



Moor House School News and Events

Duke of Edinburgh's Award - Bronze Level Practice Expedition

16th - 17th May 2009



On Saturday 16th May nine students from Year 11 all set out on their Duke of Edinburgh Practice Expedition weekend. Over the previous weeks they had been through a number of training sessions and now their goal was to put the many skills they had learned in school into practice in the real and testing environment of an adventurous expedition.

Once the students had checked that they had all had the items they would need to look after themselves they were taken to their drop off point at South Holmwood near Dorking. From this location the two groups - Alpha Team and Bravo Team - set off 30 minutes apart, following the routes that they had chosen and plotted using OS Explorer 1:25000 maps and the interactive Memory Map application.

On the Saturday morning the students were accompanied by a member of staff who provided basic guidance to ensure that the students were able to navigate successfully. At first some students were taken aback by how hard it can be to follow a route through the forests - even though a route on the map can look quite clear, it can be hard to work out how the paths and trails in real life match up with what is shown on the map.



This uncertainty can be unsettling at first, especially when you are faced with having to make a decision on which path to follow when you aren't completely sure which the right one is! This requires you to think carefully and to use the tools and skills you have available to work out your best plan -

and then to follow it. If, later on, you realise you have taken a wrong turn - then you have to make a new plan!

Despite these initial nerves the students did well and managed to correctly navigate themselves to the top of Leith Hill, the highest point in South East England, where they enjoyed a well deserved lunch with a great view of Surrey below.

After lunch the teams set off once again following their chosen routes with their final destination for the day being Etherley Farm, near Ockley. In the afternoon part of the journey the teams relied very much on themselves with minimal input from staff, who tracked the students progress from a distance using a combination of skills learned from the Discovery Channel, and also the Yellowbrick iridium satellite tracking systems!



On arrival at the campsite the teams immediately set about putting up their new tents and ensuring they had shelter, and then cooked dinner using Trangia stoves. The results looked extremely appetising and judging by the speed with which they were eaten, must have tasted good too! After washing up, a campfire with toasted marshmallows and games of 40:40 and Aerobie followed until darkness fell and people started heading for the comfort of their sleeping bags... until 15 minutes later an enormous boom alerted everyone to the start of an incredible firework display that lit up the night sky, celebrating a wedding nearby.

The following morning dawned clear with blue skies, but during breakfast the weather broke and a spitting rain started. By the time that tents were being packed up this had developed into a total downpour but this did not dampen spirits (though it dampened everything else). Bravo Team set off first, closely followed by Alpha Team, heading for the car park at Broadmoor. On this second day of practice the students walked in their groups with remote supervision from staff, and despite most of the journey being uphill they set an impressive pace; the lure of a dry minibus and celebratory chocolate may have provided a considerable incentive to complete the task.

All in all the students did extremely well, showing a positive 'can-do' attitude and generous teamwork, and keeping good humour throughout - even though at one point a student was overheard plotting to build a time machine in order to travel back in time to find the inventors of powder milk, and obliterate them from history! They all deserve to feel proud of their achievements, although they are now faced with the final challenge to complete their Bronze Expedition section - the Assessment Expedition weekend in June is not far off now...



Staff members on the trip were Laki Lee (Unit Leader), Jane Davies (Assessor) and Nick Hart (Supervisor).

Many thanks are due to the parents, staff, families and friends who support PSA fundraising events, and also to the PSA for organising the events and meetings. A recent funding contribution from the PSA enabled the school to purchase six new tents for use on the Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, and the tents were very much appreciated by the students. The funding also helped to pay for the satellite tracking systems which enabled staff to monitor the students progress and maintain safety.

Your kindness really does make a positive difference to the students and these are just a few examples of the way in which your generous donations are used. Please do continue to support the PSA!

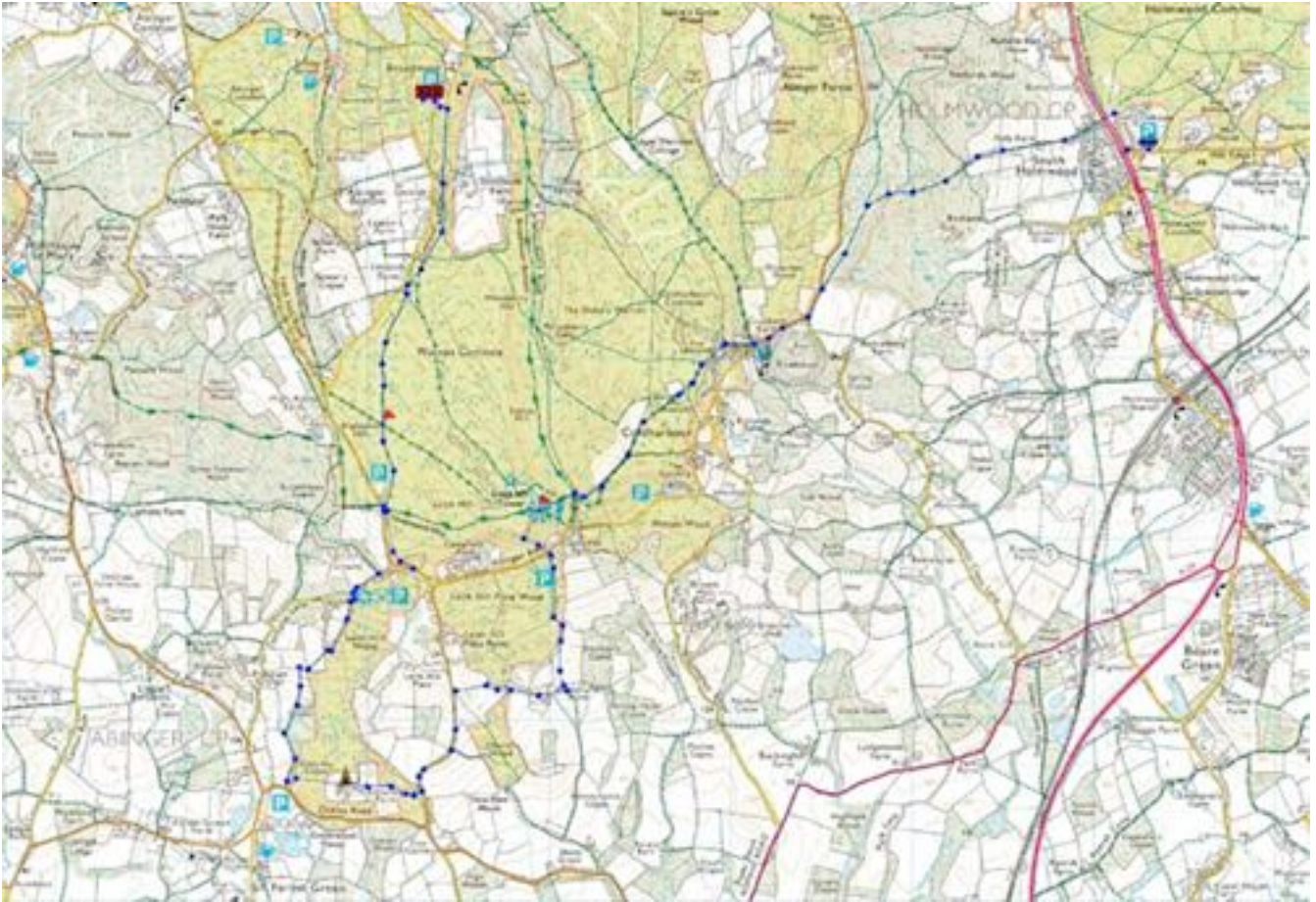
Our thanks also go to the Catering department who provided an excellent selection of snacks and drinks for the students to take with them on the expedition.



Alpha Team's Planned Route:



Bravo Team's Planned Route:



Yellowbrick Satellite Tracking System - Actual paths the teams took (Aerial view):



Yellowbrick Satellite Tracking System - Actual paths the teams took (Earth view):



Report by Mr. Hart