

# Caution: Explorers Visit Cumbria!



Staying at Bassenthwaite Parish Room, Keswick, Cumbria and canoeing on Bassenthwaite Lake, has become a tradition for Zenith Explorers and Leaders. For the third year in a row during February Half Term, a convoy of vehicles and passengers braved the freezing cold temperatures for a week of adventure.

The first main activity we did after getting to where we were staying at about 1 in the morning, was a bike ride from Penrith to Keswick, which was very tiring but it was still really good fun even though the weather was really nasty to us. We encountered lots of interesting and expensive buildings, the sort of estates that we could only dream of owning. Each and every one of us got soaked and chilled to the bone even those of us who had good water proofs, but everyone agreed that all the mud, cold and wet was well worth it. Boy we slept well that night!

Bags were packed, the trailer loaded with canoes, the van, (kindly lent by Parcellforce, driven by Bob,) was loaded with blue barrels containing equipment, food to feed an army, hammocks plus tents. Each year the numbers attending grow so this year in recognition of this, we are producing this special edition of the Norwegian Blue. Photographs have been contributed by Neville Lamkin, Louis Pinto, Katie Lawrence and Michael Willis although the camera was passed round throughout the trip so apologies if we have left any one out. This is James Youngs' report:

My first impressions of the trip were good because I was very happy to be finally going on a trip with Zenith because I had been a part of the unit for some time and not been on a proper trip, and to get the real feel for the unit and see them in their prime as it were.

The trip had a bit of a rocky start with the whole issue about the mini bus not being ready. But we eventually got going and we were off. There were a few new faces on the trip which I was a bit nervous about because I didn't know what they were like but I got talking to them and they were really nice people, and by the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the trip we were having a real laugh.



**Cold, wet and weary but the group were able to ride from Penrith to Keswick despite the appalling weather. The residents of Cumbria must have known they were visiting, as spotted en route was a sign showing a red squirrel. (See above.) Could it be a warning of the invaders from down South? "Squirrel's Heath are coming... Be on the look out! Last seen in an old, red mini- bus towing green canoes"**



**Explorers from the Zenith and Severn Droog pose for the camera left having taken a break.**

"DISCOVERY" 3RD SQUIRRELS HEATH SCOUTS

## The Norwegian Blue Special Edition : Bassenthwaite, Feb 2010

But there was no rest for the wicked, as the next day we got up at some ungodly hour in the morning half dead and we were off on our canoe expedition. This expedition was a real learning curve for me because this was the first time I had ever been on moving water in a canoe. Also at one point I was in a canoe on my own and this was only the second time I had done so; I really had to learn and learn fast.



The expedition consisted of two days. The first being a paddle down a river passing through some rapids which I found great fun but quite challenging because it was all happening so fast I didn't know quite what to do, but I was in safe hands because Louis, my co-pilot was in the back of the boat getting us through anything and everything.

That day we had to paddle out of Derwent Water and it was frozen over. The ice was only about 5 mm thick ,even so it was still a bit tough on the old arms and you felt the difference when we got into the sunshine and the ice had melted. Next we had to go down another river with even more rapids and this time they were much quicker, much rougher and Neville wanted us to do more in them. Afterwards, we dropped out into Bassenthwaite Lake where we would get out and go home, but again easier said than



Once through the river we arrived on Derwent Water and all that was left to do that day was to find the island we were staying on, easier said than done because there were several different islands on the lake, but we were able to find the right one. As the group knew the island quite well because they had been there a few times before, we were planning to stay on a different part, that is, on the other side. However, as it was very difficult to access because of fallen trees, we just paddled round and stayed on the usual area. That evening we were supposed to be sleeping in hammocks so we had to pitch those , however, it wasn't all that easy because the trees weren't in the correct position to be hammock friendly. Being 2<sup>nd</sup> Squirrels Heath blooded, I managed to do it and have an exciting, as well as, interesting experience that night. The next morning we woke to a glorious but bitterly cold day the lake was frozen over and my boots were cold but I wasn't complaining.

done, as to get all the kit and the canoes to the van we had to carry it up a hill on a really narrow over grown path. It was a killer!

The whole expedition was amazing because it was such a beautiful landscape, the fast flowing rivers and the fact you had seconds to think at some points, just made the whole expedition an unforgettable experience.

That night we had circus skills almost as soon as we got



back. But none of us were complaining, because there was so much to do, I learnt how to juggle and how to ride



a unicycle, well sort of anyway. We all slept very well again that night.

Then almost instantly from arriving on the first day it was time to go home, the trip had gone so incredibly quickly it was unbelievable. But it wasn't over quite yet as we still had one more day on the rapids and the dreaded 3 star assessment. I wasn't panicking as much as some people because I was the least experienced and I knew I wouldn't get the grade because of what I heard you had to do, but with that in mind I still tried my best, and it showed I was trying so hard I almost fell in which thankfully no one saw and Neville was there to stop me from going in the drink completely.

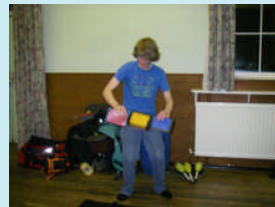
The trip home was eventful because half an hour into the journey the mini bus broke down and we had to stop for about an hour, I think. We eventually got going and we got home at some godly hour of 2 in the morning. But overall I really enjoyed myself and I think the trip was a huge success and an experience I will cherish for ever. Also I think the trip gave me an even bigger passion for the whole canoeing scene and I am really going to try hard and get my 3 star.

A big thanks to Neville, Sam, and everyone who made my first canoe experience a fantastic one .

The canoe trip to the Lake District was a brilliant experience. I learned a lot about canoeing strokes such as the j stroke and the sweep stroke. The views were beautiful, such as, mountains covered in snow and massive lakes that you couldn't see the other side of. The mountains were amazing as I had never been that close to real mountains before.

When we did circus skills my favourite was the "cigar box trick", which is three cigar boxes and you juggle them. Sleeping in a hammock was a weird experience because I was up off the ground and it was really comfortable, which is strange for a camp! Something I never thought I would do was canoeing through ice. The ice wasn't very thick but it chewed up the wooden paddles that other people used. The cycling was very tiring because the hills were hard to cycle up so sometimes I got off and pushed. I was always grateful for a rest.

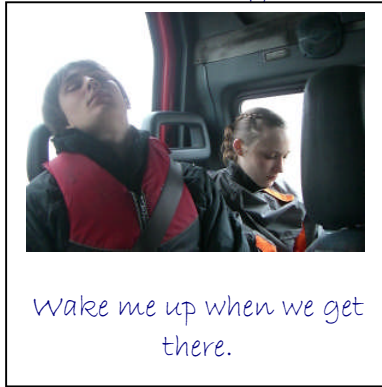
David Cheshire



I'd like to add my thanks to everyone who joined me this year. The weather was spectacular with the contrasting conditions: sun, rain, snow, and bitterly cold mornings and evenings. The water levels were down in places, the mini-bus temperamental but we had an amazing week. So well done to Explorers, (in no particular order,): Ross, Lucy, Greg, James, David, Michael, Katie, William and Leaders: Bob, Louis, Sam as well as, Natalie and Howard. You are a great bunch. See you next year. Nev.

Bassenthwaite, Lake District. Feb Half Term 2010

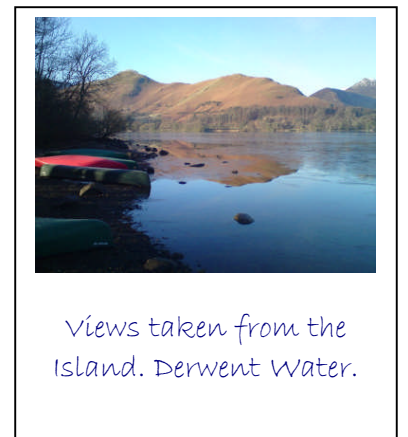
Our Photo Gallery.



Wake me up when we get there.



Bassenthwaite Finish Line.



Views taken from the Island. Derwent Water.



We're off! Rafting Together



Leaving the Island.



Are we all here?



Special thanks go to Louis Pinto for his great photographs.