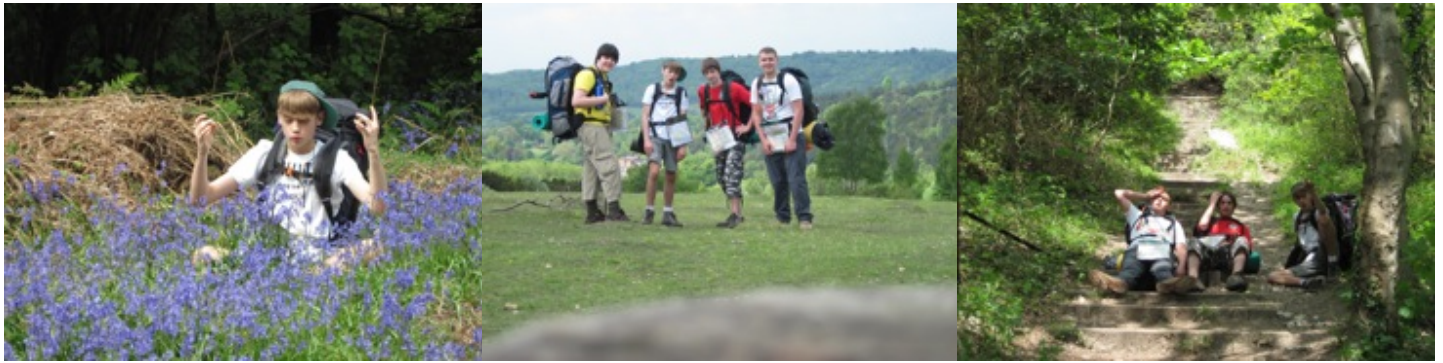




Moor House School News and Events

Duke of Edinburgh's Award - Bronze Level Qualifying Expedition

21st - 22nd May 2010



Following on from a successful practice expedition just two weeks earlier, Friday 21st June saw nine students from Years 10 and 11 take on the tough challenge of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Bronze Level Qualifying Expedition - an adventurous journey over unfamiliar land, over a two day period, with absolutely no help from anybody but themselves.

Did they make it? Read on to find out!



After the cold of the first expedition, the British weather decided to see how well the students would cope with heat. On the hottest weekend of the year so far the students were fully loaded up with heavy backpacks and had to put up with sweaty backs and stinky feet. Bradley literally was 'flat out' as you can see below; but hopefully the happy memories of being with good friends under sunny skies will make up for the difficulties!

Both Charlie Team and Delta Team did really well, displaying improved confidence at map reading, and a more mature attitude towards working as a team and ensuring that all essential items of kit were brought. This positive attitude is important because on the Qualifying Expedition the students are not allowed any adult support at all - they are required to plan their route, work as a team to follow their route, get lost, get un-lost, set up their tents, cook their evening meal and breakfast the following morning, organise their own entertainment, get through a night in the woods, pack up camp and then get to the departure point - without any adult intervention at all.



And they did it. Not only did they successfully complete all of the above, including the journey which was 12 miles over hilly terrain, they did it all with good humour and teamwork, showing a maturity and independence that was heartening to see.

They also seemed to really enjoy it - on a number of occasions staff were waiting at checkpoints and were starting to get concerned if a team seemed to be running late, but it turned out the students were having so much fun they wanted to take their time to appreciate things, which is very evident from the photos of their journeys, some of which you can see here - including the meditating monk in the first picture!



On the first day, the Steps of Doom™ were possibly the hardest part although Nick was insistent that they were easy peasy, and he proved this by running up them just for a laugh. However this only proves that he runs on Duracell batteries. During their journey Charlie Team created a number of horror movie clips which seem to be a cross between 'Chicken Run' and 'Texas Chainsaw Massacre' - it has to be seen to be understood!

High Ashurst campsite has better facilities than our earlier campsite and so once students had arrived and pitched their tents they were able to have the luxury of a hot shower to wash away the dirt of the day, which was clearly appreciated by many of them. After dinner - once again cooked by the students on Trangia stoves - the forest made a perfect location for an extended game of Cops and Robbers as the sun set.



As the night grew cold a warming campfire was enjoyed by all, supplemented with roasted marshmallows, crackers and chocolate (also known as 'Smoeres') as a tasty treat. Clark once again

proved his skills in this area. Many students stayed up late, chatting around the campfire until nearly midnight, and most people would have been content to have another full day there.



First up in the morning were Tom G. and Connor who got going with their breakfast at about 6.30am, Connor proving his English roots by sorting out his morning cup of tea before anything else. Clark sleepily cooked himself sausages while still half asleep but eating them seemed to restore him to life! Tom B. and David meanwhile proved their status as teenagers by refusing to leave their sleeping bags until gone 8 o'clock. (This however did not stop Tom from wolfing at least seven sausages before departure.)

After tents were packed away the students came up with a brilliant version of 'Total Wipeout' that has to be seen to be believed - many thanks to George for playing the part of the spinning log, although apologies may be owed to Connor for any bruised shins!



The journey on Day 2 was again in glorious weather and the view from Box Hill was simply beautiful, with Leith Hill (the site of the practice expedition) visible off in the distance. The descent down the hill was a relief from the climbing of the previous day, but plans to 'roll' down the hill thankfully did not occur.

The teams did plan to meet up at the final checkpoint to walk the final leg together, in a display of teamwork and unity - wonderful! This delightful idea was only slightly spoiled by the fact that when working in one big group, nobody thought to consider who was responsible for map reading, resulting in the biggest wrong turn of the whole weekend (look for the green V on the map!). Fortunately though the students soon worked out their error and put a new plan into action, meaning they were soon back on track.



All in all, a huge 'Well Done' is due to all of the students who took part and who made it a weekend to remember.

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

Thanks also are due to Karen Golby, Jackie McPhail and Ashleigh Hollands who manned checkpoints and assisted with the transport arrangements.

Our gratitude also goes to the parents, staff, families and friends who support the intentions of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Particular thanks are due to those who support PSA fundraising events and who bring in Sainsbury's Active Kids vouchers - much of our communal equipment (including the tents) was obtained as a result of these activities.

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.

Charlie Team's Planned Route (blue line is day 1, red line is day 2):



Delta Team's Route Plan (blue line is day 1, pink line is day 2):



The Yellowbrick Trackers show the route the teams actually took (green line below):



Report by Mr. Hart