



Outdoor News

Journal of the Outdoor Educators' Association of South Australia
Volume 28 No 3, October 2010

From the Chairman

Mike Meredith

Greetings and welcome to the spring edition of the Outdoor News. It was great to get out and watch my Year 12s on their recent self reliant expeditions.

Some chose to go bushwalking at Mt Remarkable National Park and with large amounts of rain having fallen prior to the trips what would normally have been interesting walks became quite challenging with flowing creeks (almost enough to kayak in Alligator Creek) and very slippery conditions. Another group set off to Chowilla where increasing flows were evident. Some major works here are setting the scene for future sustainable developments along the flood plains. Paddling along the main river one would be mystified as to what all the fuss is about with droughts and no water, but once you get onto the backwaters it is another story. The plains are littered with dead, dying and stressed trees. The works along the lower Chowilla Creek once completed should allow periodic flooding of the flood plains which one can only hope will see some benefit to this significant wetland region that at the moment is indeed looking very sad. Another observation was the disgusting mess left by some campers along the river, it reminds me that what we are doing with students in outdoor education is helping to educate these future outdoor users in environmentally appropriate ways of visiting natural environments ensuring our impact is minimal and sustainable.

Since the last edition of *Outdoor News* we have celebrated Outdoor Education week. It was great to see a good number of South Aussie schools get involved and have their details posted on the map. This inaugural event should now be an annual occurrence to show-

case Outdoor Education in Australia. The aim was to spread the word about Outdoor Education and what it has to offer. Ultimately it is hoped the profile and significance of Outdoor Education as a subject can be highlighted so it is not overlooked within the national curriculum in the short term and with a longer view of ensuring everyone gets a better idea of what we are all about.



Associated with Outdoor Education week was an attempt at the Guinness world record for orienteering. Whilst we did not get very close it was fun for those that had a go. Once again there was good representation from SA schools. I believe it is planned to get the state and national orienteering associations on board for the next attempt. I would like to thank Mark Munnings (Queensland OED association) and OEA for the great effort put into organising both Outdoor Education week and the orienteering attempt. For those that took part it certainly helped raise awareness of outdoor education and the postcard campaign got some interesting replies. For Mark our thanks for a most noteworthy and commendable service that he provided for outdoor education in Australia.

On a not so pleasant note Uni SA has decided to discontinue its programs in graduate outdoor education in the near future. This represents a significant threat to the provision of suitably qualified teachers to deliver the SACE subjects and other outdoor programs run by many schools. OEA will be joining with others in looking at

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Outdoor News is supported by

And: Paddy Pallin, Mountain Designs, Outdoor Adventure Skills and Scout Outdoor Centre

From the Editor

Peter Carter

With the State Outdoor Conference taking place next month, the leading article in this issue has details of key presentations and speakers, and there's a registration form on page 15.

The major item comes from the English Outdoor Council, and is a detailed look at the evidence for the value of outdoor education. There's a lot in the paper itself, and a great deal more in the extensive references. It deserves to be widely read and promoted.

As you may be aware, the University of SA has announced that its outdoor education courses will finish at the end of 2011. You can read the university's information at www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/programs/program.asp?Program=IBHT&Year=2011&Plan=N/A-IBHT and then perhaps think how you can

Ian Dewey relates the story of a bushwalking expedition that didn't go quite as planned as things went bump in the night. One can never be too careful. Luke Adams and friends have been climbing in Canada and the US, and share some of their experiences.

There were timely warnings recently on the dangers of drowning, with the numbers still being too high. Would you recognise a drowning if you saw it happening? Possibly not, as the piece on page 13 explains. There wasn't space for the complete article, and I suggest you follow the link to the original, and the US Coast Guard article.

Like many Mac users, I am not fond of Microsoft software. The only MS application I use, and then only because I need to be able to read documents from elsewhere, is Word, a bloated, bug-infested monstrosity.



(Automatic paragraph numbering anyone? More like renumbering...) When it comes to layout, if you try anything more complex than single column text with header and footer you're simply working too hard. Much of Word is like that, too awkward, and usually poorly understood, so that users persist with typewriter-style formatting. Every now and then I get so frustrated at having to deal with rubbish Word documents that I strike back, as I do on page 14.

Recall

SpanSet has recalled K4 karabiners from batch 100329:

'SpanSet Australia advises all users of SpanSet K4 triple action karabiners to remove them from service and return them to the distributor from whom they were purchased, or to SpanSet Australia Ltd for replacement.'

Details at www.spanset.com.au/pdf/Product%20Safety%20Recall.pdf.

Reminder

The final committee meeting for the year will be held at the Education Centre Hindmarsh at 6:30 pm on Friday 19 November. You're invited.



The Outdoor Educators' Association of South Australia

Aims

- 1 To promote the development of Outdoor Education in South Australia
- 2 To represent Outdoor Educators on issues and matters concerning the use of the outdoors
- 3 To maintain the professional development of personnel working in the area of Outdoor Education
- 4 To maintain, support and develop the role of Outdoor Educators in South Australia
- 5 To promote the professional interchange of information between members and other related organisations through conferences, meetings, seminars and publications
- 6 To promote a philosophy of environmental awareness, preservation, conservation and positive attitudes towards the use of the outdoor environment
- 7 To act in an advisory capacity to community, government and non-government agencies

The Outdoor Educators' Association of South Australia supports these national ethical guidelines for outdoor educators:

- The Outdoor Educator will fulfil his or her duty of care
- The Outdoor Educator will provide a supportive and appropriate learning environment
- The Outdoor Educator will develop his or her professionalism
- The Outdoor Educator will ensure his or her practice is culturally and environmentally sensitive

OEASA Committee 2009-2010

Chair: Mike Meredith

Treasurer: Phil Noble

Secretary: Nick Glover

Assistant Secretary: Belinda Buscumb

Editor and webmaster: Peter Carter

Committee: Andrew Govan, Brad Newton, Bianca

Barbon, Clay Hunter, Scott Polley, Peter Kellett, Mick

Dennis, Bethany Stewart, Danielle Meuring

From the Chairman

...continued

how to best facilitate a rethink of this decision or provision of alternative options to ensure the ongoing development of suitably qualified and experienced teaching staff. Please look out for opportunities to help in this developing issue.

Next year sees the implementation of the New SACE Stage 2 outdoor education course. Stage 1 began this year, generally going well with the final implementation due for 2011. Whilst the content and structure of the course is similar to previous years there are significant changes to the assessment and moderation process. We look forward to seeing how it develops and of course any effect the new national curriculum may have on courses here in SA.



Alligator Creek

The 2010 State Outdoor Conference is being run in conjunction with Rec SA at the Education Development Centre Hindmarsh on Monday 1 November. This year's conference is a one-day event starting at 1 pm and concluding at 9 pm. Once again OEASA are working with Rec SA to present a wide range of interesting presentations putting on show: people leading the way in the outdoors. Registration forms and details are available on the OEASA website or in this edition of the *Outdoor News*, so please set the date aside

in your diaries, get a group together, fill in the registration form and pay up for what should be a great afternoon and evening. With key-notes by Sandy Robson (sea kayaking), Ian Boyle (research on the benefits of Outdoor Education) and DENR (future planning for recreational use of parks) it promises to be great day. I look forward to seeing as many members along as possible helping to

make the conference a successful event to finish off what has been a very busy 2010.

The last committee meeting for this year is on Friday 19 November, 6:30 pm at the EDCH. All members are welcome to attend for a social get together, review of the year that has been and planning for next year's activities. Please RSVP to Nick Glover if you are planning to attend: 0421 612 340 or nicks_mailbox@yahoo.com

On a closing 'cheerful' note a reminder that membership fees will go up by \$10 next year to fund the national association and events being organised on the national stage.



The Pipeclay Creek weir

State Outdoor Conference 1 November 2010

OEASA and Rec SA have combined forces to present the 2010 State Outdoor Conference at the Education Development Centre Hindmarsh on Monday 1 November. Running over the afternoon and evening, the conference will offer a wide variety of presentations on Education, Recreation and Adventure in the great outdoors. The conference starts at 1 pm (registration from 12 noon) and finishes at 9 pm. The three strands of education, recreation and adventure will run throughout sessions offering everyone who attends something of interest with a good selection of session options. Presentations reflect the diversity of the outdoor community and offer insight into activities, programs and research within the outdoor community.

The Conference at a glance

Pre Conference Activities/sessions

- Dolphin Paddle 9 am – 12 noon with Adventure Kayaking SA at the Adelaide Dolphin sanctuary: only \$30 for those attending the conference
- AAS (Adventure Activity Standards) review 11 am – 12 noon: Rec SA will be conducting a review of the AAS documents

Conference Keynote Sessions

- DENR: Recreational use of parks what is being planned for and done
- Dr Ian Boyle: Brain Development and the benefits of Outdoor Education
- Sandy Robson: 'I just want to be a sea kayaker'
- Get Out and Stay Out: Public launch of SA's strategy for long term outdoor activity participation

Conference sessions

- A wide variety of sessions on education, recreation and adventure. See detailed listing in this edition of Outdoor News
- Mobile Climbing Wall: Wilderness Escape will have their mobile climbing wall set up for you to have a go before the conference starts or between sessions (or during if you must!)

How to register

Registration forms and details are available on the OEASA website <www.oeasa.on.net/conf.html> or in this edition of the Outdoor News, so please set the date aside in your diaries get a group together, fill in the registration form and pay up for what should be a great afternoon and evening.

Sponsorship opportunities

There are still opportunities for sponsors to help out with components of the conference. A great option for most would be as trade show exhibitor. This gives you floor space to display your goods and full registration for one person to the conference, including all sessions and catering. For any organisations or individuals interested in being involved please contact Ian Dewey at Rec SA to get

more detailed information on sponsorship options. Your participation, as always, would be greatly appreciated.

Ian Dewey, Rec SA, (08) 8351 2644, ceo@recreationsa.org

We would like to acknowledge the following sponsors (to date): Paddy Pallin, Wilderness Escape, and Roof Rack City



**Wilderness
Escape**
Outdoor Adventures



Session summaries (to date)

Sandy Robson (Keynote): 'I just want to be a sea kayaker'

For this expedition paddler from WA, sea kayaking is all about living with intention, embracing challenge, following her dreams and making time in life to connect with nature and wild places.

"Nature puts on the show: you just need to paddle your kayak to the front row... If you're out there enough and in the right places, you will get spy hopped by a whale, you will lose count of the turtles you see, and you might be surprised by a sun baking sea snake, a snoozing penguin or a sea lion demanding your catch. Be inspired, conquer your fears and get out there in a sea kayak: and don't think I haven't noticed the lack of women out there on the water. If I can do it, you can do it too."

She has paddled over 6000 km of the Australian coast, solo in a sea kayak. Three rudders by Sydney: the learning curve with a very heavy boat, in very big surf. The endos, the sharks and the bluebottles were all do-able. And then there were the crocs. We'll let Sandy explain about the crocs: and what to do when they start coming over the side...

Dr Ian Boyle (Keynote): Brain Development and the benefits of Outdoor Education

Recent developments in the understanding of how the brain works, particularly in young people, has led to a wider acceptance of the potential benefits of outdoor education in both developing and changing the individual. Presentation based on Dr Ian Boyle's research and observations.

Jonathon Robran: Operation Flinders

The Operation Flinders Foundation runs a world standard wilderness adventure therapy program for young people at risk. The program provides participants with demanding outdoor challenges and ongoing support to help them develop their personal attitudes and values of self confidence, leadership, motivation, teamwork and responsibility; so they may grow as valued members of the community.

Mike Meredith: Games and activities for camps

Presents a sequence of co-operative practical activities, games and problem solving tasks to use with new groups. Uses balls, planks, ropes, crates, rollers and blindfolds in a co-operative and fun manner. The format is practical outdoor participation in a range of get to know you, warm up and challenge activities. Involves mixing with other people and some physical activity (do what you can).

Rachael Leverton DofE: Experiences that last a lifetime

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is an enriching program for young people aged 14–25 to participate in a number of activities during minimum time periods. The program is entirely voluntary and participants design their own unique program centered around their interests and passions. It has a strong emphasis on outdoor activities: participants must complete a mandatory 'adventurous journey' to successfully achieve the Award. The Award encourages young people to set challenging goals and test their limits. It promotes their personal development and community engagement.

Fiona Shone: The evolution of 'Bush Adventure Therapy'

Bush Adventure Therapy is a diverse field of practice combining adventure and outdoor environments with the intention to achieve therapeutic outcomes for those involved. The Australian Association for Bush Adventure Therapy Inc. (AABAT) is the peak body for practitioners who have a professional interest in supporting, developing and promoting the field of bush adventure therapy in Australia. AABAT is building an increasing presence in Australia and internationally as an organisation that brings knowledge and resources together for practitioners and organisations that have an interest in using outdoor places for therapeutic ends. What is 'BAT' and how can AABAT assist you in your program delivery?

David Edwards and Diane Mudie: Challenges and opportunities on bushwalks

Looking at the challenges and opportunities for bushwalking activities. David and Diane run the outdoor education program at Aberfoyle Park High School, and have a wealth of experience in getting the most out of expedition programs.

Alex MacGreggor: GPS, maps and general navigation

This session takes an in-depth look at GPS and available mapping software for planning and recording trips. It also considers Geocaching as a fun activity for journeys.

Kylie Pointon: West Papua: "Politics, Pigs and Potatoes"

West Papua is a volatile political area where last year one Australian was killed near the Freeport mine. There are frequent earthquakes and the Indonesian military keeps a watch out to prevent journalists from reporting on the situation. Kylie Pointon has just returned from West Papua. She visited during a period when the biggest peaceful demonstrations were occurring with West Papuans protesting about the failures of the Special Autonomy. Kylie was able to stay with Papuans during her journey around the country. Kylie went to the highlands region where people live traditional lives. She went on an 8-day trek with a guide taking her from village to village eating only local food.

Ian Dewey: So you can't canoe

'In 2009 I took a snapshot of accidents, incidents and injuries in canoeing under the banner of Can U Canoe. The results were extremely "interesting" and cast doubt on much of the general risk reduction methodology used in the industry. It also showed an outdoor industry that was selectively learning from the peak body.

'In my presentation I discuss ways you can get a clear picture of your industry. I also look at the methods used to set up the data collection, how to run controls in an uncontrolled environment and the frustrations of an industry who "knew it all" and were going "down another path" anyway.'

Hal Paine: Ningaloo Sea Kayak Safari

Follows the journey of teenagers as they paddle, snorkel and explore Cape Range National Park and Ningaloo Marine Park on sea kayaking expeditions. This presentation hopefully appeals to outdoor education teachers, program coordinators and recreational sea kayakers!

Scott Polley: Indigenous Perspectives

Session on incorporating indigenous perspectives into your outdoor program. Based on experiences with Scott's Uni SA Outdoor Graduates courses.

Duncan Henderson: Primary Outdoor Education

An overview of Duncan's research into primary Outdoor Education in South Australia.

Scott Polley: Remote Area First Aid for Outdoor Leaders

An update on industry requirements for first aid certification. This is an essential session for all outdoor leaders: will you be correctly certified for leading activities? 

Time for change in Outdoor Learning

Hard evidence on the value of the outdoors and a challenge to deliver fair access for all

Executive Summary

- There is now crystal clear and incontestable evidence in support of learning outside the classroom.
- Within the broad sphere of learning outside the classroom, challenging outdoor activities and environmental studies are particularly powerful learning opportunities. They contribute to a range of important societal targets across education, health, anti-social behaviour and community cohesion.
- Not all young people benefit from these opportunities.
- To redress this unfairness, there should be an entitlement to a progressive range of learning experiences outside the classroom, including at least one residential experience, for all young people.
- This view is shared by much of society, including many MPs, as shown by a very positive response to a recent EDM.
- Such an entitlement would support a number of commitments in both the Conservative and the Liberal Democrat manifestos.
- There is a clear economic case that the entitlement should be publicly funded.
- If, in view of the current economic situation, it is necessary to delay any new financial commitments, it is nevertheless possible to achieve a limited entitlement without additional net government funding.
- Most parents recognise the benefits and are willing to contribute. This is justifiable.
- But there is a need to support those young people who would not otherwise be able to afford the experience. In the longer term, the modest cost of such support would be balanced by real savings resulting from the societal benefits.
- This document lists the evidence and explains how the government can, even in the current economic climate, create fair access for all by creating a simple entitlement to a range of progressive outdoor learning opportunities. This can be achieved by explicitly stating that the premium for disadvantaged pupils may, among other things, be used to support the provision of learning outside the classroom.

Hard evidence

There is clear and compelling evidence that:

- learning outside the classroom raises educational standards
- it makes a powerful contribution to curriculum aims
- outdoor activity helps to address health problems and enhances wellbeing
- it offers for many their first real contact with the natural environment
- it builds cross-cultural understanding and can change communities
- it helps to reduce anti-social behaviour, crime and disengagement from education
- it helps young people to manage risk and encourages them to welcome challenge.

A taste of the evidence follows. For more information, the reference section gives a series of one click links to a wealth of comprehensive and convincing documentation.

Learning outside the classroom raises educational standards

OFSTED published a thematic report on learning outside the classroom in October 2008 (1). Among its key findings was:

“When planned and implemented well, learning outside the classroom contributed significantly to raising standards and improving pupils’ personal, social and emotional development.”

It recommended that schools and colleges should:

“ensure that their curriculum planning includes sufficient well structured opportunities for all learners to engage in learning outside the classroom as a key, integrated element of their experience”

and “ensure equal and full access for all learners to learning outside the classroom”

The Teaching and Learning Research Programme is a large scale research programme (2) that has concluded as one of its ten principles for effective teaching and learning that:

“Informal learning, such as learning out of school, should be recognised as at least as significant as formal learning and should therefore be valued and appropriately utilised in formal processes.”

Outdoor learning makes a powerful contribution to curriculum aims

QCDA has published a set of aims for the curriculum (3). These are that it should enable all young people to become:

- successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve,
- confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives,
- responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.

Outdoor learning, especially through a residential experience, contributes particularly powerfully to the second of these aims. QCDA lists the following elements as part of that aim. Outdoor learning helps young people to achieve these far more effectively than they could in a school context:

- have a sense of self-worth and personal identity,
- relate well to others and form good relationships,
- are self-aware and deal with their emotions,
- become increasingly independent, are able to take the initiative and organise themselves,

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- make healthy lifestyle choices,
- are physically competent and confident,
- take managed risks and stay safe,
- are willing to try new things and make the most of opportunities,
- are open to the excitement and inspiration offered by the natural world ...

These are exactly the range of outcomes that outdoor learning delivers so well. A meta-analysis of 96 studies (4) shows that there are significant improvements in independence, confidence, self-efficacy, self-understanding, assertiveness, internal locus of control and decision making as a result of outdoor adventure programmes.

Outdoor activity helps to address health problems and enhances wellbeing

The 2009 Department of Health publication "Be Active, Be Healthy" (5) estimates the annual cost to the NHS of physical inactivity at between £1 and £1.8 billion. It recognises the importance of the outdoors:

"Natural environments offer important settings for health-enhancing physical activity." "Contact with nature has been shown to improve people's physical and mental health."

There is an increasing emphasis on wellbeing as a key indicator of societal progress (6). The New Economics Foundation emphasises five actions to enhance wellbeing—connect with others, be active, take notice of what is around you, keep learning and give to others (7). Outdoor activity is a superb way of enhancing wellbeing in this way.

DEFRA's review of evidence (8) made the point that:

"The natural environment provides physical, mental and social wellbeing benefits. There are synergistic effects between these benefits."

A recent literature review on children in the outdoors (9) states:

"It is generally reported that being outdoors contributes to higher levels of wellbeing bringing physiological benefits such as stress reduction."

The Countryside Recreation Network (10) finds that:

"There is substantial evidence that links the natural environment with good physical health and psychological wellbeing."

It offers for many their first real contact with the natural environment

Arguably the single most important lesson for the future is an understanding and respect for our environment and an awareness of our responsibility to behave towards it in a sustainable way. There is no better way of developing such understanding and respect than first hand experience. This is particularly so for those who live in towns and cities.

Natural England's research (11) shows that today's children spend substantially less of their time in a natural environment, in comparison with the previous generation. It points out that...

"Traditional outdoor activities are as popular now as they were in the past"

...but argues that there is a need to make natural spaces more available for children today.

It helps to reduce disengagement, anti-social behaviour and crime

A recent DEMOS report (12) shows how serious the problems of disengagement in our schools is and considers that

"there is a good deal of research linking participation in out-of-school activities characterised by high quality adult-child relationships with better outcomes."

A New Philanthropy Capital report (13) highlights the success of outdoor activity in helping to re-engage the one in ten 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training.

"Sport, outdoor activities and creative activities such as dance, can all be used as a 'hook' to motivate young people to participate. As many young people have had a bad experience of formal education, alternatives need to be different."

A DCSF report on attitudinal barriers to engaging young people in positive activities (14) reports the views of young people themselves:

"Sports and outdoor activities, in particular, were seen as the most fun and helpful in developing confidence."

It builds cross-cultural understanding and can change communities

In terms of community cohesion, the contribution that outdoor recreation can make to combating discrimination and promoting cross-cultural understanding has also been highlighted in a report by the Countryside Agency and the Black Environment Network (15).

A National Trust study (16) also showed the impact on communities:

'We looked at whether school children's learning about their local environment would influence the way they treat it. We found that not only was this the case, but high quality, out-of-classroom learning also influenced how children behave and the lifestyle choices they make. It shows the potential for schools trips not just to change individual lives, but the lives of whole communities.'

It helps young people to manage risk and encourages them to welcome challenge

There is a growing groundswell of media and public opinion that recognises that risk is an inescapable aspect

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of life and that, instead of wrapping our children in cotton wool, we should help them to take greater responsibility for managing their own safety. The Risk and Regulation Advisory Council has published a very positive report (17) which deplores disproportionate responses to risk and regulatory creep. We endorse the Council's efforts to signpost the way to achieving a consistently balanced societal response to risk.

Within our own sector, we have published guidance to teachers (18) which encourages them to take a reasonable and proportionate approach to safety and reassures them that a degree of risk, properly managed, is positively desirable in helping young people to learn to manage their own safety. A risk-averse approach is discouraged. Instead, readers are encouraged to balance the risks and the benefits from an activity.

Unnecessary risk aversion is an insidious influence which is damaging to enterprise and initiative. Sociologist Frank Furedi (19) considers that:

"The worship of safety represents a profoundly pessimistic attitude towards human potential."

Outdoor education teaches young people to face real risk in a sensible way and encourages a "can do" attitude.

A powerful impact but far from equal opportunity

While all forms of learning outside the classroom are valuable, challenging outdoor activities and environmental studies have a particularly powerful impact on young people, especially when delivered through a residential experience.

Despite the current economic situation, there is still a healthy extent of outdoor provision, possibly because many school staff and parents recognise the unique contribution it makes to personal development. A total of 66% of pupils take up the opportunity of a residential experience during their time at school (20). However, in only 21% of schools do all the pupils attend a residential.

This disparity of opportunity is described in detail by Professor Power et al (21). Their research shows a clear link between the level of provision of outdoor education and the proportion of pupils in the school who are eligible for free school meals - the greater the level of disadvantage, the less provision. This is particularly tragic in that most disadvantaged pupils have potentially most to gain from the transformative impact that outdoor education has for many young people.

Power et al emphasise the potential inequality:

"If high quality out-of-school learning is to become an entitlement rather than an 'add-on' that only some can afford, it will be important to invest significant resources, develop structured support and clarify strategic direction at school, authority and national level. Unless this happens, the uneven distribution of high quality out-of-school learning both between and within schools may well exacerbate educational inequalities."

In recent years, the potential of the outdoors has been clearly recognised in Early Years provision (22):

"Outdoor learning has equal value to indoor learning."

"Outdoor learning has a positive impact on children's wellbeing and development."

In contrast however, outdoor learning has not yet been embedded into the curriculum for primary and secondary school pupils.

An entitlement: public and political support

This unfair disparity would be eliminated by declaring a simple entitlement to a progressive range of learning experiences outside the classroom, including at least one residential experience, for all young people.

There is widespread support for such an entitlement. It forms the focus of the Countryside Alliance Foundation's aspirations for outdoor education (23). Their report contains survey evidence from teachers and pupils which reveals huge enthusiasm for outdoor education.

In its 2010 follow-up report (24), the House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Select Committee noted the very strong body of evidence that has been established to show the benefits of learning outside the classroom and expressed concern that children are spending less and less time outside. It expressed disappointment in the lack of progress made in the previous five years, recommending that:

"Learning outside the classroom is important, and the Department must provide adequate funding to achieve maximum impact."

"We call on the Department to ensure that families' ability to pay is not a deterrent to schools offering or pupils participating in school trips and visits."

"There should be an individual entitlement within the National Curriculum to at least one out of school visit a term."

During the 2009–2010 parliamentary session, the following Early Day Motion was tabled:

"That this House notes the conclusion of an Ofsted report that learning outside the classroom contributes significantly to raising standards; recognises that learning through experience is a powerful educational tool; applauds the work put into the Manifesto for Learning Outside the Classroom; regrets that despite this work, its aspiration to provide all young people with a wide range of quality experiences outside the classroom, including one or more residential visits, is not yet embedded in all schools; and calls on the Government to find a way of making this a reality for all young people, including those who need financial support."

Despite the fact that the Conservative Party understandably advised its MPs not to sign (because it could have financial implications), there were nevertheless no fewer than 104 signatories, clear evidence of the breadth of support from MPs.

Time for change in Outdoor Learning

Support for the Conservative and Liberal Democrat manifesto commitments

We strongly support proposals for a National Citizen Service. We have actively contributed to the development of the pilot scheme and are convinced from direct experience of such provision that it will make a major contribution towards building the big society that is the government's vision. As a sector, we will work to deliver high quality, high impact adventure provision as part of this scheme to be redressed.

We support the Liberal Democrat proposal to slim down the National Curriculum but consider that the evidence for learning outside the classroom is so strong that the minimum curriculum entitlement proposed must include that opportunity. We note that the Scottish Liberal Democrats (25) have proposed that...

"Every child will be entitled to two weeks of outdoor activity during their time at secondary school, allowing them to learn new skills and better understand their environment."

...and we commend that confidence in the value of the outdoors.

Finally, we welcome the Conservative Party review of health and safety that has been carried out by Lord Young of Graffham. We have contributed to this review and will be happy to comment further on health and safety issues that are relevant to outdoor provision. We are particularly concerned that safety measures should be balanced and proportionate and that unnecessary ratcheting up of regulation should stop; we therefore welcome the proposal for regulatory budgets.

An entitlement makes economic sense

There is a huge amount of evidence which brings home the cost of doing nothing. Backing the Future (26) demonstrates vividly that proactive investment in pre-emptive measures to tackle social problems could save £1.5 trillion spent on picking up the pieces after it is too late. For every £1 invested in targeted services designed to catch problems early, the authors estimate that society would benefit by between £7.60 and £9.20.

Of course, outdoor activity is only one of the range of interventions that can be used to contribute to solving these social problems. However, its effectiveness is clearly recognised: the Sutton Trust (27) notes that summer camps that mix learning with fun:

"have shown substantial improvements in participants' reading scores... which disproportionately impacts on those from lower socio-economic groups"

The report concludes that there is a cost-benefit ratio of 13:1 for such camps.

Quite apart from the developmental impact of the outdoors, the sector makes a substantial contribution to rural employment and regeneration. With an estimated £430 million output (28), it is a significant employer of young adults.

In short, there is a clear economic argument that there should be a publicly funded entitlement to a progressive range of learning experiences outside the classroom, including at least one residential experience. However, it is recognised that the current economic climate is not one in which new spending commitments are likely. Therefore, we propose an alternative.

A feasible alternative

It is possible to propose a combination of steps that will make it possible to create that all-important entitlement, without significant new central government funding.

Most parents are very supportive of outdoor education and seem to have an intuitive understanding that challenge is a very positive developmental experience. As a result, they are perfectly willing to contribute to the costs of the experience, particularly the costs of a residential. We consider that, for those parents who can afford it, this is acceptable.

However, it is essential that there is a safety net for those whose parents cannot afford to contribute. Schools are able to a certain extent to support such pupils through their existing delegated funding but, if an entitlement is to be achieved for all young people, some further support to schools is desirable.

There are currently a number of different sources of central government funding. These include:

- The Extended Services Disadvantage Subsidy
- Local initiatives such as London Challenge, Black Country Challenge and Greater Manchester Challenge
- Do It 4 Real.

Each of these sources of funds has been set up for a good reason and each provides valuable opportunities. However, those opportunities are in some cases limited to specific urban areas and leave many young people unsupported. For example, research by Professor Power et al (21) shows that pupils in small rural schools have fewer opportunities for learning outside the classroom than pupils in city schools.

We very much welcome the creation of a premium for disadvantaged pupils. Individual headteachers will clearly have their own priorities for using that premium. However, we argue that the government should explicitly state that the premium may, among other things, be used to support the provision of learning outside the classroom. If this were done, we would welcome it if the premium absorbed and replaced the current sources of funding.

We are confident that the investment will be more than recouped by the savings illustrated in the economic section above and would be dwarfed by the human, financial and social cost of doing nothing. Moreover, it will end the unfairness caused by unequal access and will allow an entitlement to a range of progressive outdoor learning opportunities, including at least one residential, to become a reality for all young people.

Time for change in Outdoor Learning

In summary, we propose that:

- There should be a formal entitlement for all young people to a progressive range of opportunities for learning outside the classroom, including at least one residential experience.
- In the roll-out of the proposed premium for disadvantaged pupils, it should be stated explicitly that this may be used to support the provision of learning outside the classroom, to support those young people who would not otherwise be able to afford these opportunities.

This will, for the first time, allow learning outside the classroom to be embedded on a sustainable basis into our educational system.

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It's 5am: The storm

Ian Dewey

General introduction

Between 1995 and 2008 I worked for a number of companies and schools as an outdoor expedition leader. Each morning I would get up at 5:00am and plan the day over a quiet cup of coffee. 'It's 5am' was a document that analysed five incidents that occurred over the years, comparing the plan with the outcome.

Incident 3

The sun is slowly coming up and looking at the campsite I am surveying a very different scene to what the place looked like when we went to bed. Last night an unusual weather occurrence happened.

We are in the middle of a three day unsupported walk up part of the south coast of NSW. Last night was night 2 and we are currently camped on a headland in the middle of a national park. The group is composed of 12 Year 9 students and I have an untrained female teacher supporting me. By the way, it's mid winter.

During yesterday's coffee the plan was relatively simple. The track is 18km of well tracked coast, rises of less than 80m and good access to water three times during the day. The group have shown themselves happy to follow their peer leaders and are following my King, Seer and Navigator leadership program. There are no health problems and the group showed themselves quite able to carry their own loads at a comfortable pace. Quite simply, it seems too easy.

The risk management for the day was fairly standard. The equipment and human hazards were fairly standard. The weather pattern was for Fresh to Strong westerly winds throughout the program, nights down to 6°C, days to a maximum of 18° (not bad for mid winter). Only high level cloud was forecast with zero precipitation. The shore line along the walk was generally clay and conglomerate cliffs (read, very unstable) with sandy beaches; however this headland we camped on is Sydney sandstone. The track was through SE remnant rainforest (read, widow maker eucalypts, scratchy burrawang palms and tiger snakes). The tourist brochure speaks of "pristine", my sarcastic side wonders if that is their local word for the pig rutting at the back of one of the barrier lakes.

This incident is included in 'It's 5am' due to its ability to catch me out. The walk went off perfectly and we made camp with an hour to spare prior to dinner. The time was spent setting up a comfortable campsite and exploring the rock pools around the headland. I called the local coastguard for a weather update just before dinner and was told "westerly winds abating over night, fresh to strong westerly winds tomorrow, temperature down to 6°C, no rain". We were sheltered from the west by a mountain. At the campsite, we were getting occasional "gusts" of less than 5 knots.

The headland campsite area was on a slight slope (less than 5 degrees) with tent size patches of kangaroo "mowed" lawn between low native shrubs. It provided

each tent with "some" wind protection (were it needed) and privacy.

At 2 am I had been woken by a clap of thunder. "What the?" Seconds later heavy rain and wind gusts to over 30 knots hit us from the south. Whilst trying to argue with nature for not listening to the weather forecast I threw on my OPs and jacket and headed out. I was not concerned about tents blowing down, I was however concerned that the kangaroo pathways which tended to run up and down slope would make excellent water courses, straight toward the tent doors.

As an aside; I am a member of the storm watchers guild and take every opportunity to watch a good storm.

The rain was extremely heavy and I was right, the lowest level tents were going to be in path of a significant water flow: one was already taking on water. Note, we were not camped near any type of dry creek bed.

Interestingly, one of the more sheltered tents had obviously pulled out a couple of pegs. Water had pooled in the loose fabric and one of the occupants already had a very wet sleeping bag.

Finally there was evidence of equipment that had been left out, contrary to requirements and was now making little boats.

All this had happened in the time it took to pull on a rain coat, OPs and boots.

I quickly re-pinned two tents, made a couple of minor dams a beaver would be proud of and rescued what equipment I could find.

I then did a tent by tent inspection/question (the thunder was very loud and everyone was awake). We had three wet sleeping bags to deal with but otherwise things were OK. I then headed back to my tent to watch the show from inside.

The sun came up slowly as I sipped my coffee and it became obvious that more equipment had been left out than seen during the night. On final inspection we had lost a tarp (which had been lying folded outside a tent) and some significant cooking equipment had washed or blown away.

Fortunately with the sun the westerly (dry) wind came up and we were able to dry everything quite quickly.

The lessons learned

- The weather bureau is working on statistical probability over large areas; it can be wrong. Set your campsites for bad weather
- Sudden heavy rain can produce little creeks capable of putting 10 litres of water into a tent remarkably quickly. Always have tent doors away from possible water courses and consider where any water will flow in relation to tents
- In strong winds, small aluminium pegs can pull out quite easily from flapping tents with possible major

Continued on page 13...

Just another overseas climbing trip

Luke Adams

Learning No 1: Never book your airfare and time off from work before checking what months are wettest at the chosen crag and country you are travelling to.

This year was supposed to be a no overseas climbing trip year. Mike and I had planned a two week walking trip in June to the Larapinta Trail in Central Australia as a consolation. By about mid March we were kicking around the fact we were keen for another adventure and I suggested Squamish as an interesting cliff. So at the last minute we booked tickets and proposed to meet in Vancouver around 1 June.

One of the benefits of travelling to North America is the two pieces of luggage of up to 23kg each. This means we could travel in luxury and bring the larger tents, extra clothes and of course the full size wok.

Mike and I met in Vancouver, picked up our little hire car and drove through and out of the city towards Squamish. The darkened skies and the constant drizzle were getting us worried.

Squamish is only about 80km from Vancouver and stands directly next the highway to Whistler ski fields. Unfortunately it was not to be. After a hearty cooked breakfast we checked the forecast and decided we could not wait a week for the weather to clear. Skaha Bluffs is near Penticton in British Columbia, about six hours' drive east from Squamish and became our new plan. The local outdoor shop salesman in Squamish sold us a Skaha Guide and promised us that it would be a lot drier on the other side of the range. We arrived in Penticton late on day one of our trip and were both feeling the effects of a long drive and jetlag, but being motivated to at least see some climbing, we walked out to the crag for a look. Skaha Bluffs are a series of cliffs above the town, predominantly smooth granite of up to 50m high. The nature of the rock requires bolting to make most of the routes and it is one of Canada's premier moderate sport climbing areas. A light rain started before we had gone too far and so we walked solemnly back to the car trying to convince each other that it would be clear by the morning.

It rained intermittently through the night but by next morning the sky was clear enough for us to venture out. We started on a small introductory area known as Red Tail Area. Getting a feel for the climbing on Lichen in my Panties 5.8, What's Left 5.10a and Basic Black 5.10a. The weather held and we finished Day 1 with eight leads each.

Most of the classic two and three star routes at Skaha were vertical granite faces with sharp good edges and well thought out bolt

protection with the occasional piece of trad gear to keep you honest. We would each lead a selected route. The first person would lead, lower off and clean the gear. The second person would then lead and do the same.

The weather held and Days 2 and 3 were spent working other areas at the crag.

We continued to assess the weather in Squamish to see if it was improving but the forecast was for more rain. On the fourth morning in Skaha we woke to solid rain and the decision to move on to another area was made. I had bought a Smith Rocks guidebook from Australia for just this eventuality. Smith Rocks is in Central Oregon and boasts over 1300 routes. It is the high mountain desert environment and we felt confident the rain would not follow us there. So we packed our stuff and drove south on Highway 99 into the States, through Washington State (getting a speeding fine along the way: welcome to the US of A) and into Oregon.

Learning No 2: Doing 70 miles per hour in a 60 miles per hour zone costs about US\$100 when you get caught.

It was a long drive of approximately 800km but when we arrived and viewed the gorge that makes up the Smith Rocks State Park we both knew it was a good move.

Smith Rocks State Park has an interesting climbing history. Oregon Trad climbers used it as a local training ground until the early 1980s when Alan Watts, a local hardman, introduced sport climbing. It quickly became America's sport climbing capital heralding in routes like Chain Reaction 5.12c, Rude Boys 5.13b and To Bolt or To Be 5.14a.

Our first full day at Smith was a Saturday and the first dry weekend in North Western United States for a couple of months, so the crags were full of climbers from Portland, Seattle and even Vancouver. An early start beat the queues and we ticked 16 routes between the two of us.



Five Gallon Buckets Area, Smith Rocks State Park

Just another overseas climbing trip

...continued

The first few climbs were eye opening as the first bolts are 5–6 metres off the ground and after some quite cruxy moves. We subsequently found that a lot of climbers in the know carried adjustable stick clips for the high first bolts. The rock was weird mix of volcanic mud with small stones in it and large hueco like holes. A lot of the routes had very sharp edges that wore the tips of your fingers raw.

We climbed at Smith for six days. The days would start with a leisurely breakfast, a two minute drive from the campground to the carpark and a five minute approach walk which would be followed by climbing for 6–7 hours. After climbing we would either hit the local supermarket for food and beer supplies or the local restaurant called the Depot. By the end of the trip we had climbed nine days in the last 10 and were starting to feel worn out.

The statistics say it all

Mike Hillan led 60 routes with about 1,380 metres of climbing.

Luke Adams led 50 routes with about 1,140 metres of climbing.

We had to be back in Vancouver by midday Saturday so on Friday morning we packed up a gear and drove 10 hours back. Mike went on to Las Vegas and met his wife for another couple of weeks of touring and I came home to a very frosty winter in Adelaide.

Despite the initial disappointment with the poor weather at Squamish things worked out rather well. Climbing at Skaha was excellent but three days of climbing that was similar was probably enough and the travel day was a welcome rest day and let us see some more of the country. Smith is a climber's crag and provides greater interaction with other climbers. Camping is better and there is a wilderness character that is lacking at Squamish which is almost urban by comparison. You gotta put on your bucket list.

Learning No 3: It is probably impossible to have a bad climbing holiday. 

It's 5am: The storm

...continued

ramifications in heavy rain. Consider double pegging the side that may face expected or unexpected winds

- Don't rely on the group to pack everything up. I had conducted a campsite inspection at the previous campsite to ensure everything was stowed in the tents. On this occasion I verbally reinforced the requirement but hadn't conducted the inspection. Had the weather deteriorated, we would have needed the tarp and we were now limited in our cooking ability. 

Drowning doesn't look like drowning

Mario Vittone

Drowning does not look like drowning—Dr Francesco A Pia, in an article in the US Coast Guard's *On Scene Magazine*, described the instinctive drowning response like this:

'Except in rare circumstances, drowning people are physiologically unable to call out for help. The respiratory system was designed for breathing. Speech is the secondary or overlaid function. Breathing must be fulfilled, before speech occurs.

'Drowning people's mouths alternately sink below and reappear above the surface of the water. The mouths of drowning people are not above the surface of the water long enough for them to exhale, inhale, and call out for help. When the drowning people's mouths are above the surface, they exhale and inhale quickly as their mouths start to sink below the surface of the water.

'Drowning people cannot wave for help. Nature instinctively forces them to extend their arms laterally and press down on the water's surface. Pressing down on the surface of the water, permits drowning people to leverage their bodies so they can lift their mouths out of the water to breathe.

'Throughout the Instinctive Drowning Response, drowning people cannot voluntarily control their arm movements. Physiologically, drowning people who are struggling on the surface of the water cannot stop drowning and perform voluntary movements such as waving for help, moving toward a rescuer, or reaching out for a piece of rescue equipment.

'From beginning to end of the Instinctive Drowning Response people's bodies remain upright in the water, with no evidence of a supporting kick. Unless rescued by a trained lifeguard, these drowning people can only struggle on the surface of the water from 20 to 60 seconds before submersion occurs.'

This doesn't mean that a person that is yelling for help and thrashing isn't in real trouble—they are experiencing aquatic distress. Not always present before the instinctive drowning response, aquatic distress doesn't last long—but unlike true drowning, these victims can still assist in their own rescue. They can grab lifelines, throw rings, etc. Look for these other signs of drowning when persons are in the water:

- Head low in the water, mouth at water level
- Head tilted back with mouth open
- Eyes glassy and empty, unable to focus
- Eyes closed
- Hair over forehead or eyes
- Not using legs—Vertical
- Hyperventilating or gasping
- Trying to swim in a particular direction but not making headway
- Trying to roll over on the back
- Ladder climb, rarely out of the water.

Source: mariovittone.com/2010/05/154/ 

Wordprocessing right and wrong

Peter Carter

Every outdoor activity has its techniques, and in some cases correct technique can be critical for preventing injury, or worse. Incorrect technique in wordprocessing may not be life-threatening, but it makes for wasted time, inconsistent documents, and demonstrated lack of understanding.

In 1961 IBM introduced the Selectric typewriter, notable for its 'golfball' type element. For the first time with an office-level machine it was possible to have type in different sizes and typefaces, including *italic* and special characters. One stopped, changed the type element, keyed in whatever needed to be in a different typeface, and then reverted to the original. For its time, revolutionary.

Then came wordprocessing by computer, with Microsoft Word becoming the dominant, but not the only, package. Unfortunately, typewriter thinking often came with it. Users would stop, change the typeface, size or type weight (**bold**, etc) for individual words or lines, and then change back to the original setting. (They often brought other typewriter habits like two spaces after full stops, blank lines between paragraphs, layout with multiple spaces and tabs and so on.)

In doing so, they wasted time setting and resetting font, size, bold, margins, etc, and the results were often inconsistent. They were also unable to use features such as the automatic generation of tables of contents, and did them manually, working through documents page by page...

There is a better way, and it's been part of Word even before it was Word, as Xerox Bravo: styles, also known as paragraph formats. When you start a new Word document you are not starting with a 'blank sheet'. Word begins new documents with its Normal template (Normal.dot), which contains specifications for page size, margins, and a number of predefined paragraph styles. If you simply begin typing, the text is in Normal style, usually set for a body paragraph. If that's what you want, no great problem.¹ What if you want a heading? The answer is to use a heading style, not to change font and size willy nilly: this is not the IBM Selectric.

Where are the heading styles? Different versions of Word look a little different, but on the left end of the toolbar you'll find a little pulldown menu, probably with the word 'Normal' visible. Click on it and try some of the other styles: there's a whole heading hierarchy and other useful formats. If they suit your document design, use them, and if they don't, design your own: Format > Style...

A paragraph style defines everything about the format of a paragraph: typeface, its size and weight, leading (line spacing), spacing before and after, margins and indents, tabs and their placement, whether or not to stay with the next paragraph (important for headings). It's all there. You want an indented paragraph? Set it with the style,

¹ Unless you transfer the document to a machine whose Normal template, and therefore Normal style, is different. Interesting things can happen. And that's not all...

not by inserting tabs. No blank lines between paragraphs: set the spacing with the style. You can design the document. Alternatively, try one of the other templates that comes with Word, or Pages, or whatever you use. Explore them.

Outdoor News is put together with Adobe InDesign, and the style principles are the same, in fact expanded, because there are character and object styles as well. Examples are in the sidebar, whose outline and shading are controlled by an object style. The table of contents on the front page is generated by InDesign using the Title style, and the TOC entries have their own style. Easy.

Many Word users thought that because they were using Word the rest of the world did too, and the same version. It turns out that there are people who don't use Word, and to them Word documents are gibberish. Then there is the matter of version, highlighted recently with the .docx format of Office 2007, unreadable by earlier versions. Even if they do have Word, if their printers are different documents will display differently, often with odd pagination because Word paginates as it goes according to the printer on the system. That's right, move a Word document to a machine with a different type of printer and the document will display and print differently, perhaps badly.

The only time you should send a Word document to someone else is when you are collaborating, and this is where Track Changes can come in handy. The finished document should *never* be distributed as a Word document. Only open, cross-platform, formats are acceptable, and for most tasks Portable Document Format (PDF) is the appropriate one. Designed by Adobe, it's now an ISO standard, 32000-1:2008. This is where Mac users have it easy, since PDF is a default Mac OS X format, although Acrobat Professional or PDFpen are needed to access some features. For Windows and Linux users there are free conversion tools, and Adobe Reader is free.²

With PDF you, not Word, control the final appearance, and PDFs are generally more compact than Word files. If it's a form, PDFs can have live form fields—text, check boxes, radio buttons, list boxes, buttons—added for people to complete. The conference registration form is one example.

Good documents start with good technique, with style even.³

² Office 2007 SP2 can generate PDFs, and the most common free PDF utility is PDFCreator, from www.pdfforge.org/pdfcreator.

³ Elsewhere I have a rant about Word and its misuse, with links to useful resources: www.users.on.net/~pcarter/word.html. (And yes, links have their own character style, which includes the blue colour.)

Title
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1 November 2010
Education Development Centre Hindmarsh**



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Full Registration: Includes platter dinner and all sessions, 1 pm–9 pm

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