



# THE ULYSSES TRUST

*Summer 2020 Newsletter*



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**LET'S GO  
FOR IT!**

**BEAT LOCKDOWN  
BLUES WITH IDEAS  
FOR EXPEDITIONS  
CLOSER TO HOME**



**SINCE 1992 WE HAVE SUPPORTED OVER 37,000 CADETS AND  
RESERVISTS TO UNDERTAKE EXPEDITIONS AND  
ADVENTUROUS TRAINING THROUGHOUT THE WORLD**



**THE ULYSSES TRUST**



## Chairman's Comment

Well, we are certainly living in interesting times - who would have envisaged twelve months ago the impact of the COVID-19 virus? I was pleased that we were able to assist a number of Field Hospital Units with their expeditions over the last year, noting that many have now provided military aid to the civilian authorities in recent months.

The virus has understandably put a stop to all unit expedition plans. However, with time moving on, it is perhaps worth considering now how to kick-start matters. With the uncertainties connected to overseas locations and international travel, an expedition in the UK is suddenly a very attractive proposition! It has benefits relating to reduced cost, ease of organisation and there are a huge variety of activities available in the UK. Many possibilities are discussed further in this newsletter. For reference, you may wish to consider 'Microadventures' by Alastair Humphreys; the book contains a range of ideas - from the simple to the more demanding. Do not forget though that The Ulysses Trust is there to support your expedition activities, whatever your aspirations are.

The Charity's Trustees have taken a long hard look at how fundraising has been undertaken and have decided to call in a specialist consultancy firm to assist the Trust. Morgen Thomas Ltd will be working with us to develop engagement with potential benefactors. Additionally, we are keen to promote the use of 'Give As You Live' to support the Trust. It costs you nothing but each time you make a purchase with a registered firm, The Ulysses Trust receives a small contribution. As the saying goes, many a mickle makes a muckle! So, please help us to help you by signing up. Significantly, many of the larger retailers are registered with the scheme. Did I say it costs you nothing? Further details feature elsewhere in the newsletter.

On a personal note, my own outdoor adventures have been severely curtailed. Indeed, this time last year I was busy training for the Ride London 100 challenge in support of the Trust. Whilst I have still managed to continue solo cycling it has been undertaken within the limited guidelines advocated by British Cycling. As for getting out on the hills and crags, things are definitely thin at the moment. Let us hope that circumstances improve shortly.



The Chairman gritstone climbing in Yorkshire - noting the UK provides many great opportunities for all types of expeditions.

To conclude, the Trust is working hard to ensure that when matters approach normality we will be ready to support Reserve and Cadet Units with their expedition plans. We are very aware that individuals will have been cooped up for many months and are looking for adventure and the benefits available from the outdoors. However, we are also conscious that, in particular, some cadets and their parents may be suffering financially as a result of the pandemic and will require greater financial assistance than previously. We will be ready to help you - do contact us.

Stay healthy!

AVM Nick Kurth CBE FRGS  
Chairman of Trustees

*"We are very aware that individuals will have been cooped up for many months and are looking for adventure and the benefits available from the outdoors."*

# Let's Go For It!

*With COVID-19 causing such huge disruption to travel overseas, is it time to consider the UK for your next expedition? We think it is!*

COVID-19 has affected almost every part of our lives. For those planning expeditions it has created so many headaches - and disappointments. Social distancing, unpredictable world events, foreign travel restrictions... the list keeps growing. The pandemic stopped most of our supported expeditions in the first half of 2020 and looks like it will continue to disrupt plans into 2021 and beyond. However, the taste for adventure has not gone away. And, indeed, the benefits for both individuals and units, after months of 'life on hold,' are greater and of more importance than ever.

So, how can we adapt to this strange new world? One simple answer is to make plans closer to home. Many units already select the UK as their destination. Our home turf is often used for training exercises in the build-up to a trip overseas. These mini-exercises have lots of positive outcomes for those taking part, even if the main event is cancelled. At first glance the UK might seem like a poor substitute— after all, the Brecon Beacons is not quite on the same scale as the Himalayas. However, there are plenty of challenging adventures to be had on our doorsteps – to suit all tastes.

There are many arguments in favour of choosing a UK expedition (see below left). This sceptred isle is spilling over with adventurous opportunities and fantastic access to mountains, rivers, trails, seas and many more exciting environments. Reducing the impact of travel and being kinder to our planet is becoming increasingly important, so perhaps COVID-19 has provided a fresh opportunity to rediscover what we have right under our noses. The illustration below highlights a selection of recent UK expeditions we have supported to whet your appetite... **Let's Go For It!**

## UK EXPEDITION BENEFITS

**Reduced Costs** – Because the expedition is cheaper, the personal contribution of each participant can be much lower which makes it more accessible.

**Easier to Fund** – Raising the necessary funds to enable a UK expedition is a much-reduced task.

**Generous Grants** – Analysis of our grant-making shows UK-based expeditions attract more support towards the overall cost than similar expeditions abroad. This makes adventure accessible to more young people, especially cadets from lower income families.

**Environmental Impact** – The fact is that air travel is bad for the environment. Choosing a UK location is kinder to our planet.

**UK Weather** – The variable UK weather can add to the challenge of the venture and certainly does not provide an 'easy option'.



**Scapa Flow**  
Explore WWI wrecks sites in the murky waters of Scapa Flow. See page 4 for full details.

**Western Isles**  
Try out some challenging & demanding offshore sailing around the West coast of Scotland.

**Brecon Beacons**  
Go hiking in the Black Mountains where the weather can quickly turn sour.

**The English Channel**  
If you're short on time, choose a weekend's sailing on the South Coast. Great for developing team spirit.

**Salisbury**  
Visit the home of the Army Parachuting Association and jump out of aeroplanes.

**Cairngorms**  
In the winter you'll find plenty of snow to try out your crampons and ice axes.

**Let's Go For It!**

# Northern Scapa Tartan



Reservists from 7 SCOTS dive the murky depths of Scapa Flow to explore the scuttled German fleet wreck sites.



Ready to dive aboard the MV Jean Elaine

2019 marked the centenary of the scuttling of the German High Seas Fleet in Scapa Flow at the end of the First World War. To mark the occasion the British Sub-Aqua Club launched a special project to encourage divers to visit and dive the wrecks and salvage yards throughout the year. And so a group of eight reservists found themselves aboard the MV Jean Elaine in Scapa Flow in October, ready to spend a week exploring its hidden gems.

The exercise involved diving in dry suits in the cold UK waters - which is a skill in itself. Once accustomed to the underwater environment the divers would push further and dive deeper into the dark waters of Scapa Flow. Exploring the wreck sites promised to push the divers towards the edge of their comfort zones.

SMS Karlsruhe was the first wreck on the list. Being the shallowest of the light cruiser wrecks lying in 25m was a useful 'shake out' dive to help the divers get back into the swing. This was followed by a shallow dive on the V83 torpedo boat.

Day 2 saw them heading to the wrecks of the SMS Cöln and the SMS Dresden and for many it was to be their first experience of diving with a 'stage' - a second cylinder completely separate from the primary cylinder strapped to their backs. Despite the encumbrance on the boat, the divers found them quite easy to manage in the water. Also the boat's handy diver lift made it much simpler to get back on deck. The following days involved a mix of dives and theory lessons as the divers honed their skills.



Exploring the depths of Scapa Flow

During the expedition, the group visited several Scapa Flow wrecks including SMS Kronprinz Wilhelm, SMS Brummer, and the battleship SMS König. Mike Dunnigan describes seeing the warship for the first time. *"The scale of this wreck is something to behold. Descending down the shot line the shape wells up out of the gloom and it is difficult to get a sense of what you are actually looking at. Eventually details come into focus and you realise how big the wreck is (nearly 27,000 tons and 146m long!) and you start to explore."*

This challenging dive was a huge success for all involved. Read the report at: [www.ulyssustrust.co.uk](http://www.ulyssustrust.co.uk)

## UK DIVING BENEFITS

**Variety** - The UK is a great place to dive as there are plenty of sites catering to all levels and types of diving from reefs to wrecks. Also there are lots of options for wetsuit diving for those who don't have access to an expensive dry suit.

**Lodges** - The UK has a choice of military AT Lodges, such as Balmacara (nr Skye) which provide accommodation + food at no cost.

**Easier Planning** - Staying at home also means less red tape, fewer travel hassles and easy access to decompression chambers.

## DISADVANTAGES

**It's cold & murky** - Weather conditions, cooler waters and underwater visibility can be more challenging than overseas.

**Kit** - The restricted visibility and extra kit to keep warm can put many divers off.

*"The dark waters in Scapa Flow around the wreck sites certainly pushed me towards the edge of my comfort zone."*

Capt Mike Dunnigan | 7th Bn. The Royal Regiment of Scotland



# Barra Honda

*Cadets from 282 (East Ham) and 338 (West Ham) Squadron travel to Costa Rica to do 'something good and different'.*



In December 2019, 282 (East Ham) and 338 (West Ham) Squadron embarked on an adventure to help preserve some of the world's most precious habitats and help share the message about how important conservation work is.

The original idea was developed by a cadet who suggested that they do 'something good and different' to address the climate crisis and to combat habitat destruction which is a huge threat to wildlife and biodiversity.

Following the success of previous expeditions, the squadron also wanted to provide more fantastic opportunities to these young EastEnders and help equip them with important life skills such as leadership, self-reliance, initiative and teamwork.



How many cadets can you fit in a hole?

The unit's chosen destination was Costa Rica. The Barra Honda National Park is a dry rainforest which sits around 400ft above sea level and about 180km from the capital city, San Jose. It is riddled with creepy crawlies, unusually large bugs and reptiles, along with many different species of monkey. The Barra Honda area is a harsh habitat with two distinct seasons – wet and dry. Temperatures can reach over 40°C in the dry season and wild forest fires are common. This was an expedition that would require willpower and determination. The secluded environment was the perfect location to test the cadets to their limits.

The team, along with senior members of the Park, had agreed to construct an educational facility within the Park. The building would be used to educate people about the need and importance of national parks. This project was to be the main focus of the expedition. In addition, the cadets used the rest of their time productively by doing vital conservation work throughout their stay. They also found time to 'tidy-up' the area by collecting over 216kg of rubbish which was then sifted for recycling.

During these activities the cadets undertook several treks through the tropical forest. The entire package provided them with a broad mix of experiences not usually found in a 'traditional expedition'.



Job done! Flags and heads held high.

The building was completed in just eight days and the entire project was reported to be a resounding success by all those involved.

The Ulysses Trust was pleased to support this exercise, particularly since it included a significant number of cadets from disadvantaged backgrounds. Half of those who took part were in receipt of Free School Meals. Some had never travelled outside their own area or the M25. Their commitment to fundraising and training prior to deployment was impressive and an indication of the strength of their character.

This exercise was different to the 'norm' as it had a community project at its heart. We welcome applications from other units for UK-based expeditions that include a project that has a similar positive impact on wider society.

Read the full report via our website at: [www.ulysses trust.co.uk](http://www.ulysses trust.co.uk)

*"I'm very proud of what I have achieved by going out there. I could never have imagined that I would be carrying out construction and conservation projects like this."*

Cadet Corporal Nicole Mosquera

# Thinking Differently

## Positive Changes for Army Cadet Adventurous Training



Lt Col CMM Cath Davies MBE TD VR SCOTS is the Army Cadet Force's National Adviser for Adventurous Training (AT) and a member of The Ulysses Trust's Grants Applications Committee.

As the world of AT has been thrown into a state of paralysis due to the pandemic we took the opportunity to catch up with Cath to gaze into her crystal ball for a glimpse of what the future may hold.

### **BIG QUESTION CATH, WHEN DO YOU EXPECT EXPEDITIONS TO START AGAIN?**

The COVID-19 situation has put all AT activity for all the Services on hold. With an uncertain future ahead nobody really knows when things will get going properly again - possibly later this year, but it's looking more likely to be 2021. Many units are postponing their plans, so they're looking to deliver their expeditions a year later than originally planned.

Also, it is looking more likely that many will be seeking their adventures closer to home for the foreseeable future. Luckily for us, the UK is blessed with a huge range of AT choices that can provide challenges at almost every level, but particularly for cadets. Mountaineering, rock climbing, sailing, kayaking, mountain biking and parachuting are just some of the activities that can be undertaken here in the UK. So I think there's lots to keep us busy here at home (especially in Scotland—my back yard!)

*"You don't need to travel to the other side of the world to go on an adventure..."*

### **WHAT'S BEING DONE BY THE ACF TO HELP CADETS TAKE PART IN AT?**

Adventurous Training is changing, and changing for the better. For Army cadets and Army detachment CCF cadets, AT will be much more prominent. The Army Cadet Force (ACF) has put AT at the front and centre of every cadet's experience so it is something every cadet will be aware of as it is embedded into their cadet syllabus. Once the lockdown is eased, we expect cadets will be chomping at the bit to get out and explore the great outdoors.

But their adventures are more likely to be closer to home. The uncertainty of foreign travel and potential difficulties in getting abroad is likely to push up the costs and complexity of planning an overseas trip. The unpredictability of COVID-19 could mean countries restrict access if the virus suddenly flares up. This uncertainty makes planning a nightmare, so we have to think differently to enable cadets to do AT.

With this in mind we've been working on ways to make it easier for units to deploy an expedition. The ACF plans to create a database of approved expeditions, which will make the planning process much quicker and should allow many more cadets to take on challenging experiences here and abroad.

We're pushing to open up focused activities for CCF cadets rather than the multi-activity camps they're used to. These will embrace the expedition experience. As opposed to the usual camp where they get to try out lots of different things we want to run camps that allow cadets to concentrate on a single activity where they can develop their skills quickly and become more proficient. Thinking differently and the COVID-19 shutdown has allowed us time to reflect and focus on what's important. If it means more cadets will be able to benefit from these experiences because they're cheaper and more accessible as they're closer to home then I don't think that's a bad thing. After all you don't need to travel to the other side of the world to go on an adventure....

*"Adventurous Training is changing, and changing for the better."*

# News

## GOODBYE BRENDA



We are sad to say goodbye to the Trust's Development Director, Brenda Allanson.

Brenda joined the Trust in 2017 at a time of significant change and worked hard to help move the Trust forward to where it is today. We wish her all the best!

## WELCOME BACK PAULA



Wg Cdr Paula Willmot MBE has returned to the Trust after a short spell away. Paula is taking on

the role of Awards Officer to coordinate all actions associated with the Prince of Wales's Expedition Awards. Welcome back Paula!

## EXPEDITION HIGHLIGHTS

Since our last newsletter eight expeditions managed to deploy before COVID-19 shut everything down. You can read more adventurous tales in the 'Expedition Reports' section of our website. Here are some of the recent highlights:



**Cockney Strandloper**  
Reservists from NRHQRA go trekking in South Africa.



**Dragon Venturer Canski 2020**  
Cadets explore Canada's Banff park.



**Charlamain 2020**  
HMS King Alfred Reservists visit the Cairngorms.

## FACEBOOK FORUM



If you've enjoyed reading this newsletter you might want to join our new Facebook

group—The Ulysses Trust Forum. The aim is to encourage conversations between the Trust and expedition leaders supported by the Trust in the past, present or future. We also hope members will share posts about any relevant activities relating to planned expeditions (eg training exercises, fundraising days, expedition posts, etc). If you'd like to join, please visit our Facebook page.

## FUNDRAISING UPDATE

Earlier this year the Trust commissioned Morgen Thomas Ltd to review our fundraising strategies with the intention of bringing more funds into the charity. Following this review, the Trustees have appointed Morgen Thomas Ltd to start work on a new 2-year fundraising programme to attract an additional £2m of new funds over the next five years.

## COVID-19 SURVEY



We are very interested in how units are adapting to the COVID-19 situation and

how this is affecting expedition plans for 2020 and beyond. To this end, we have created a short survey which we are asking units to complete to help us understand the impact of the lockdown. If you'd like to complete the survey, please visit our website to access the survey link at: [www.ulysses trust.co.uk](http://www.ulysses trust.co.uk)

## NEW YEAR HONOURS

Earlier this year two members of The Ulysses Trust were recognised in the New Year's Honours List.



Vice-Patron, Clive Richards OBE DL, was awarded a CBE for services to charity and to the community.

Trustee, Group Captain Matt Stowers MBE, was awarded an OBE.



Our chairman, Air Vice-Marshal N J E Kurth CBE FRGS commented, "I am delighted that two members of the Trust team were recognised in the New Year's Honours List. On behalf of all those in the Trust, please accept our heartfelt congratulations."

## ARMY & NAVY FUNDRAISER



In December the Transformation Leaders network celebrated its 19th anniversary 'end year' event

in style at the prestigious Army and Navy Club, raising a fantastic £3,500 for The Ulysses Trust. £500 was raised from various activities during the evening. The sum was boosted by £3,000 thanks to a generous donation from the network's start-up Chairman. We are extremely grateful to David Pinchard (above) who organised the evening. David's support continues as Transformational Leaders has adopted The Ulysses Trust as its charity of the year for 2020 with more fundraising events in the pipeline. Thank you David and thank you to all those who took part.



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## SUPPORT US TODAY!



Our website provides further details about how you can donate in one of the following ways:

- ✓ Join Give As You Live
- ✓ Make a one-off gift
- ✓ Set-up a direct debit
- ✓ Pledge an annual gift
- ✓ Leave a gift in your Will

There are lots of ways you can make a gift to The Ulysses Trust to help us support UK reservists and cadets.

*Thank you!*

**PLEASE NOTE:** All photographs featured in this newsletter were taken before social distancing measures were introduced.

[www.ulyssustrust.co.uk](http://www.ulyssustrust.co.uk) | Reg'd charity No 1170600