natural world has proven benefits to our **mental health and wellbeing**. Expeditions enhance **morale and self-esteem**, and Adventurous Training is a key factor in **recruitment and retention**.



EX: Leviathan 2024 | Location: Portsmouth
Units: JFS CCF + 2 CCF(A) Londist Units

OUR VISION

To bring the benefits of challenging adventurous activities and expeditions within the financial reach of every member of the UK's Volunteer Reserve and Cadet Forces.

FOREWORD



Trust Chair Brigadier Tim Seal TD DL VR

Over the past 12 months, we've seen a significant rise in expeditions supported, participants involved, and grants awarded. This is a hugely encouraging trend, reflecting the growing appetite and need for Adventurous Training among cadets, volunteers, veterans, and reservists. But it also places a greater responsibility on us—to ensure our fundraising efforts keep pace with this rising demand.

The expeditions we've supported this year are as diverse as they are inspiring. From sailing adventures to mountaineering and leadership training, each has left a lasting impact on individuals and units alike. Our Impact Measurement results clearly show the transformative effects of these experiences. These outcomes are brought to life in this report through award-winning expeditions, compelling case studies, and participant voices.

We've also strengthened relationships with supporters. Heartfelt thanks to our loyal donors and a warm welcome to new ones—we couldn't do this without you. A highlight was the special event hosted by our Odyssey Circle Group, under the outstanding leadership of The Earl Cadogan and Lady Jane Grosvenor. Their support has helped showcase our work and communicate its real-world impact. We're planning more events to share our story and stay accountable.

In a climate of public sector constraint, our work matters more than ever. Units tell us our grants are essential—not only for enabling participation, but for making expeditions possible at all. That's a powerful reminder of the role we play in unlocking opportunity.

This year also marked development and renewal. We welcomed new Trustees—Dawn, Honor, and Mark—and a new Vice Patron, Sir Tyrone Urch. Their insights will help guide the Trust into its next phase. I'm also proud we're expanding our reach—supporting more Cadet Force Adult Volunteers, veterans, and now including the Military Preparation College for Training (MPCT). These steps reflect our commitment to broadening our impact while staying true to our mission.

The Royal Geographical Society award was a wonderful endorsement of our work. Behind that recognition is the tireless effort of our Board of Trustees, our CEO, and the wider team, forging new partnerships and strengthening existing ones. Their work, supported by robust social value data, ensures the Trust remains relevant and attractive to funders. (Thank you to everyone who contributed to our survey—see pages 14 & 15 for highlights.)

And of course, thank you to our incredible volunteers and dedicated part-time staff. They are the unsung heroes who keep the charity running smoothly.

Last year, I asked: how can we expand our support to benefit more people? That question continues to guide us. We're answering it through new initiatives, broader inclusion, and deeper engagement with those we serve.

The year ahead brings challenges—but also great opportunities. With your continued support, I'm confident we can meet them head-on and continue changing lives through challenge, adventure, and service.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tim Seal".

Brigadier Tim Seal TD DL VR
Chair of The Ulysses Trust

WHAT WE DO



EX: Wyvern Odyssey 2024
Location: Scilly Isles | Unit: Exeter UOTC

“This event is one of the hardest things I have done so far in my military career, challenging me to go places I did not think possible in order to keep going to the finish.”

Gdsm Johnstone | 4 LANCS, Scots Guards

CHANGING LIVES

We change lives through enabling outdoor challenge, exploration and adventure; supporting activities that deliver confidence, resilience, self-awareness and values; opening eyes to a world of unseen opportunity, and achievement beyond expectation.

“Each day really pushed us out of our comfort zones, whether we were trying to handle tough descents or just grinding through steep climbs—we learned how to stick together and keep everyone’s spirits up.”

Ocdt Partridge | NIUAS

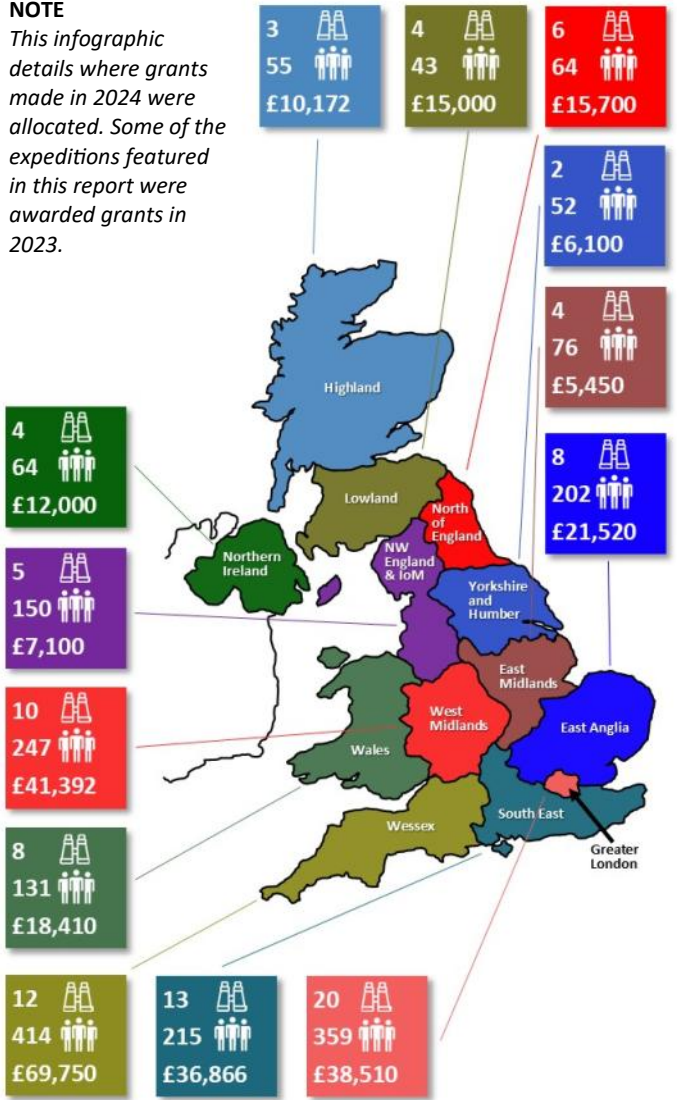
BENEFITTING ALL PARTS OF THE UK

Grants reached units in all parts of the UK, as shown on the map below, displaying expeditions supported (AA), participant numbers (III) and grants made, based on Reserve Forces’ and Cadets’ Association (RFCA) Regions.

105 grants totaling £311,351 were made by The Ulysses Trust in 2024 to support 2,156 cadets and reservists to take part in adventurous activities in 2024 & 2025.

NOTE

This infographic details where grants made in 2024 were allocated. Some of the expeditions featured in this report were awarded grants in 2023.



Many thanks to all our supporters who enable us to support life-changing impact on the lives of our cadets and reservists. Without you our mission would not be possible. Thanks also to all the individuals and units who provided photographs, quotes, reports and data in 2024. **Thank you.**

CASE FOR SUPPORT



Ex: Operation Ullswater Outward Bound 2024
Location: Lake District | Unit: Hampshire & Isle of Wight Air Cadets

Despite challenging adventurous activities having proven positive impact on individual development, unit morale, and social mobility - they are **not funded by the public purse**.

Since our founding we have awarded grants totalling over **£4 million** to support over **44,000 young people** participating in over **3,100 expeditions**. Challenging outdoor adventurous activities offer new experiences that develop **self-awareness** and **personal values**, such as courage, respect, integrity, loyalty and selflessness, as well as **vital life skills** such as initiative, resourcefulness, managing risk and judgement. They are also proven to be effective therapy for both **physical and mental well-being**, so critical for today’s youth in a post-COVID-19, internet-focused world. We focus strongly on **disadvantaged** young people and areas of deprivation, enabling reserves and cadets access to life-changing opportunities that might otherwise be out of reach.

Pivotal research into the impact of Cadet Forces, undertaken by Professor Simon Denny at the University of Northampton found that:

“By engaging young people in activities that boost their confidence, their motivation and their desire to achieve, the Cadet Forces are helping young people to move out of poverty.”

In recent years there has been growing demand for the support the Trust provides. The success of the Government’s Cadet Expansion Programme (all units based in state schools) has reached its target of 500 CCFs—a high proportion in areas defined as of high or very high areas of deprivation.

Headteachers report significant improvement in attendance and behaviour, with higher academic attainment, self-confidence and ambition of the young people involved, creating positive benefits in all areas of school life.

“This expedition taught me more about myself than I ever expected. I learned that I could push through fear and fatigue, and that the support of my team can help me overcome any challenge.”

Cadet Corporal H | Royal Grammar School
Guildford CCF | Ex: Tudor Tiger 2024



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“Without the grant funding, I would not have been able to come. I think my mum would have tried to find the money, but I wouldn’t have asked to go on the trip. My dad died a year ago, so things are hard. This trip has helped me so much. Not only has it given me the opportunity to actually complete my gold DofE but the island of Tiree gave me the space to be at peace. I was able to take moments on my own to talk to my dad. I felt like I was sharing the experience with him.”

Anon cadet | Ex: Tiree Tiger 2024

CEO’S REPORT AND OVERVIEW



In my second year as CEO, I promised myself to write less but say more.

Our usual tables and charts detail the breakdown of grants to expeditions and cadet and reserve units nationwide, alongside data showcasing our 2024 impact. We measure success at three levels:

Individuals – Development of values (courage, integrity, respect, selflessness) and life skills (resourcefulness, risk-awareness) - all vital to employers but not taught inside a classroom.

Units – Recruitment, retention, and morale.

Society – Socio-economic impact, mental health, and well-being benefits.

I’ll let the numbers speak for themselves, but I’m particularly pleased to report an increase in both **the number and value of grants awarded in 2024**, with **more support reaching disadvantaged young people**. Our results show **100% positive impact on individuals and units**, alongside significant social value—especially in mental health benefits from outdoor challenge and adventure.

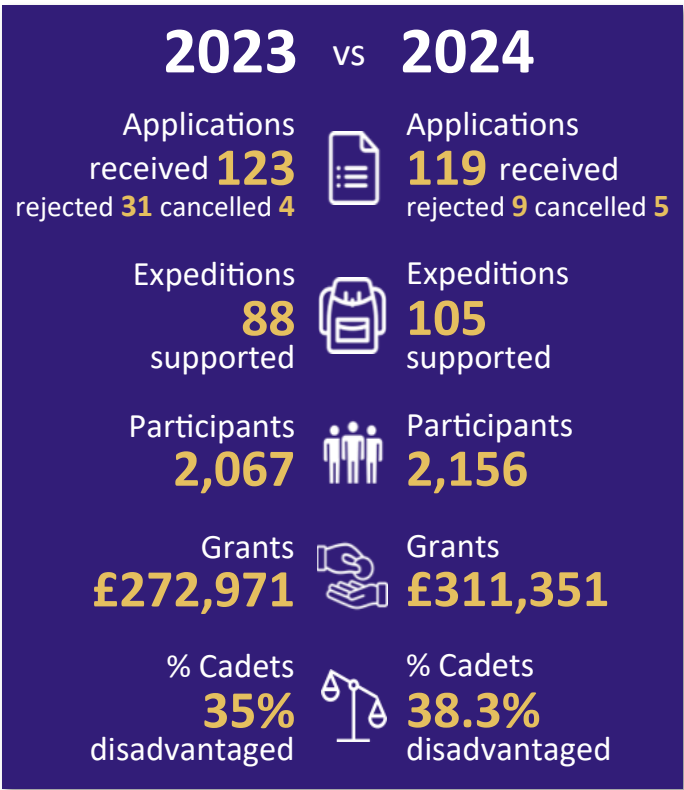
This success is thanks to our incredible team—almost all volunteers. We’ve welcomed **new Trustees, advisors, Vice Patrons, grant assessors, and supporters**. We host an annual thank-you event for our growing team and two impact-focused gatherings for donors, whose support is vital. A list of our generous donors can be found on page 19, and on behalf of all cadets and reserves, I extend my heartfelt gratitude.

I was pleased to see that the recently published Strategic Defence Review recognises the benefits of cadet forces and the need to grow cadet and reserve numbers. The Ulysses Trust is already aligned to the support this recommendation. With the **cost-of-living crisis, education budget cuts, and MOD savings**, our support is more crucial than ever. **More young people need help, and more cadets and reserves face funding shortfalls than ever before**. Yet the benefits continue to grow—outdoor challenge and adventure are **scientifically proven to improve mental health and resilience** (see Simon Denny’s report on social value and Belinda Kirk’s research at Adventure Mind, both Trust advisors).

This year, we’re prioritising **support for Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs)**—the backbone of the Cadet Forces. We’ve launched a **CFAV reward scheme** in partnership with Lord-Lieutenants and RFCAs. Additionally, we’ve expanded our definition of ‘disadvantaged’ to include young adults up to **age 25**, aligning with other youth charities. **Turning 18 doesn’t erase socio-economic challenges**.

Together, we are making a difference. Thank you for being part of this journey.

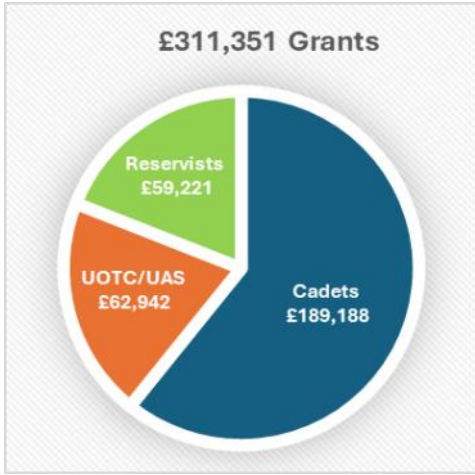
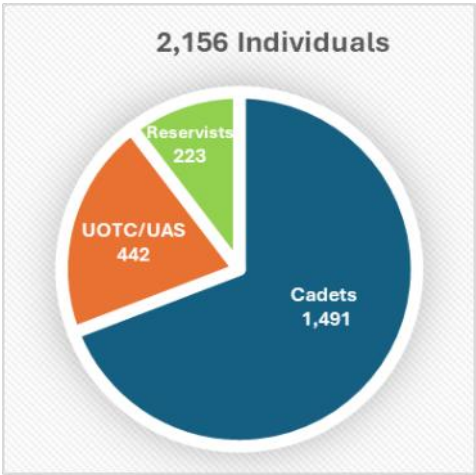
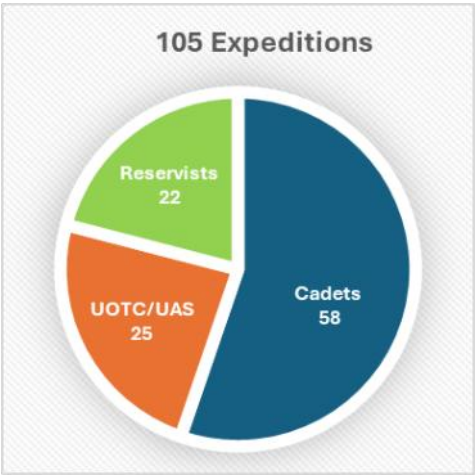
Polly Marsh | CEO



OUTPUT 2024

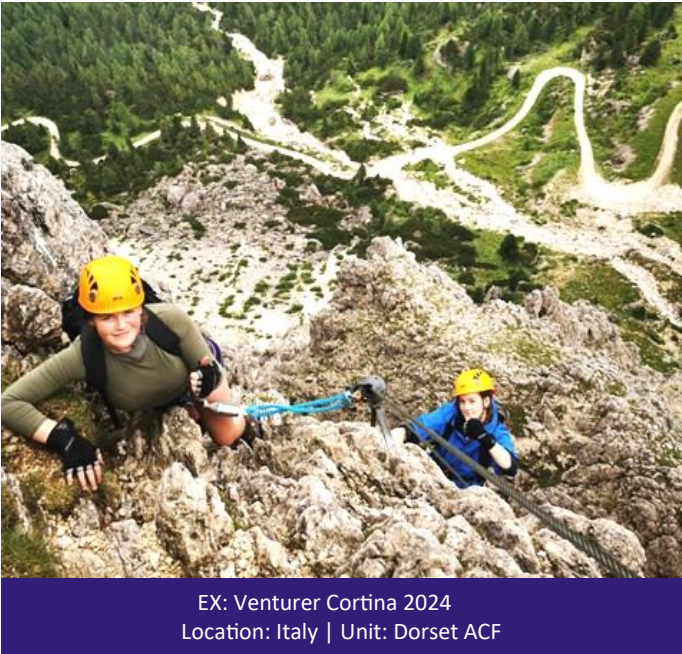
The table opposite gives a breakdown of the £311,351 of grants awarded in 2024. The table above details our Key Performance Indicators and the charts below provide more detail.

Unit type	Exped.	Adults	Cadets	Total Nos	Grants	Per Exped.
ACF	17	128	443	571	£74,832	£4,402
Sea	15	60	264	324	£30,130	£2,009
ATC	11	64	239	303	£45,950	£4,177
CCF	15	47	246	293	£38,276	£2,552
All Cadets	58	299	1,192	1,491	£189,188	£3,262
University OCdts	25	442	0	442	£62,942	£2,518
Army	19	184	0	184	£50,860	£2,677
RNR/RMR	1	36	0	36	£600	£600
RAuxAF	2	3	0	3	£7,761	£3,881
All Reservists	22	223	0	223	£59,221	£2,692
Totals	105	964	1,192	2,156	£311,351	£2,965



Please note these figures are extracted from the application data which is used to award grants. As circumstances can change on deployment the number of participants may vary. The Trust monitors any variations and takes appropriate action as required.

GRANTS MADE TO CADETS 2024



EX: Venturer Cortina 2024
Location: Italy | Unit: Dorset ACF

CADET EXPEDITIONS ARE BOOMING!


Over the past 12 months, we have seen a 38% increase in the number of cadet expeditions, an 18% rise in the number of participants supported, and a 13% increase in the total amount of grants awarded compared to the previous year. Popular activities included canoeing, caving, diving, mountaineering, parachuting, sailing, skiing, trekking, and mountain biking. This is excellent news. In particular, Sea Cadet expeditions have surged in recent years, growing from four expeditions in 2022 to 15 in 2024. This compares to 11 RAFAC, 15 CCF, and 17 ACF grant awards in 2024.

TARGETTING DISADVANTAGE

Of the 1,491 participants in cadet expeditions, 1,192 were cadets, and 299 were adult volunteers or instructors. Among the cadets, 447 were identified as disadvantaged out of 835 cadets with known data, representing 53.5%. However, 357 cadets (30%) were listed as 'unknown' at the application stage, as collecting this data can be a sensitive and challenging task for some expedition leaders.


Given the identified proportion of 53.5% disadvantaged cadets, it is reasonable to assume a similar distribution among the 'unknown' cadets. This would suggest an estimated 191 additional disadvantaged cadets, bringing the total estimated number of disadvantaged cadets to 638 (ie 53.5%).

KEY STATS



58


expeditions supported



1,491

participants

38.3% cadets disadvantaged



£189,188

grants

Funding from The Ulysses Trust plays a crucial role in making expeditions accessible to young people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. This includes those on free school meals, bursary students, looked-after children, and individuals from minority backgrounds. Evidence from our **Impact Measurement** found that the expedition experience had a profoundly positive effect on both units and individuals.

The benefits to individual cadets are immense. The number of children and young people experiencing mental health difficulties in the UK has risen at alarming rates over the past decade. However, expeditions have had a significant positive impact in this (and many other) areas, as the case study opposite details. See pages 14–15 for further insights into our impact.



EX: Sailing 2024 | Location: SE England
Unit: Gravesend Sea Cadets

CADET CASE STUDY



Ex: Camino 2024 | Location: Spain
Unit: Cumbria & Lancashire Wing RAF Air Cadets

In 2024, The Ulysses Trust supported Ex: Camino 24, an expedition undertaken by twelve cadets and support staff from Cumbria & Lancashire Wing RAF Air Cadets. The team embarked on a five-day trek along the Camino de Santiago pilgrim route in Spain, covering 115 km from Sarria to the cathedral in Santiago de Compostela.

PREPARATION AND OBJECTIVES

The expedition was meticulously planned, with initial selection and training exercises conducted in the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales to prepare the cadets for the physical and mental challenges ahead. The primary objectives were to:

- Foster a sense of adventure through an overseas trekking experience.
- Develop self-confidence, self-reliance, initiative, teamwork skills, and physical fitness.
- Earn the 'Compostela,' a certificate awarded to pilgrims who complete a minimum of 100 km of the Camino de Santiago.

"Walking the Camino de Santiago was one of the greatest challenges I have taken part in during my time in cadets. It was a fantastic experience."

Anon cadet
Cumbria & Lancashire Wing RAF Air Cadets.

IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH

The multi-day nature of the trek, with limited recovery time, required cadets to draw upon physical fitness, teamwork, determination, and a sense of fun. Such expeditions have been shown to offer significant mental health benefits, including:

- **Reduction in Anxiety and Depression:** Engaging in physical activity and connecting with nature can alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression.
- **Enhanced Self-Concept:** Overcoming challenges during the expedition helped cadets build a stronger sense of identity and self-worth.
- **Improved Social Development:** Working collaboratively in a team setting enhanced interpersonal skills and overall social well-being.

Ex: Camino 24 exemplifies how adventurous expeditions supported by The Ulysses Trust can positively impact the mental health and personal development of young cadets. By immersing participants in challenging yet supportive environments, such initiatives foster resilience, teamwork, and a sense of accomplishment that extend beyond the expedition itself.

A full report of this expedition, and every other expedition supported by The Ulysses Trust, is available on our website at www.ulyssesrust.co.uk.



Ex: Camino 2024 | Location: Spain
Unit: Cumbria & Lancashire Wing RAF Air Cadets

GRANTS MADE TO UNIVERSITY CADETS 2024



EX: Climbing Now | Location: Mallorca
Unit: Northern Ireland University Air Squadron

BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH ADVENTURE

In 2024, 442 university Officer Cadets from 21 different university units embarked on a series of 25 challenging expeditions, supported by The Ulysses Trust, to develop their resilience, leadership, and other essential skills. Activities included canoeing, mountaineering, sailing, skiing, trekking and mountain biking.

DEVELOPING FUTURE LEADERS

From the **Adriatic Lion 2024** and **Alps Crusade 2024** expeditions, which tested endurance in mountainous terrain, to **Bear Escape 3216**, where Officer Cadets honed their survival instincts, these experiences have pushed participants beyond their limits. Leadership and teamwork were at the core of **Cockney Mountaineer** and **Dragon Morzine**, where cadets navigated alpine environments, while **Northern Highland Express** demanded both endurance and decision-making under pressure.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

For those refining specialist skills, **Cockney Sailor XXXVII & XXXVIII** and **Plain Sailing** provided hands-on seamanship training, while **Dragon Telemark Blue** and **Solent Bergziege Jager** built expertise in difficult climates. Other expeditions, such as **Harkan Fire** and **Wyvern Odyssey**, provided numerous challenges in unpredictable and demanding environments.

KEY STATS



25 expeditions supported



442 participants



£62,942 grants

Through these experiences, The Ulysses Trust has played a key role in shaping adaptable and capable future officers, ensuring they are ready to face the future with confidence as they embark on the next chapter in their lives.

“All I was thinking going over the rapids was Aggression! Aggression! Aggression! like we were told, don’t be a passenger so I paddled hard.”

Off Cdt KM
Ex: Slim Dragon Viking 2024



EX: Slim Dragon Viking 2024
Location: | Unit: Birmingham UOTC

UNIVERSITY CADET CASE STUDY



EX: Dragon Telemark Blue | Location: Norway
Unit: Cambridge University Officers' Training Corps

Between 1–14 April 2024, Ex. Dragon Telemark Blue took a team of eight Officer Cadets and four Second Lieutenants from Cambridge University Officers' Training Corps on a two-week Nordic skiing and battlefield study across Norway's Hardangervidda plateau. This student-led expedition followed the route of the 1943 SOE Operation Gunnerside, in which Norwegian commandos sabotaged Nazi heavy water production, hindering Hitler's atomic ambitions.

The expedition began with intensive training in Nordic Ski Foundation 1 & 2 (NF1 & NF2) at Høgås ski centre, led by experienced Nordic Leaders Captain Michael Atkinson, Lieutenant Jason Franks and Corporal Jamie Bell. Over six days participants developed skiing, avalanche survival, and navigation skills, while evening lectures deepened their understanding of Arctic survival and military history.

The main expedition covered over 75km of remote, snow-covered terrain, testing participants' endurance through whiteouts, steep ascents, and freezing conditions. Nights were spent in traditional Norwegian hyttes, including one used by the original saboteurs. The final leg recreated the saboteurs' descent into Rjukan, culminating in a visit to the Vemork hydroelectric plant, the historic sabotage site.

This expedition profoundly impacted the Officer Cadets, strengthening their resilience, teamwork, and leadership under adversity. Every participant achieved at least NF1, with most reaching NF2, and several were recommended for further Nordic leadership training. Additionally, it inspired a newfound appreciation for military history, physical endurance, and extreme environment operations.

Thanks to generous support from the Nuffield Trust, this expedition proved to be a once-in-a-lifetime experience, immersing participants in a physically and mentally demanding journey that mirrored one of the most daring special operations of World War II.

- **Leadership & Ownership:** Participants planned, organised, and executed the expedition with minimal staff intervention. This significantly enhanced leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving skills.
- **Officer Pathway Development:** Several participants committed to the Officer pathway after this experience, making it a crucial step in their career progression.
- **Resilience & Confidence Building:** The expedition required OCdts to overcome physical and mental challenges, boosting their self-belief and ability to handle adversity.
- **Financial Accessibility:** Without Ulysses Trust support, each OCdt would have had to pay more than £700 to attend, which could have created financial barriers. The funding ensured equal opportunities for all.

Dragon Telemark Blue 2024 had a strong combination of leadership, career impact, financial inclusivity, and professional development, making it an exemplary expedition.

"This expedition was OCdt inspired, planned and lead. UOTC Staff provide support and mentoring throughout, but the enthusiasm drive and hard work of the OCdts makes it so worthwhile."

Major Mark Bevin | Cambridge UOTC

GRANTS MADE TO RESERVISTS 2024



KEY STATS

 **22** expeditions supported

 **223** participants

 **£59,221** grants

CHALLENGING EXPEDITIONS YIELD RESULTS

In 2024, The Ulysses Trust continued to play an important role in supporting UK reservists by providing an increase of 49% in grant value from the previous year for a similar number of expeditions. This reflects the rising costs of deploying challenging expeditions overseas. These experiences tested the endurance, leadership and adaptability of the participants in extreme conditions—with positive results. See pages 14-15 for more details of the impact of expeditions.

PUSHING PHYSICAL AND MENTAL LIMITS

Expeditions like **Dragon Army Everest 24**, **Skimo Warrior 2024** and **Snjor Mountaineer 2024** (featured opposite) took reservists into harsh mountain environments, strengthening their resilience. At the same time, leadership and teamwork were at the heart of **Monty Merger 2024** and **Cockney Vambrace Peak 2024** where participants had to make tough decisions in high-pressure situations.

DEVELOPING SPECIALIST SKILLS

The **French Parachuting Course at ETAP** offered elite airborne training for five members of the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry, while the **RNR National Sailing Expedition** honed crucial seamanship and navigation skills for 37 reservists from 14 units across the ranks of the maritime reserve.

Meanwhile, exercises like **Dragon Dieppe Challenge 2024** and **Pegasus Frost 2024** included a historical context to mark some of the important military anniversaries of 2024.

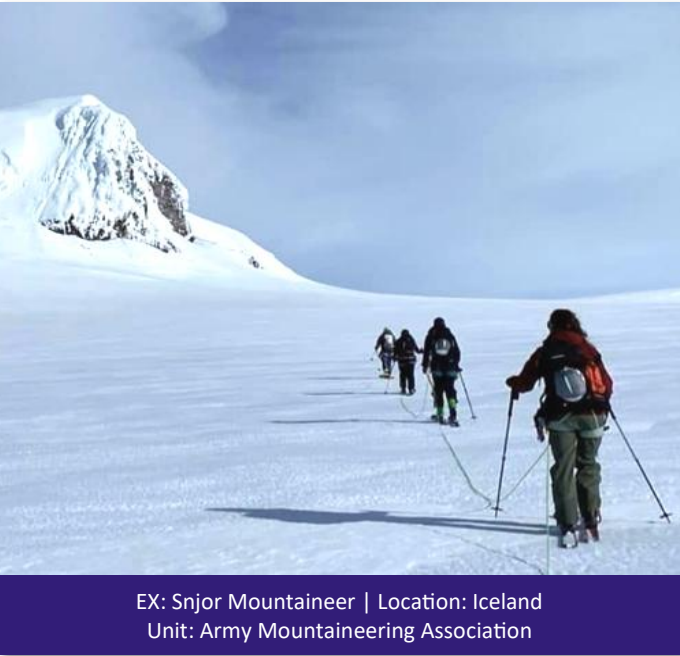
Many of the expeditions took place in unforgiving landscapes. **Badlands 24** and the RAF Mountaineering Association’s **Alpine Venture 2024** ensured that reservists gained experience in a range of climates. These experiences, supported by The Ulysses Trust, are invaluable in shaping resilient, capable forces ready to tackle the challenges ahead.

“This event is one of the hardest things I have done so far in my military career, challenging me to go places I did not think possible in order to keep going to the finish.”

Gdsm Johnstone | Ex: Badlands 24 2024



RESERVIST CADET CASE STUDY



CHALLENGING THE LIMITS IN ICELAND

The Snjor Mountaineer expedition, organised by the Army Mountaineering Association (AMA), aimed to summit Hvannadalshnúkur, Iceland’s highest peak. Designed to develop leadership, teamwork and resilience, it exposed participants to extreme challenges in a remote environment. The journey pushed physical and mental boundaries, fostering critical military skills.

INTENSE TRAINING AND PREPARATION

Training in the East Fjords, with its steep mountains and vast snowfields, provided an ideal setting for skill development in off-piste skiing, ski touring, and avalanche rescue. The team, selected from over 120 applicants, included 15 members, six of whom were reservists.

Rigorous training covered navigation in extreme weather, avalanche drills, and endurance exercises. These activities built confidence and resilience, enhancing decision-making and trust—essential leadership skills.

SUMMITTING HVANNADALSHNÚKUR

After nearly two weeks of preparation, the team attempted the summit. The ascent demanded immense physical and mental effort, with members facing unpredictable weather, steep climbs, and technical descents.

Reaching the 2,100 m peak was a historic achievement—the first by a British Military team. The descent, complicated by dense cloud and vertigo-inducing conditions, tested the team’s ability to remain calm under pressure.

This expedition reinforced teamwork and leadership, requiring members to rely on training and each other to overcome challenges. These experiences directly translate to military readiness, where confidence and resilience are crucial.

PERSONAL GROWTH, MORALE AND RETENTION

Beyond physical achievements, the expedition promoted personal growth. Reservists gained self-awareness, stronger values, and a renewed appreciation for perseverance. Facing harsh conditions bolstered self-esteem and morale, crucial for military motivation and commitment.

Adventurous training plays a vital role in recruitment and retention. By offering challenging experiences, the military fosters purpose and camaraderie. Many participants now plan to pursue higher-level military ski leader qualifications, ensuring long-term benefits for individuals and the force.

A LASTING IMPACT

The team also engaged in conservation work at Vatnajökull National Park, reinforcing environmental responsibility while strengthening teamwork. The Ulysses Trust has supported many AMA expeditions in recent years which has enabled Army Reservists to enhance their technical skills in testing environments. This ambitious expedition is an excellent example of the benefits of Adventurous Training and will inspire others to plan future challenging expeditions across the globe.

“Sport and Adventurous Training help to build vital qualities for operations. As Chairman of the Army Mountaineering Association, I’m grateful to The Ulysses Trust for supporting reservists and helping them integrate smoothly with regulars during these valuable training experiences.”

Lt Col Pete Davis | AMA Chairman

IMPACT MEASUREMENT

This is a summary of the 94 survey responses we received from the expedition leaders and Commanding Officers of units that took part in 96 expeditions supported by The Ulysses Trust from 1 Jan to 31 Dec 2024. It includes a summary of the 538 comments received reflecting the overall survey results (response rate: 98%).

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LIFE SKILLS

100% Positive impact on individuals. Measuring the impact on the quoted characteristics of leadership, teamwork, confidence, initiative, self-discipline and judgement—our survey said: **73% major positive** impact on most of the quoted characteristics, **25% positive** impact on the majority of the quoted characteristics and **2% modest positive impact** on one or more of the quoted characteristics.

“As a veteran organising the expedition, I would say that it had a major impact on my leadership experience and confidence. For the cadets on the expeditions, the teamwork between them was inspiring, seeing them develop their confidence... was wonderful to see.”

Alex Gray | Glasgow & Lanarkshire Bn

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND MORALE

100% Positive Impact on Units

Measuring the impact on the quoted areas of recruitment, retention and morale—our survey said: **52% major** positive impact on all 3 of the quoted areas, **41% positive** impact on all 3 of the quoted areas and **7% modest** positive impact on 1 or more of the quoted areas.

“Recruitment, retention and morale were all greatly benefitted from this expedition as people worked as teams and leaders in challenging circumstances in remote environments.”

Major Al Mason | Ex: Dragon Spindrift 2024

REFLECTION AND LEARNING

The Trust continues to review its activities and looks for ways to improve on an ongoing basis. Reflecting on the data we have received, the Trust has learnt that expeditions:

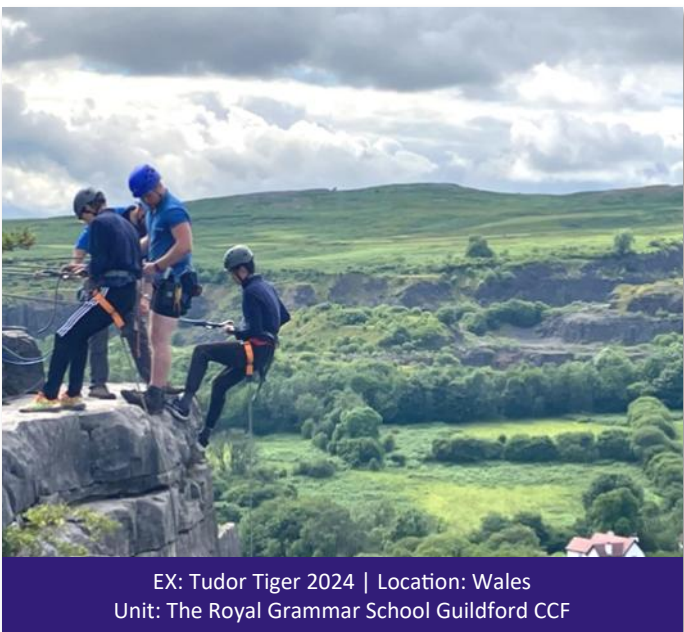
- provide an experience **that pushes personal boundaries and builds strong relationships**, reinforces problem-solving abilities, and inspires future engagement in adventurous and leadership-focused activities.
- have a profoundly **positive impact on a unit’s recruitment, retention and morale**.
- have a significant positive impact on **mental health and wellbeing** and **economic inequality**.

Survey respondents reported that **88% were strongly satisfied with our service**.

“We saw a significant positive impact on cadets’ wellbeing during the venture. They grew in self-confidence, demonstrated resilience and an ability to look after themselves and others, and learnt a great deal about themselves and their strengths and weaknesses.”

Lt Col R Lockhart

Ex: Venturer German Gold 2024



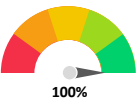
SOCIAL VALUE

2024 SURVEY DETAILS

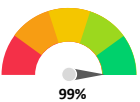
The charts below summarise the results of our survey and provide the headline figures for each category.



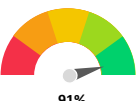
100% positive impact on **INDIVIDUALS**



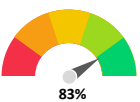
100% positive impact on **UNITS**



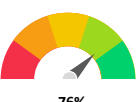
99% positive impact on **MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING**



91% positive impact on tackling **ECONOMIC INEQUALITY**



83% positive impact on fighting **CLIMATE CHANGE**



76% positive impact on **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

MEASURING IMPACT

As well as developing personal values and life skills, and having enormous benefits to recruitment and retention in our Reserve and Cadet Forces – we want to measure the social impact we have and the role we play in levelling-up in society. It is a huge driver behind our purpose, and this report enables us to show the incredible impact we are able to deliver through the support of our donors.

In our previous Impact Report we piloted a Social Value survey for cadet units. This year we have expanded the survey to include reservist and university Officer Cadet expeditions—involving all the units we supported in 2024. The survey measures the effect of challenge and adventure across five areas, which align with the UK Government’s Social Value Model.

“Finishing those hikes felt incredible. It taught me so much about leadership and teamwork.”

Anonymous | Ex: Solent Bergziege Jager 2024

IMPACT ON INDIVIDUALS’ WELLBEING

Expeditions had a significant positive impact on participants’ social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH), particularly in confidence, resilience, and self-awareness. **99% reported positive outcomes, with 49% noting a major positive impact.**

Participants, many travelling abroad for the first time, overcame initial anxieties with peer support. Facing challenges like mountaineering or scuba diving, they grew in confidence and leadership. Tech-free environments encouraged relaxation and deeper engagement. Many participants, including those facing grief or anxiety, developed resilience and coping mechanisms. Self-awareness was a key outcome, boosting self-esteem and motivating participants to set higher personal goals.

TACKLING ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

91% of respondents noted a positive impact. 35% identified a major benefit. Financial support **reduced contributions by 50% or more**, ensuring participation was not limited by socio-economic status.

Participants gained qualifications like RYA Start Yachting and Duke of Edinburgh Awards, fostering social mobility and inclusion.

FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE

83% of respondents reported a positive impact on environmental sustainability. Low-impact transport and eco-friendly practices reduced CO₂ emissions.

Participants learned about waste reduction, natural habitat respect, and engaged in hands-on conservation projects, deepening their commitment to environmental preservation.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE PART

76% of respondents noted a positive impact. Cadets with SEND (autism, ADHD, learning difficulties) were fully integrated into activities.

SEND participants gained confidence, social skills, and independence, supported by high staff-to-cadet ratios.

+ the impact on COVID-19 recovery was measured at 67% indicating a decline in the pandemic’s significance since 2020.

FINANCIAL REPORT



EX: Venturer Malta Dive 2024
Location: Malta | Unit: Glasgow & Lanarkshire Bn

2024 continued to see a strong recovery despite budgetary cuts at the end of 2023 leading to several expeditions being cancelled. These cuts to Adventurous Training were largely withdrawn in early 2024 allowing a number of these cancelled expeditions to proceed. This contributed to the number of expeditions and participants being supported exceeding pre-pandemic levels. This was reflected in the increased total value of grants awarded in 2024, a 32% increase on 2019 and 2023. This progress was seen by both volunteer reserves and cadets.

The need for this support to cadets remains vital, with the Free School Meals (FSM) benchmark continuing to increase to 24.6% of students in secondary education. The excess of our reach to these, above this benchmark, continued to grow, with the proportion of cadets on FSM benefiting from our grants, growing from 35% to 38.3%. A key ambition for the Trust remains to provide increased support for cadet expeditions, with a particular focus on reducing the costs to the individual cadet participants.

Donations income in 2024 declined by 15%, underperforming expectations due to a delay to the £250,000 endowment from the Lloyd-Jones Foundation. This has subsequently been gratefully received in 2025. We do, however enter 2025 with only £360,000 of further assured donations, £60,000 less than last year.

As a counter to this, a renewed donation of £5,000 was received from the Gosling Foundation, and a further commitment was pledged from Army Sport, increasing to £60,000. The prospects therefore remain promising as our profile continues to grow.

Total grants of £320,808 were up 19% on 2023, with support to volunteer reserves up by nearly 24%, and cadets up by 17%. Although running costs did increase over the prior year, this was still a reduction to 32% of total expenditure. The return on investment for fundraising for every £1 spent, declined from £4.80, to £4.01, a reduction of 16.5% on the previous year. The above produced an operating deficit of -£42,560, decreasing operating reserves to just over £131,000, equating to 3.5 months of trailing. However, forecast cashflow into 2025 means no immediate measures to restore that to the policy 6 months are considered necessary. Our capital funds increased in value by 4.2% in 2024, however investment income received from dividends and bank interest increased by 11% to £26,994. This resulted in total net assets reducing by 2.4% to £720,395.

PROSPECTS FOR 2025

Although our grant ambitions for 2024 were not fully achieved, our intent is to target all available funds from the Nuffield Trust, (including prior year underspend) £159,000 for volunteer reserve expeditions, a focus for the trust activities in 2025. The target for cadet expeditions, £250,000, would also continue the aspiration that an average of 33% of expedition costs to be met by The Ulysses Trust.

Mark Seibenaller
Finance Trustee



EX: LASCAT Caving 24 2024 | Location: Peak District
Unit: London Area Sea Cadets

ACCOUNTS SUMMARY

ULYSSES TRUST - SUMMARY ACCOUNTS 2024 (UNAUDITED)

	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	2023
Operating Income				
Voluntary Income / Donations (incl Gift Aid)	£237,000	£131,430	£368,430	£453,615
Bank Interest and Dividends	£11,052	£15,942	£26,994	£24,313
Other Income	£23,004	£9,443	£32,447	£0
Total Operating Income	£271,056	£156,815	£427,872	£477,928
Operating Expenditure (net of refunds from cancellations)				
VR Grants (inc. VR instrs on cadet expeditions)	£68,456	£0	£68,456	£46,405
University Cadets	£57,547	£0	£57,547	£55,453
Cadets (excluding VR Instructors)	£194,805	£0	£194,805	£166,438
Total Charitable Activities	£320,808	£0	£320,808	£268,296
Cost of Grant-making		£46,214	£46,214	£31,526
Cost of Generating funds		£99,083	£99,083	£92,623
Governance and Administration		£4,328	£4,328	£5,514
Total Running Costs	£0	£149,625	£149,625	£129,663
Total Expenditure	£320,808	£149,625	£470,433	£397,959
Excess of Operating Income over Expenditure	-£49,752	£7,190	-£42,561	£79,969
Gains/Losses on Investments	£11,387	£12,833	£24,220	£1,655
Net Movement of Funds	-£38,365	£20,023	-£18,341	£81,623
BALANCE SHEET - 1 Jan 2025				
Fixed Assets				
Investments	£277,090	£312,300	£589,390	£565,171
Current Assets				
Cash	£0	£225,844	£225,844	£226,469
Debtors	£2,763	£3,114	£5,877	£5,616
Total Current Assets	£2,763	£228,958	£231,721	£232,085
Liabilities				
Accruals & Creditors: falling due within one year	-£97,016	-£3,700	-£100,716	-£58,520
Net Current Assets	-£94,253	£225,258	£131,005	£173,565
Total Net Assets	£182,837	£537,558	£720,395	£738,735
Made Up of:				
Capital Funds				
Army Cadets Fund	£277,090		£277,090	£265,704
Future Development Fund (Designated)		£312,300	£312,300	£299,467
Total Fixed Assets			£589,390	£565,171
Operational Reserves				
Restricted Reserves (inc. £39,249 of Nuffield Trust pre-payments)	£83,703		£83,703	£133,454
General Reserve		£47,301	£47,301	£40,110
Total Reserves			£131,004	£173,564
Total Trust Funds	£360,793	£359,601	£720,394	£738,735

ODYSSEY CIRCLE AND DONOR BENEFITS



The Earl Cadogan DL (left), John Bottrill Managing Director of C3IA (centre) and Lady Jane Grosvenor (right) at the Odyssey Circle event at Grosvenor Estates.

CELEBRATING GENEROSITY & EXPANDING IMPACT

Following the success of the New Horizons Campaign, The Ulysses Trust launched its ongoing initiative for donor engagement: The Odyssey Circle. Created with our fundraising team at Morgen Thomas Ltd, this prestigious group recognises and celebrates the exceptional generosity of our supporters. It is also our channel to be accountable to them.

Led by President The Earl Cadogan DL and our newly appointed Vice Patron Lady Jane Grosvenor, the Odyssey Circle offers two tiers of membership: Discovery Partner and Odyssey Partner. Each level provides a suite of meaningful benefits designed to honour and deepen the connection between our donors and the life-changing work they make possible.

DISCOVERY PARTNERS

As a Discovery Partner, members receive a personal welcome from the President, along with an invitation to our Annual Gathering. This special event offers opportunities to meet beneficiaries, Trustees, Vice Patrons, and fellow supporters, while learning about the impact of your support. Members are also recognised in our annual Impact Report and on our website, unless anonymity is preferred, and receive an Odyssey Circle Certificate and commemorative lapel pin, presented at our annual event.

ODYSSEY PARTNERS

Odyssey Partners enjoy all Discovery Partner benefits, plus exclusive access to high-profile lectures and receptions, and the opportunity to have an annual grant named in their honour. Individuals and organisations will also receive an engraved plaque and be listed on our website with a link to their own.

For full details, please contact:

fundraising@ulyssesrust.co.uk

Rob Astick, CFRE – 07934 606029

A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT AND CELEBRATION

The Odyssey Circle has seen impressive growth since its launch in October 2023, with high profile events hosted at Fishmongers' Hall by the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers and in 2024 by Lady Jane Grosvenor at Grosvenor Estates. Our supporters come from all walks of life—military charities, businesses, livery companies, private foundations, and dedicated individuals, including those who've chosen to leave a legacy gift for future generations. We continue to expand our circle of partners and welcome discussions with supporters who may know potential organisations and individuals who might welcome becoming involved.

We know our mission is more important than ever. With ongoing challenges like the cost-of-living crisis, we remain committed to raising the funds needed to help even more young people experience the life-changing adventures made possible by The Ulysses Trust.

Robert Astick, CFRE
Fundraising Director

*We are **enormously** grateful to all our supporters and donors for your investment in our Reserve and Cadet Forces. Your support enables us to deliver incredible life-changing opportunities and improves Social Value for individuals, units and communities.*



The Ulysses Trust would like to thank our supporters and donors for their generosity.



SIR JAMES KNOTT TRUST



The Dyers' Company
Charitable Trust

Clive Richards
Foundation
Making a Difference



4 Para Regt
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Ulysses Trust Board of Trustees
Veterans' Foundation
Wessex RFCA

Westminster Foundation
William Henry 2nd Lord Leigh Memorial Fund
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THE MACROBERT TRUST



London
Freemasons



The Worshipful Company
of Fletchers

STRATEGIC DEFENCE REVIEW



A KEY PARTNER IN DELIVERING THE SDR

The Strategic Defence Review (SDR) 2025 outlines ambitious goals to strengthen the UK's defence resilience and youth engagement. Central to this vision are initiatives to expand Cadet Forces by 30% to 250,000 by 2030, introduce a voluntary "Gap Year" scheme for school and college leavers, and grow the active and strategic Reserve Forces. The Ulysses Trust is uniquely positioned to support and deliver on these objectives.

For over 30 years, The Ulysses Trust has enabled adventurous training and expeditions for cadets, university Officer Cadets, and reservists. These experiences directly contribute to recruitment, retention, and personal growth, supporting the SDR's expansion targets. Moreover, the Trust's expedition model provides an ideal foundation for the proposed gap year scheme—offering leadership development, military ethos, and resilience-building.

The Trust also bolsters reserve readiness by enhancing team cohesion and reducing attrition through funded expeditions. It builds a bridge from cadet to reservist by fostering commitment through challenging experiences, both at home and abroad.

In addition to providing proven, cost-effective delivery, The Ulysses Trust leverages both MOD and charitable funding, ensuring value for money. It amplifies the MOD's youth engagement activities and advances national resilience by instilling confidence, teamwork, and civic responsibility in the next generation.

As Defence seeks to engage more young people and build flexible, capable forces, The Ulysses Trust stands as a scalable, mission-aligned partner ready to help deliver the SDR 2025's goals.

General Sir Jim Hockenhull KBE ADC Gen Commander of Strategic Command



"The Ulysses Trust plays a vital role in supporting our nation's volunteer cadet forces and reservists through adventurous and demanding expeditions that build resilience, leadership, and teamwork. Crucially, the Trust ensures that these life-shaping opportunities are open to all—regardless of background—by removing financial barriers for those who might otherwise be excluded. In doing so, it helps unlock potential, strengthen social mobility, and develop the kind of confident, capable individuals our Armed Forces—and our country—need for the challenges of tomorrow. Strategic Command is proud to support this mission."

General Sir Gwyn Jenkins KCB OBE ADC RM First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff



"The Ulysses Trust supports the Royal Navy's aim to help young people develop core naval values including courage, commitment and integrity. Through adventurous training it builds inner strength and sound judgement, shaping them into confident young adults with the life skills required to deal with life's challenges."

General Sir Roland Walker KCB DSO ADC Gen Chief of the General Staff British Army



"The Army's goal to grow Cadet and Reserve Forces is enhanced by The Ulysses Trust supporting tough expeditions that build courage, integrity, and teamwork. These experiences forge adaptable, resilient individuals ready to serve their communities and the nation."

Air Chief Marshal Sir Rich Knighton KCB ADC FREng Chief of the Air Staff



"The RAF needs leaders with character and resilience. The Ulysses Trust's aims of building confidence, judgement, and mental toughness through challenging activities is invaluable. Its work reflects our guiding principles and helps shape future-ready leaders for service on the ground and in the skies, who are always ready to fly and fight."

2024 EXPEDITION AWARDS

THE ROYAL PATRON EXPEDITION AWARDS 2024

Each year The Ulysses Trust presents three awards for the best expeditions in the following categories—Cadet Forces, University Units and Volunteer Reserve Forces—to highlight the very best in leadership, ambition, endeavour and planning. Award certificates will be presented at regional events throughout 2025. Further details will be announced on our website. Here are the winners for 2024:

CADET CATEGORY

EX: TIREE TIGER 2024

UNIT: SE REGION HQ ARMY CADETS

A team of 27 Army Cadets, including 14 from disadvantaged backgrounds, completed a Gold DofE expedition on the Isle of Tiree. They camped for six nights, conducted 723 hours of beach cleaning, and contributed to Marine Conservation Society research. Evening activities included wildlife talks, otter spotting, and a whale-watching trip. All cadets earned the John Muir Discovery Award and completed their DofE residential section.



EX: Tiree Tiger 2024 | Location: Isle of Tiree, Scotland
Unit: SE Region HQ Army Cadets

UNIVERSITY CATEGORY

EX: HARKAN FIRE 2024

UNITS: WALES, BRISTOL AND BIRMINGHAM UAS

Three groups of 12 Officer Cadets from Birmingham, Wales, and Bristol University Air Squadrons (UAS) undertook a seven-day self-sustained Canadian canoe expedition in remote Sweden. They developed resilience, leadership, teamwork, and military skills while navigating lakes and rivers. The expedition also honed canoeing, bushcraft, and survival skills, preparing participants to operate confidently in austere environments.



EX: Harkan Fire 2024 | Location: Sweden
Unit: Wales, Bristol & Birmingham UAS

RESERVIST CATEGORY

EX: SNJOR MOUNTAINEER 2024

UNIT: ARMY MOUNTAINEERING ASSOCIATION

Ex Snjor Mountaineer was the Army Mountaineering Association's flagship ski mountaineering expedition to Iceland, aiming to summit Hvannadalshnúkur—the first British military team to do so. The expedition challenged participants in a remote, demanding environment, fostering leadership, teamwork, and resilience. Trust funding enabled six reservists to take part in this groundbreaking achievement. For further details, see page 13.



EX: Snjor Mountaineering 2024 | Location: Iceland
Unit: Army Mountaineering Association

MESSAGES FROM OUR AMBASSADORS

The Ulysses Trust is fortunate to have fantastic support from a range of supporters, stakeholders and volunteers. Part of our excellent volunteer team are our Ambassadors. They represent the Trust at events and help us raise awareness about the work we undertake, among stakeholders, potential donors, and society at large. Here are their messages.



LEVISON WOOD

"I'm honoured to be an ambassador for The Ulysses Trust, who understand the importance of adventure and challenge to develop people, and benefit

communities. The Trust helps young people and reservists build resilience, confidence, leadership, and teamwork through challenging expeditions. It's a privilege to support such an important cause and help inspire others to push beyond their limits and travel the world."



LOUIS RUDD MBE

"It's fantastic to see that The Ulysses Trust continues to support reservist expeditions. It was thanks to them that I was able to take five reservists on the

journey of a lifetime across Antarctica.

Adventure Training in all its forms builds resilience - it would be great to see even more applications to the Trust next year."



RAY MEARS

"Outdoor adventure training and expeditions offer young people unique opportunities to grow physically, mentally, and socially.

Outside of a classroom, facing the genuine and often unpredictable, challenges posed by nature, rewards good risk assessment, and personal preparation while highlighting the importance of training and resourcefulness. Being in nature also fosters environmental awareness and personal reflection, promoting mental well-being, encouraging problem-solving, and nurturing a spirit of curiosity and self-awareness, ultimately preparing individuals for future challenges of life."



DR AMELIA SEARLE

"This year has been full of adventure, with plenty of work and personal challenges! The highlight was guiding my first team to the South Pole. I'm delighted to see

that The Ulysses Trust is helping even more young people from all backgrounds. Recently, they've taken the important step of measuring disadvantage in those up to aged 25 - recognising that many need support well after they turn 18. The Ulysses Trust continues to stand out as an organisation which demonstrates values of equality and diversity in action."



JORDAN WYLIE

"It's wonderful to read and hear about all the amazing expeditions that have been supported by the Trust in the past 12 months.

Without doubt these experiences are life-changing for so many of our young cadets and reservists. A big shout-out to all the fantastic donors —it's thanks to your generosity that these dreams can become a reality. And a HUGE thank you to all the volunteers who continue to be the difference that makes a difference."



SALLY ORANGE MBE

"This year, I took on the challenge of completing the Everest Marathon in Nepal, to really shout about mental health from the top of the world. Adventure pushes

limits, builds resilience, and strengthens wellbeing—something The Ulysses Trust enables for so many. Their support helps others experience the transformative power of challenge, proving that stepping outside comfort zones is a game-changer for mental health."

A BIG thank you to **Tania Noakes** who stood down as a Trust ambassador this year. Tania was one of our first ambassadors and helped promote the Trust and fundraise through her incredible 2,500 Km Norwegian ski-trek in 2018 . **Thank you Tania!**

WHO'S WHO?

Vice Patrons

The Earl Cadogan DL
Lt Gen Sir Mark Mans KCB CBE DL
Lt Gen (rtd) Tyrone Urch KBE
Army Ex-Officio – CFA
MOD Ex-Officio – ACDS (R&C)
Rear Admiral Jude Terry OBE
RAF Ex-Officio - AOC No 22 (Trg) Gp
Col Julian Radcliffe OBE QVRM TD
Lady Jane Grosvenor
Lady Lucy French OBE
Justin Packshaw MBE DL FRGS

Trustees

Brig Tim Seal TD DL VR (Chair)
Col Mark Siebenaller TD VR FRGS
Lt Col Philip Neame MBE (Vice Chair)
Air Cdre Dawn McCafferty CBE
Professor Rod Stables
Sophie Fernandes
James Wilson
Honor Wilson-Fletcher MBE

Advisory Officers

Col Murdo Urquhart OBE – CE ACF & CCF Assoc
Col Nigel Thursby
Col Bernard Cazenove TD
Col Rex Stephenson CBE
Prof Simon Denny
Prof Helen Dodd
Sqn Ldr Julian Mosses RAFVR(T) (Rtd)
Sqn Ldr Myles Harris PhD SFHEA FRGS RAFAC
Flt Lt Dave Hill RAFAC
Dr Richard Crawford
Belinda Kirk
Emily Bailey
Shane Winser
Sam Plant MBE

Hon Secretary

Lt Col Ian Orr MBE

Hon Treasurer

Maj Stephen Wright TD

CEO

Capt Polly Marsh DL

Ambassadors

Levison Wood
Sally Orange MBE
Ray Mears
Dr Amelia Searle
Louis Rudd MBE
Jordan Wylie MBE

Grants Applications Committee

Sqn Ldr Kev O'Brien FRGS RAF (Chair)
Wg Cdr Mike Blakey MBE MEd FRGS CF FIoL RAFAC
Col Chris Young
Col Dominic Goggs
Surgeon Cdr Steve Mannion RNR
Cdr (SCC) Noel Wheatley MBE RNR
Lt Col Nigel Carr
Lt Col Cath Davies MBE TD VR SCOTS
Lt Col Philip Neame MBE
Wg Cdr Dan Tebay BSc (Hons) PGCE MA FHEA
Maj Tony Simms
Maj Heather Sharp
Capt Polly Marsh DL
Sqn Ldr Jonathan Archer RAFR Regiment (Rtd)
Sqn Ldr Julian Loxton, BA (Hons), GCGI, RAFVR(T) (Rtd)
Sqn Ldr Myles Harris PhD SFHEA FRGS RAFAC
Kate Hannaford

Other Volunteers

David Preston - Minerva Apps System Admin
2Lt Nicola Rowlands-Smith - Awards Officer
Gary Rimay-Muranyi - Events Coordinator
Jess Beck - Social Media Volunteer
Finnley Howard - Social Media Volunteer

Fundraising Consultants (Morgen Thomas Ltd)

Robert Astick & Robin Thomas

Legal

Sarah Rowley, Charles Russell Speechlys LLP

Communications and Marketing Officer

Paul Randall



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