

k. Vietnam Expedition 2016

What do we do after the successful Sri Lanka trip, well of course plan the next one. Vietnam has the wonderful combination of incredible natural beauty and a fascinating history & culture for us to explore. It's another family friendly location

Outline Itinerary

- Hanoi
- Cycle tour through the old quarter of Hanoi
- water-puppet theatres
- Boat trip in Halong Bay
- Overnight train to Hanoi
- Nguyen emperors
- Dragon trip on Perfume River
- Explore the Thien Mu Pagoda
- Rowing boat in Vietnam's rice-bowl
- visit to a local candy factory
- local water park



Walk, Cycle, Scoot to school

We should be aiming for 45 mins of exercise a day. The roads in Exeter as everywhere else are grinding to a halt with combustion engines. Why not solve 3 problems in one. Walk, Scoot or Cycle to school. If you have to drive in from outside the city, why not drop & pickup your child 2 miles from school. You'll be saving fuel, giving them healthy exercise & reducing congestion on our roads.



Finally

You can view thousands of photos of hundreds of trips the school has run, as well as school videos on the school on-line photo album & video portal. Both accessible through the school web-site. The password for both is 'snow' all in lower case. Go explore, realise how much they learn on these trips & ensure they join us on the next one.



Occasional Newsletter Summer 2014



MCS Ten Tors, 1st over the line for their route

The route to success is a long one. Officially we can start training on Dartmoor from the 1st Feb. but a great deal has happened before this to see a team of 6 over the line on the 2nd weekend in May.

Some might say our first training walk starts in late Sep. the year before preparing for the 23 mile Abbot's Way walk from Buckfastleigh to Tavistock on the 1st weekend of Oct. But really for us it starts much earlier, 8yrs old attending Junior Summer Camp might be the first time they take part in Orienteering (it's easier to sell it as a treasure hunt), then at 10yrs old they can undertake the Exmoor Challenge Event, which you read about inside this newsletter. So from the end of Sep. to the 2nd weekend in May the team will be out every other week, honing their skills, developing their muscles, but far more importantly learning the mental strength to succeed.

My guess is there are close to 5,000 students who train to take part each year, for 2,400 places. Out of those about 70% of the Bronze 35 mile route will complete the course & 60% of the Silver 45 Mile route & 50% of the Gold 55 mile routes. The idea being it's not worth achieving if everyone can complete the challenge. Of course not all years are equal, the weather plays a key ingredient in each year's challenge. 2015 will see my 15th year as a Ten Tors Manager & possibly the first time the school has entered a 35,45,55 team. Don't expect to see too much of me between Sep. & May next year! Unless of course you're out on the hills. We train on Dartmoor, Exmoor, Cornwall, Scilly Isles, Brecon's & more. Pupils who succeed on Ten Tors are often our highest achieving academic pupils as well.



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16. Sports Hall Changing rooms
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I can't capture all that has gone on this year, but here is a flavour of a few.

Coming up

- a. Summer Camp
- b. Swimming Gala
- c. Sports Day
- d. Twitter
- e. Speech Day
- f. Summer Concert
- g. Sri Lanka Trip
- h. Duke of Edinburgh Award
 - Bronze DofE Expedition
 - Silver DofE Expedition
 - Gold DofE Expedition
- a. Skiing 2015
- b. Brittany Camp 2015
- c. Vietnam Expedition 2016

i. Skiing 2015

One of my great passions is skiing. If you've been before, just once you will know what I mean.

In our dark winter, wet, warm, with the sun as a distant memory, to fly off to the alpes; bright sunshine as hot as an English summers day, reflecting off the pristine white snowclad mountains with views to die for, breathing air that is crisp & clear, like a mountain spring. Just gives you the bare



glimpse of why the school goes skiing each year. It's one of the best family activity holidays you can ever take. It's sure to bring the family together year after year for millennia. There is so much educational opportunity as well, the complex mountain economy, environmental issues, climate issues, an opportunity to practice your language skills. All experienced first hand.

We extend our skiing program beyond what any other school offers, to a full term of activity at the dry ski slope & indoor snow slopes in England allowing pupils to use Skiing for many of their

GCSE examinations.

j. Brittany Camp 2015

This year we went to Alderney, the 3 years prior to this we went to the Silly Isles & now it is time to return to Brittany. We use a campsite Les Moutees, with an incredible swimming pool & sports complex in a beautiful village Carentec on the Brittany coastline, only 5 miles from Roscoff. Carentec is a little peninsular with beaches on 3 sides, one of which is the home to a wonderful watersports centre, we link with to provide sailing, sea kayaking & windsurfing lessons. All given in French.



h. Duke of Edinburgh Award

I've got so much time for the Award. It's suitable for ALL pupils from 14-21yrs old. I love the inclusive nature of the award.

It's hugely & widely received & well thought of by 6th Form colleges, Universities & employers. They all recognize the skills the children need to hone to achieve the award & value it because of the independence & effort they need to show to achieve it.

There are 3 awards; Bronze, Silver & Gold, with the length of time pupils need to work on these, extending with each one.

What do they do? The list is endless, but here are a few examples

- **Skill;** musical instrument, bike maintenance, pottery etc
- **Physical;** Horse riding, swimming, running etc
- **Volunteering;** listening to the younger children read, a day a month helping Dartmoor National Park,
- **Expedition;** by bike, canoe, kayak, foot, rowing boat, sailing boat
Bronze; 2 days, 1 night in the local countryside, Gold 4 days & 3 nights in wild country
- **Residential;** only at Gold level. 5 day residential activity where they know no-one.

The award is about them giving their time, & commitment to something over a long period of time, it provides a catalyst to get them to lead a more fulfilling life, engaging with the wider community in a wide range of activities. It's great.

- **Bronze Expedition**
This Autumn, mode of transport is yet to be decided by the pupils.
- **Silver Expedition**
This term, NOW by Canoe
- **Gold Expedition**
We have 8 pupils undertaking their Gold expedition by canoe this August on the river Tarn in France



1. Rocksolid Race

The school has entered teams in Gemini Radio's Commando challenge, but this year we wanted something far more challenging & fun & so entered a MCS team into The RockSolid race at Escot. Wow! What a success. Our team was made of past & present parents, alumni & school staff.

Left to Right; Lewis Chambers, Mr J, Chris Deane, Gale Nesbit, James Lovering, Lucy



Jenner, Sam & Steve Morris, Keri Jenner & Alice Jenner.

The course requires a **LOT** of teamwork to complete.

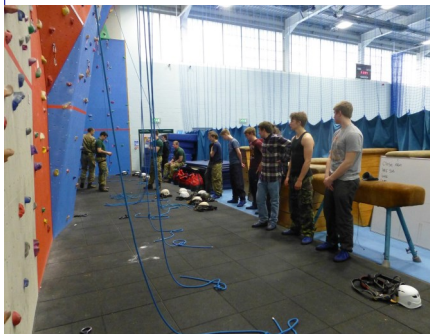
We were not content to undertake the short 5k challenge, but undertook the longer 10k challenge. It was just soooooo much fun & we will for sure be entering another team next year.

2. Marines Leadership Course

The pupils were lucky to have 3 Marine Commandos come into school running a Leadership development day. The forces are so good at getting the pupils to utilize those grey-cells in ways they have not had to in the classroom. None us know what challenges our pupils are going to face in the future, so learning to be adaptable & using your skills in innovative ways is essential.



3. Taunton Marine Camp



This day was about an insight into the life of a Marine. The commanding officer made it clear to the pupils that qualifications & learning made his unit unique. He gave an example where his Marines had to work in a Spanish theatre of war with Spanish speaking troops. Interpreters can't work in their environment so having 2 of his Marines with 1st Class honours degrees in Spanish, was essential. He pointed out that whatever the challenge, wherever they are sent in the world, the Core as the skills in its ranks meet the demands



4. Outdoor First aid

We ran a series of First Aid courses in school. The UK is unique in the Western World, being the only country which does not teach First Aid as part of the National Curriculum. Apparently due to the lack of a single governing body, the 4 organizations which promote First Aid training in the UK can't agree on practice!

We ran 1 First Aid course in school & an Outward Bound First Aid course which was suitable for the students undertaking expeditions & outdoor activities.

5. Chicks & Ducklings

O my goodness! Were these ever a success. 21 days is a long time to wait for the Nursery children, even when we lamp them from time to time to see their development. We could not believe how quickly they grew. They are 15 weeks old now & have had their new home out in the Adventure Playground for some time now.

I did feel a little sorry for the chicks when we then hatched baby ducklings (28 days) for if you think chicks are cute... It was a fantastic opportunity to learn about the development of eggs to life. A biology lesson in the raw.



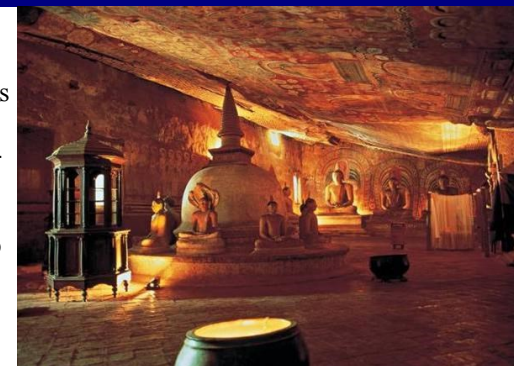
6. Sports Stars

Aren't we all? Exeter University are wonderful at supporting the local community & what a great chance to let the children get a glimpse of what University life is like.

They took part in a series of Sports activities, theoretical & practical. This then leads on to University undergraduate students coming into our school to help support the sports in our school



we break up for our summer holidays. It's cost £1,800 per pupil, very impressive when you'll find nearly all the similar trips offered by schools in Exeter charging about £3,000. We've done a whole host of fund raising events. The most successful has been the link with Exeter Canoe Club, where most of the pupils have raised close to 1/2 their trip costs, cooking meals for the club on their club night.



So what are we doing?

- Flying via Qatar
- Day of beach activities
- Visit a coconut processing plant
- Boat trip on Negombo lagoon to explore the mangrove ecosystem.
- Day of beach activities
- Cycle trip to the great rock of Sigiya
- Elephant back safari
- climb the amazing Sigiriya rock
- Catamaran excursion on Polonnaruwa Lake
- Visit the ancient city of Polonnaruwa
- Spend the day at the Primate Research Camp
- Visit Dambulla cave temple
- Attend Kandy evening fire show
- Visit the Royal Botanical Gardens
- Visit Tea plantation and factory
- Kitulgala boat trip
- Jungle walk
- Day of beach activities

It's going to be a great success



d. Twitter

We are very keen to try & keep parents posted on what is happening at school & what's coming up. We've been experimenting with 'Facebook' for quite a while now & have extended this to 'Twitter'. The school also uses 'Google Groups' to keep parents posted when they have signed up their child for a particular event or activity.

**e. Speech Day**

This is such a great day in our calendar, MCS is about enthusing students about learning. No-one can predict the future, skills we teach today might be obsolete tomorrow, so learning to love education, gaining the skills to be able to adapt & find the opportunities in tomorrow's challenges are key to our pupils success in future life. Speech day is a great opportunity to reward pupils for their endeavors over the last academic year, hear from an inspirational speaker, find out what the headmaster has in store for next year & sadly wish our older students an exciting & fulfilling career. We do love it when our alumni return with their experience to better inform our pupils.



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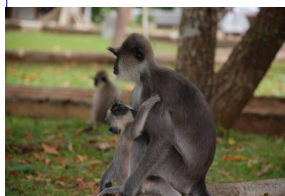
f. Summer Concert

Which other school involves all the pupils in the entire school in their end of term concert?

Not many I feel & yet all our concerts; Christmas Carol Service, Harvest Festival, Easter Concert & our main production; summer concert do. They will all need to present ideas to groups of people in latter life, what a great way to learn those skills & so much more.

**g. Sri Lanka Trip**

The school embraces education outside the classroom in a huge way, but it had troubled me for some while that pupils on our school trips & to a fair extent on their family holidays visited the minority of the world. The Western World. So the challenge was to find a developing country

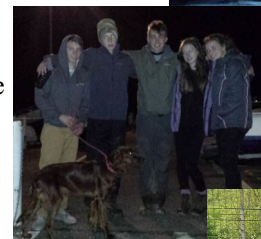


which would give our pupils a rich cultural experience, but still allowing us to take younger pupils. Sri Lanka hit the bill. So a little over 2yrs ago I set about selling the idea to pupils & parents. I very much wanted our pupils to try & fund as much of the trip as possible themselves. I also wanted it to be as assessable financially to as many pupils as possible. We are going for 12 days, this summer, a day after

7. Saints Way

Life is not all roses! Pupils need to learn 'Grit & Determination', resilience & hard graft & so it is with these words ringing in their minds I took a group of our Ten Tors aspirants to the YHA hostel at Treayarnon Bay. To say it is beautiful there would do the bay & huge injustice.

1 5am on Sat. morning we rose to start walking at 6am to complete the 21 miles from coast to coast finishing in Foye before sunset. I've yet to get a team to finish it in sunlight!

**8. Exmoor Challenge**

And so it is, 14yrs we've been entering teams into this event. This year we had 2 junior teams (10-14yr olds) & 2 senior teams. They all completed the 16 mile route, with hills that make Dartmoor look like the Somerset Levels. The walking sticks we sourced ourselves & were a great success. This is a great stepping stone for Ten Tors & the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

**10. PGL**

Another successful trip. This hits the following objectives for me; introducing children to overnight trips, allowing them to try a wide range of activities which they then might want to pursue further away from PGL, fantastic for social development & team skills + lots more.

**11. Alderney Camp**

A 1st for the school & with our personal guide Mr Salado a huge success, for me the best bit was Joey the plane. It seats 14, we took a group of 6 & you sit with the single pilot. Huge windows, flying really low with wonderful views of Guernsey & Alderney. However the blonde hedgehogs, bats, moth traps, kayaking, sailing, German bunkers & Victorian forts, combined with a stunning coastline & super friendly islanders, all added up to a very special trip.





12. Canoe Club

We are spoilt with our location; The Teign estuary, Teignmouth beach, the higher reaches of the River Teign, & the lower Dart are amongst my favorite spots to take the children paddling. It's a great way for them to explore issues with access, & the impact of mankind on water systems & really first hand experience of weather & climate.

13. Playground Development

Major changes are planned for the front grass playing field, car park & Tennis court. James & Jeff Jenner (2 of the 5 trustees of the school) are taking an increasing role in the management of the nursery & school. Jeff's 2 children already attend the nursery. The plan is to build 2 houses on the existing Tennis courts for Jeff & James so they can have a greater input into the school & nursery. This will not affect the new vegetable garden or adventure play area, which will stay as it is. Then we plan to take the front lawn which is only used for Sports Day at the moment, put an all-weather surface down & build 2 multi-sport playing pitches, with spectator areas, very similar to the one in the park close to school.

14. Car park

The car park has seen many improvements over the last few years; the 2nd entrance, creating parking areas under the trees & more recently resurfacing this part of the car park. We can never hope to provide parking for all those who would like it, but the planned all-weather play area also incorporates some ideas to create a few more parking places.

15. Toilet revamp

Both the girls & boys toilets are being stripped out this summer & receiving a total makeover.

16. Sports Hall Changing rooms

At Christmas we installed 2 new changing rooms, toilets & showers for the Sports Hall, which have proved a great success.



16. Runners

Keri Jenner has been running a girls running club, this has seen a great level of enthusiasm & commitment from the girls, some of which have no interest in normal school Sports activities. They have taken part in public running events & plans to enter more. Running is a fantastic way to stay fit & healthy, control stress, boost metabolism, strengthen bones



& re-energize yourself for the day. Running particularly for women is a flourishing physical activity, with thousands of fun running events, but possibly most importantly, has a huge take-up after leaving school & is likely to see these girls running for the rest of their lives.

Some events on the Horizon

a. Summer Camp

Designed for some of the younger children, but so enjoyed, extended to include children in the middle of the school & also an opportunity for the older pupils to take part in a leaders role.

We camp at a campsite in Dawlish, with a fantastic inside & outside pool complex, link up with the Nature reserve on Dawlish Warren, camp fires, we get the chil-



dren involved in cooking their own meals, a night walk, loads of camp games. We cycle from school out along the wonderful Exe estuary cycle route, catching the ferry across to Star Cross. They come home exhausted,

glowing with all that fresh air, having learnt to organize themselves better, work with other people a little better & so much more.

b. Swimming Gala

Each term the school has a gala, which includes children from our weekly swimming lessons which take place throughout the year & enthusiastic swimmers in the school. Swimming is a life skill to preserve life in case they fall into water, but more importantly the key to the plethora of watersports which our region is superbly placed to offer.



c. Sports Day

Our Sports Day is such a great success, involving all the children, enthrusing them to take part & be active. From High jump, sack races, a challenging obstacle course in the gym to the parent's race. It's fun for all. It's more reminiscent of a village races & the final Tug of war.

