WHO WE ARE

British Exploring Society is a world class youth development charity with a unique heritage, founded on the belief that challenging experiences can change lives, empowering and equipping young people with the courage, skills, resilience and determination to make the most of their future.

We prepare and take young people on expeditions to remote locations where they face challenges, gain skills and learn about themselves - as well as acquiring knowledge relevant to their lives and to the fragile environments that they explore.

The results are transformative – not just in terms of practical skills and resilience, but in a newfound confidence and self-belief which they carry forward to their future life.

More than this, through their adventure together, our young people forge friendships for life and become part of a unique supportive and continuing community of Young Explorers with shared experiences, values and perspectives on the world.

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The quotes throughout this report have been provided by young people taking part in our programmes in 2019.
WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO - OUR EXPLORERS EXPLAIN

Beth Fowler
Peruvian Amazon

"...My scientific understanding has developed as I’ve been exposed to science that I would not usually be able to be involved with such as dragonfly catching and IDing along with recording the weather patterns in the area using the weather station that I was involved in building."

Eilish Murphy
Indian Himalaya

"...It turned out to be better than I could ever have imagined... I learned many things about living in an extreme environment, and the challenges that come with high altitude. One of the best aspects of the expedition was the people; we developed great friendships and always made sure to look out for each other. The scenery was incredible, I feel very lucky to have had the opportunity to experience it in the way we did. I returned from the expedition with an ambition to build on my expedition skills and competency living in a wilderness environment. It has given me the inspiration and confidence to think about pursuing a career involving expeditions in some way. As a medical student, interacting with the medics was really interesting, it opened my eyes to an aspect of medicine I had not previously thought about.

Overall, the memories, friends and ambitions I have gained from the expedition all combined to make it one of the best experiences of my life."

Illyada Waters
Canadian Yukon

"...I was lucky enough to see the Northern Lights! There’s not a moment where I was happier than when the big green lights danced around the sky... mostly it has helped me gain new perspectives on life, I realise that the world has so much more. It’s surprising how living in the wilderness without a phone can alter your mindset and attitude towards life... my life goals became a lot clearer and I understand myself a lot more now. I know that in the future wherever I go and whatever I am doing this experience will still be holding a positive influence on my mindset. At the start of this expedition I was in the middle of nowhere with a large group of strangers, at the end I was in an amazing place with friends I now have for life."

Lauren Terry
Dangoor Infinity

"This was...a start of something new in my life, a new journey that I didn’t want to end... The thought of not going back and not being around everyone every minute of every day made me sad. My level of confidence has massively increased... in myself (and) for what the future may hold. It has made me rethink everything I wanted to do before. Even though I did miss home a couple of times, being in the middle of nowhere with nothing but silence made me feel so free. Nothing to worry about, nothing to care about, you were just in the moment and it felt so surreal... We live in a world full of technology which pulls young people away from the most beautiful nature and expeditions like these just remind people that we need to get out more, we need to pull away from our daily snapchats and tweets about irrelevant things."

Christina Graham
Landmark

"You honestly learn so many new things and skills you never thought you had, just by being somewhere new in the world for a couple of weeks. I heard about British Exploring Society from Power2 and they thought it was a great opportunity for me... it will definitely help young people... who struggle in school, college and university.

The expedition... made me feel happy, it was quite challenging but that’s what makes it amazing. Looking back... it’s just shown what I can accomplish, for me it takes time but I knew I could do it in the end, especially with the leaders and the group around me. The best thing... is just knowing you’ve got so much support, being in a group with people who haven’t been on adventures like this before and just knowing that you are not in it alone."

Kyle Mills
Dangoor Next Generation

"...We’ve embraced others, ourselves but finally the stunning nature that has submerged us these last three weeks. Seeing the complete wilderness of this beautiful landscape has revealed... the little things (which) can have such a big impact which can be easily ignored when living in a fast-paced city... it has inspired us all to change our ways to conserve the wonderful world we live in. Every time when we think about the seven-hour ascent up Askja, despite the lack of visibility due to the weather conditions, we will always remember the cold nipping our faces, the tire in our legs, the sound of the river flowing down, feeling the fast powerful gales blowing against our bodies and past our red ears, but most importantly the sense of achievement and pride when we finally reached the summit and came back down."
Founded in 1932, British Exploring Society has always sought to evolve with the times. In recent years this has helped us to remove barriers to participation and enable many more young people from more diverse backgrounds to access and benefit from our programmes. But some things haven’t changed.

My first encounter with British Exploring Society was nearly 25 years ago, as a Young Explorer in the summer of 1995 on expedition to the Wrangell St Elias mountains in Alaska. It was a watershed moment in my life. Flashes of the forests, rivers, mountains and glaciers I encountered still regularly and happily pop into my mind.

With the benefit of some adult hindsight, the camaraderie we enjoyed on that expedition was a unique experience. My sharing in this, I believe, has served me well. I should think many, if not all, of my fellow Young Explorers on that expedition would agree. We were 80 young people from all sorts of backgrounds and all parts of the country. We barely knew each other. We were all very different; individuals borne out of our respective families, schools and communities.

But there we were, all together, in this extraordinary place, having to figure out much for ourselves. No parents or teachers. Yes, there were Leaders – to inspire and educate, facilitate and ensure the safety and wellbeing of the Young Explorers. But we were there to make decisions for ourselves, to work successfully as a team, and to own the outcomes of our decisions. And so, we did.

During those six weeks in Alaska we crossed countless glacial streams, mountain torrents and languid channels snaking over wide valley floors. But there was a metaphorical river that many of us crossed as well. For my own part, I was a schoolboy when I arrived in Alaska, and someone rather different on my return home.

British Exploring Society’s model of youth development, for which it has long been recognised, takes young people to remote and wild places, both in the UK and abroad. There, unencumbered by familiarities of home and regardless of how and where fate determined they would begin life, they go through an extraordinary process of change. Just like me, they return home more confident, resilient, respectful of others and ready to take on whatever life throws at them.

When asked many years later if I would become involved in the governance of the Society, it was not a difficult decision to accept. I had gained so much from my own experience. As it turns out, like many things in life, saying “yes” was the easy bit. Over the last few years a great many people have invested extraordinary amounts of time, skill and financial resources to help transform the charity into an efficient and high impact youth development organisation. They have done so in order to enable as many young people from as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible to experience the transformational benefits of the Society’s unique programmes.

Speaking as a colleague, as well as one who all those years ago benefitted from the efforts of our predecessors, I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to all those with whom I have had the pleasure and privilege of working on our shared mission over these past ten years.

Of course, much remains to be done. The journey continues, but for now, please enjoy reading the stories and results from last year’s programmes.

The trustees are pleased to confirm the appointment of Ian Maginnis as Chair from November 2019 to continue to move the charity forward on its journey of improvement and change. More information about his professional and trustee experience may be found on our website.
2019 has been a rewarding year. We’re 3 years into our strategy, called Advance and Ascend, and are making real progress in delivering our charitable aims against a backdrop of great economic and political uncertainty. Every week we talk to and hear about Explorers, Leaders, partners and supporters whose commitment and determination re-charges us. After four happy years of leading this remarkable organisation it is however easy to fall into the trap of believing that our purpose is understood, our values and mission simple and clear. Then I have a conversation which disabuses me of this self-deception. The world of ‘adventure’ ‘exploring’ and the outdoors still brings with it a cartload of cultural baggage - largely the assumption that exploring must be the domain of sporty, privileged white men. It doesn’t have to be. For readers who are new to us - firstly, thank you for picking up this report. I hope you enjoy what you read. I urge you to put aside everything you think you might know about us, or about what an organisation calling itself ‘British Exploring Society’ might do. We do not provide holidays. We are not a ‘club’ for people who love the outdoors. We design and deliver life-defining programmes to support young people towards positive adulthoods. We bring together young people from every area of society. We prioritise those facing significant and multiple disadvantage. Our programmes utilise wild and remote environments, adventure and learning and the generous commitment of about 100 skilled professional volunteer Leaders from a wide range of disciplines. We are an enduring organisation. We have worked with over 11,000 Explorers since we were founded in 1932. We have a model which works. Our Leaders, Explorers and external advisors challenge us as we challenge ourselves to ensure that our programmes have real contemporary punch and relevance. We measure outcomes across all our programmes - but we know from decades of contact with our alumni that the most potent impacts and benefit of what we provide may become visible in a life over years, not months. If you don’t know us well please re-imagine before reading on what a ‘young explorer’ might be like or what experiences they might bring with them when we first meet them. The modern young explorer at British Exploring Society defies expectations about the ‘kind of people’ who do things outdoors - and why. Their achievements are all the more remarkable given the amount of intense learning and personal reflection they agree to take on when they join us. We ask a lot of our Leaders, too. We work with great new and loyal donors and established partners. Charitable business Catch-22 has been an indefatigable and vital partner helping us reach and improve the future for marginalised young people for years. Jubilee Sailing Trust worked with us and the Dangoor family to deliver one of our most ambitious programmes - Dangoor Infinity - this year. The NFA - the UK’s largest independent fostering agency - worked hard to help us achieve all three of our core operational goals this year - great outcomes, recruitment to meet greatest need, and financial stability; our definition of a great partner. You’ll read about other national and local partners in this report. We know we are fortunate in our partners, and we need them all. If you are new to us, I hope knowing this about us helps make more sense of what follows. Thank you again for taking the time to read our Impact Report.

“The modern Young Explorer at British Exploring Society defies expectations about the ‘kind of people’ who do things outdoors.”

“My main highlight would be my 24 hour solo where I spent the night in a hammock and saw loads of monkeys jumping from tree to tree during my dinner.”
EXPLORING IS FOR EVERYONE
“...We attempted to climb a really steep hill, which took us 11 hours! Even though it was really difficult, I was extremely proud of myself for doing it and the view made it worth it.”

Kayleigh Corbin Yukon 2019

“Things changed for me this summer and my life was transformed when I found the inner strength to ignore the negativity of bullies and overcome my self-doubt and anxiety, to put myself forward and join the awe-inspiring, mixed ability, month-long Dangoor Infinity sea and land expedition of self-discovery to Iceland.”

Joshua Hopkins Dangoor Infinity 2019

“To see how far we had come in 3 weeks in terms of fitness was incredible but also seeing how much stronger we were emotionally was unbelievable...”

Charlotte Youlden Yukon 2019
IMPACT

Our Mission is to deliver exceptional learning through exploration with life-defining impact to an increasing number and diversity of young people.

- We create opportunities for Explorers from different backgrounds and with different experiences of adolescence on our programmes.
- We ensure better access to our programmes by recruiting in partnership.
- Our flexible funding support is designed to ensure that those who should have the opportunity, and would benefit most, can do so.
- The profile of Young Explorers varies for each programme. See 'Field Notes' on page 15 for details of the programmes we ran in 2019.

These pages show some of the ways in which we measure our success in meeting our aims.

“I have learned a lot about working with others and being part of a team made up of lots of different people. I learned a lot about how to be on an expedition.”

- Information taken from 235 young people.
- 74% of our Explorer places were partially or fully funded by us.
- 71% of Explorers came through recruitment partnerships with two of our programmes being completely recruited through Catch-22 and Power2.
- 57% of all Explorers came from areas of multiple deprivation (56% of the 57% coming from some of the most deprived areas of England).
- 24% of Explorers identified as coming from BAME backgrounds.
- 13% of Explorers identified that they had a disability or long-term health condition.
The difference we make

My Compass measures the degree to which young people have developed skills during their time with us, and is used as a tool for reflective conversation with Leaders, encouraging Young Explorers to think about what they hope to learn with us to and to set goals for themselves. We use it to help us improve what we do.

We want to empower and equip young people with skills, resilience and determination to make the most of their future.

We collect evidence and feedback from Young Explorers and Leaders throughout our programmes. There are 8 areas of skill and experience we want to help young people progress with most.

On average, we see progress in skills and ability in all areas measured across all our programmes. Rates of progress vary from Explorer to Explorer.

In 2019 the following percentages of Young Explorers indicated increases or significant increases in their abilities in individual areas:

- **67%** of Young Explorers experience increases in ability across all skill areas on average, with an average of 27% experiencing significant increases in ability across all areas.

- **We have experienced a significant positive shift in our impact on Explorers’ assessment of their progress in relation to The world and me, this year. This is an indicator of awareness of our impact on the environment and the environment’s impact on us.**

- **In 2019 the following percentages of Young Explorers indicated increases or significant increases in their abilities in individual areas:**
  - **76%** The world and me
  - **74%** Making decisions that matter
  - **69%** Confidence
  - **67%** People and me
  - **67%** Managing my feelings
  - **66%** Staying on track
  - **64%** Communication
  - **60%** Problem solving

“Picking up and recording all the plastics littered around where we trekked really shocked me into realising how significant our impact as humans is on the world. Even in the middle of nowhere we managed to find masses of waste.”
EXPLORER AWARDS

The Les Morgan Memorial Award

This is presented to a Young Explorer who has shown exceptional initiative or leadership in adverse circumstances on expedition. The Award is made on the recommendation of the expedition Chief Leader and judged by the CEO.

Leah Carrigan from Castlebrae Community High School in Scotland won following her expedition to the Canadian Yukon in 2018.

LEAH CARRIGAN
Canadian Yukon in 2018
The Les Morgan Memorial Award, Winner 2018

“Leah faced the challenges of demanding mountain conditions with stoicism and resilience, tears and laughter. She had a steep learning curve when walking and carrying heavy loads, pitching tents and cooking in the rain. She developed an inner strength and bore the adversity with a quiet smile, always aware of the needs of those around her.”
LEADER AWARDS

The judges of the 2018 Awards were Joe Smith, Director of the Royal Geographical Society, Beth Chapman, Founder Inspire Worldwide and Honor Wilson-Fletcher CEO of British Exploring Society.

They were unable to choose between two outstanding candidates so they selected two winners of the Les Morgan Leader of the Year Award: Taff Raymond and Lydia Mason.

The Les Morgan Leader of the Year Award

The Les Morgan Leader of the Year Award is to identify and celebrate consistent excellence in any area of Leadership, or to recognise an individual who has supported and helped develop their fellow Leaders, providing guidance and direction for them as well as for Explorers in preparation for and throughout their expedition experiences.

GERAINT ‘TAFF’ RAYMOND

The Les Morgan Leader of the Year Award, Winner 2018

“Dependable, hugely capable, and physically unstoppable, but caring for the Explorers and their goals and abilities. Ever ready to ‘just do’ his energy and love for us all is infectious across the whole exped. Mention his name and a smile spreads like wild fire, think of Taff professionally and there’s a knowing nod that’s like a Mexican wave. The explorers all welcomed his input, and secretly enjoyed being stretched. If Taff has your back, you’re safe & good, he’s steadfast and unwavering. Taff’s performance was nothing short of exceptional.”

LYDIA MASON

The Les Morgan Leader of the Year Award, Winner 2018

“Without question, Lydia showed what it meant to be a senior leader on this year’s expedition. Lydia’s professionalism never faltered, and she remained a steadfast sounding board for all of the other leaders on expedition, often fielding challenging questions and providing coaching and development opportunities for the rest of the expedition. Her resilience and professionalism were inspiring to observe, and without her I genuinely believe the expedition would have had a different outcome.”

HANNAH FINDLAY

Watson Emerging Leader of the Year Award in memory of Jean Sinclair, Winner 2018

“We faced a large amount of challenges…many of which I had never dealt with before. Out of everyone I have ever met doing expeditions I can’t think of anybody I would have rather faced these challenges with than Hannah. Her constant support and patience allowed me and the whole Fire to have such a positive experience of our time in the jungle. I can’t think of many people who care about the people they are working with as much as Hannah. Even after four intense and exhausting weeks, Hannah still remained so in tune with the diverse needs of our group and would not let herself go to sleep each night until she was sure each one of our young people was safe and healthy.”
OUR APPROACH

Working with young people from across the UK, and with Leaders from the UK and abroad, our expedition programmes employ a unique and continuous mix of knowledge, adventure and personal development to inspire young people and help them make the most of their futures.

Adventure
We work in some of the most beautiful and remote wilderness areas on the planet. From rainforests to high mountains, each environment has a distinctive balance of flora and fauna and unique features to explore. Our teams (young people and Leaders together) design their own adventures, agreeing between them what and where they want to explore.

They come to group decisions, make mistakes, share challenges and learn to compromise and support one another in an environment which is equally alien to all of them. This unique environment offers young people new opportunities to excel and to understand their own worth.

Knowledge
Our expeditions provide a rare opportunity for learning. We are supported by scientists and media specialists who, like our adventure Leaders and medics, are volunteers. Together they all support our groups to find different ways to engage in each spectacular environment and to understand and share their experiences on their return.

From basecamp management, communications technology and water sampling to star gazing, time-lapse photography and poetry our teams develop a richer understanding of how to engage with and look after the world around them which informs their actions and choices in the future.

Personal Development
Working with young people on the cusp of adulthood, expedition Leaders provide Young Explorers with new and transformative role models for adulthood. Whilst not peers, our Leaders are not teachers or parents either, and they offer young people a greater degree of control and autonomy around their choices and the impact of those choices than they may have had in other environments.

The decisions young people make on expedition with us will impact on others. They will have many chances to lead. Every young person will help shape their expedition. Trained in supporting reflection, our Leaders will encourage young people to think about their own learning journeys. They will help them identify their strengths, build on them, and work with them to set ambitious personal targets for the future.
This table indicates the range, diversity and scale of activities undertaken in the UK and overseas during 2019 in order to deliver our programmes and meet the needs of different groups of young people.

### Expedition Name

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expedition Name</th>
<th>Chief Leader</th>
<th>Leaders</th>
<th>Young Explorers (UK &amp; Overseas)</th>
<th>Leader Induction</th>
<th>Technical Competence</th>
<th>Leader Training</th>
<th>Explorer Induction/Briefing</th>
<th>First Aid (Leaders)</th>
<th>Leader Induction (Trainee Leaders)</th>
<th>Leader Induction Catch Up</th>
<th>Mountain Leader Training</th>
<th>Departure → Return</th>
<th>Adv party departure</th>
<th>TL Debriefing (Trainee Leaders &amp; TL Course Directors)</th>
<th>Next Steps (Leaders, Explorers &amp; Parents)</th>
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<td>17 Jul</td>
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<td>17 Jul</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Soo Redshaw</td>
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<td>10 Aug → 20 Aug</td>
<td>07 Aug</td>
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**Legend:**
- **Leader Induction**: Number of training days
- **Technical Competence**: Number of training days
- **Leader Training**: Number of training days
- **Explorer Induction/Briefing**: Number of training days
- **First Aid (Leaders)**: Number of training days
- **Leader Induction (Trainee Leaders)**: Number of training days
- **Leader Induction Catch Up**: Number of training days
- **Mountain Leader Training**: Number of training days

**UK Training**
- **Number of training days**

**After Expedition**
- **Chief Leader**
- **Past BES expeditions**
- **Young Explorers (UK & Overseas)**
- **Leaders**
- **Leader Induction**
- **Technical Competence**
- **Leader Training**
- **Explorer Induction/Briefing**
- **First Aid (Leaders)**
- **Leader Induction (Trainee Leaders)**
- **Leader Induction Catch Up**
- **Mountain Leader Training**
- **Departure → Return**
- **Adv party departure (Leaders)**
- **TL Debriefing (Trainee Leaders & TL Course Directors)**
- **Next Steps (Leaders, Explorers & Parents)**
Our Leaders are a talented bunch. The skills and lived experience they share with our Young Explorers on expedition provide an illuminating perspective on different potential versions of adult life.

The fact of their volunteering is also very important – and one we emphasise to our Explorers – that their Leaders are with them by choice. The generosity of that donation of time is considerable – and in many cases it is repeated. We have, on record, Leaders who have donated their time on up to 16 expeditions with us.

Here’s a sample of our leaders’ day jobs in 2019:

| Archivist            | Artist            | Conservationist | Countryside Manager | Countryside Ranger | Doctor | Earth Scientist | Ecological Economist | Engineer | Environmental Consultant | Epidemiologist | Ethnologist | Geographer | Geologist | Filmmaker | Head Teacher | Herpetologist | Journalist | Lawyer | Leadership Consultant | Management Consultant | Mathematics Teacher | Mountain Leader | Mountain Rescue Reservist | Operations Manager | Outdoor Instructor | Physics Teacher | Pilot | Primary School Teacher | Professional Trekking Leader | Psychodynamic Counsellor | Physical Education Teacher | Teacher | Queens Dragoon Guard | Science Journalist | Theatre Teacher | Youth Worker | Wildlife Biologist | Wing Walker | Zoologist |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------|-----------------|----------------------|---------|------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------|-----------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|

“Looking back these parts of the trip are where I learnt the most and what had the biggest impact on me as a person.”

![Bar chart showing the number of leaders who have been on 2+ expeditions](chart.png)
“Our work with British Exploring Society is one of my proudest achievements of a 35 year career in social work.”

WHAT SOME OF OUR PARTNERS SAY

Chris Wright
Chief Executive

“Catch22 first started working with British Exploring Society 8 years ago when we jointly arranged for a group of Catch22 young people to sail a Tall Ship from Halmstad in Sweden to Tilbury and through Tower Bridge eventually mooring alongside HMS Belfast. What an induction and what a partnership.

The young people Catch22 work with typically have not benefitted from the things most of us take for granted, a stable home life, decent schooling, a network of supportive family and friends and belief. The partnership has allowed these young people to participate in overseas expeditions where they’ve learnt to test themselves, to trust one another and importantly recognise that they too can achieve great things. Catch22 could not have done this without British Exploring Society. They have brought their huge experience of safely running expeditions designed to bring the best out of participants. Their deep knowledge of personal development has allowed Catch22 young people to access new horizons. Many of those who have gone on to the expedition stage of the programme have progressed into higher education, vocational training and employment and taken with them an increased confidence and ability to navigate their way successfully through life. This is a genuine partnership. It brings together the capability of two very different organisations in pursuit of a common purpose – to unlock the capability that exists in young people. Our work with British Exploring Society is one of my proudest achievements of a 35 year career in social work.”

David Leatherbarrow
Chief Executive

“I am delighted that Outcomes First Group has formed a long-term strategic partnership with British Exploring Society.

We’re also growing our partnership with British Exploring Society in 2020 and we’re even appointing a dedicated leader for adventures.

We are completely focussed on improving outcomes and to building incredible futures by empowering young people. We believe that amazing adventures, such as those offered by British Exploring Society, help young people to see the world and people differently whilst also helping them to see the real impact of human action on the environment. Opportunities like this are rarely made available to children in care or those with special needs - and it is to British Exploring Society’s credit that they can provide the support to potentially vulnerable young people to allow us to help change that. I am therefore delighted to be able to provide these opportunities which are all too often only made available to the privileged. British Exploring should be commended for making this transition to serving a wider group of young people.

I loved the stories I heard back from the young people who took part last year. Their lives have already changed for the better.”

Duncan Souster
CEO Jubilee Sailing Trust

“The Jubilee Sailing Trust was thrilled to work alongside British Exploring Society in a multi-year partnership. We’re delivering a pioneering, ambitious youth development programme to provide land and sea adventure experiences to severely disadvantaged and disabled young adults. With shared beliefs and areas of expertise as organisations, we’ve been able to put in place strong foundations for the venture. Like British Exploring Society, we are passionate about providing young people with rich and stimulating adventure that means they can find the best version of themselves. We believe that through these experiences, people can discover things about themselves and those around them that they never realised before. Ultimately we believe these experiences can positively alter people’s perceptions of themselves and the world around them. This is a unique programme: it wouldn’t have been possible without our two organisations working cohesively to achieve an experience that fulfilled our missions and actively furthered the impact of them. It’s a privilege to work with British Exploring Society and we hope this partnership will continue for many years to come.”
Chief Leader of the Leaders and the progress made by at the energy, enthusiasm and commitment exploring Society expeditions I am still amazed nor of the huge skies above us. After 7 British the base of Askja, a volcano 40 kms to our SE, vastness of the landscape which stretched to until the last few metres. No evidence yet of the journey to get to basecamp, which lay hidden across the moor at 03.00am; the end of a long “Misty conditions enveloped us as we walked Soo Redshaw Explorer.… all the features of a classic expedition; heavy rucksacks, ration packs, flapjacks, field loos - anxiety, laughter, tears, wet, cold, tired, happy; challenged, elated Explorers. Friendships forged and for most a dawning realisation that they can achieve far more than they ever thought possible - provided they have the curiosity and courage to make that first step. Seeing the smiles, hearing the banter, watching treasured moments when you know all the effort is worthwhile and makes a genuine difference. Two moments encapsulate this inclusive expedition for me. On a tricky descent from the summit of Selanderfjell one Explorer support. they descended the mountain hands linked without awkwardness or embarrassment, engrossed in the task of safely getting down, one visually impaired the other non-Visually impaired; a real partnership. The other moment was when an Explorer who had been really struggling to value themselves and their time on expedition, came over to read to me a piece of prose about being able to really see the amazing scenery, having the space and time to think and the comfort of being surrounded by the sound of friends. As some family said on the return of their Explorer from Iceland, “we had wanted a report, but seeing them now confident and proactive, that’s all we need. Thank you.”

Roland Arnison Deputy Chief Leader

On land: “We faced tough conditions in Iceland, with long treks through inhospitable landscape in cold, wet weather. We didn’t get a glimpse of the elusive Huldubólf (Icelandic ‘hidden people’ or elves) amongst the volcanic rocks to cheer us. After days backpacking our young people had rapidly progressed through forming, storming, norming and were now definitely performing. On the way back to basecamp I was especially proud of our Fire (group) as they efficiently decamped, enduring miserable weather with good humour. Two young people had volunteered to get up early to get the stoves going and make breakfast for everyone.

“The practical and emotional support the young people gave to each other was inspiring.” Broken zips, wet clothes, missing gloves and occasional emotional flare-ups were smoothed over by them helping each other. The team packed rucksacks, sharing weight fairly allowing for differing abilities, chose a walk leader, navigator and backstop person, checked we had left no sign of our passing on the wild landscape and set off on the long day’s trek - all without any great input from Leaders. The practical and emotional support the young people gave to each other was inspiring and was key to how we became dream team, a formidable Fire; thrivers rather than mere survivors. I was very proud of them.”

On sea: The two Fires who sailed back on Tenacious from Iceland to Scotland were a tough bunch. After sailing the ship through North Atlantic storms, tackling seasickness and pre-dawn watches, they embraced the opportunities of the expedition. They climbed masts, made films, recorded whales and seabirds and were increasingly imaginative in how they used the ship’s tannoy. My favourite moment was the first time we successfully deployed the manta net to sample the sea for microplastics. The young people threw themselves into the operation and queued up to see what was caught.

Clare Fitchett Deputy Chief Leader

“lt’s cold. really cold! We are all tired from our final trek into basecamp after exploring the beautiful Icelandic landscape for 9 days. Chief Leader is pleased to see us and we head to the Eden Fire camp. Rucksacks are coming off our backs, feet are tired. people are starting to get the trangias (stoves) on to make hot drinks and snacks are out! Morale is high… Then we start to hear the singing… getting louder and louder. We realise it is Sol Fire Heading back into Basecamp… the Explorers are straight up on their feet…some running back towards the Store tent. The singing is really loud now. Sol Fire come into basecamp all together, smiles all round and the look of excitement on all their faces was a delight to watch as they all came together again. The constant bubble of excited chatter they were all trying to speak at once and tell their own stories of their expeditions to each other. This is a highlight and memory that will last for me and encapsulated the whole ethos of British Exploring Society; huge personal development within the individual Fires. They all wanted to share their experiences of adventure and purpose with each other - just as they had done during the sea phase on board ship. Morale is really high now, thoughts of tiredness and sore feet a distance memory… the excited chatter continues.”
My memorable moments are a combination of something special - shared with incredible people. Listening to a pack of wolves howling to the moon, first across the river, then miles downstream, then rather close by, is spine tingling.

“Seeing the world afresh through the eyes of an Explorer makes us look again and feel something new.”

Looking at the narrow ribbon of the Yukon we had canoed, compared to the vast emptiness around it, is daunting.

Turning away from a trail we could only briefly explore was hard, the desire to continue over the rise ahead or around the next bend was so strong.

My best decision as Chief Leader wasn’t the big stuff, dealing with wild fire and the smoke pollution from them, it was creating a quiet space, where Explorers and Leaders could take stock, reflect, or just enjoy a moment of personal space. Enabling everyone to get the best from their experience and providing the support they need is what it was all about.

Without our fantastic Leaders, expeditions would not be the success they are. They give up their time, energy and commitment for the benefit of others, and are the greatest resource we have. A big thank you to all the leaders, medics and our base camp manager on the Yukon expedition. They supported us in moments of uncertainty and adversity. I wish I had had more time to spend with our Fires and their leaders.

Our Explorers make it all special. Expeditions are all about development, learning something new in ourselves, a new skill, or an insight into the world around us. Watching a person growing in confidence before your eyes is stunning. Seeing the world afresh through the eyes of an Explorer, makes us look again and feel something new. Sharing emotions of enthusiasm, joy, fear or pride, personal achievement, hammering a nail in straight, making jam, or going into the wilderness.

It was these simple things that made my experience special.

“Our final adventure out as a Fire was up Rambler Hill. We had... tried this hill on our first... but struggled to make it anywhere close to the top. However, when we tackled it for a second time... we flew up.”
many miles. I knew without doubt that all these threads of the expedition were being held by our Leaders, whose dedication, inspiration and competence had made it all happen.

“There are people at the heart of what we do. Our Young Explorers were amazing: for some the act of arriving was one of astonishing bravery. When they returned, it was clear that each of them in their own way had fulfilled the commitment they had made when they stepped off the beaten track. For me the faith is in people; it is good for us to gather our wildly different lives and walk together on the same path, for a while.”

This was UK Explorers, British Exploring Society’s first ever UK-based expedition. April in Lochaber offers the chance of wintry weather, proper dark, and the prospect of adventure in a landscape strewn with the riches of life, geology and human history. Our Explorers had equipped themselves with some intense training and all the paraphernalia of expedition, and now on this first night of their wilderness journey, were experiencing commitment.

The mountains of Scotland are the cradle of British mountaineering. Everyone who has experienced them will know how much their wilderness can ask of us. They demand a commitment to preparedness, to remembering why we started out, and to each other. Those of us who have explored the mountains will know what we leave them with: self-knowledge, compassion and respect for others, a heightened awareness of our own capability and strength, and maybe something humbler, a sense of our place in our vast world.

My expedition began to wind down around a fire on a beach looking out across the Sound of Arisaig.

Out of sight across the Sound other groups had set up. Back in the mountain wilderness under the peaks of the Mamores, another intrepid Fire (group) was making its last high camp. Once again we were separated by...
Our challenge: using our experience for future generations.

Is it context, country, people or flora and fauna, that provides the British Exploring Society challenge? Travelling amongst the tributaries of the mighty Amazon in ‘deepest, darkest Peru’, the voyage of discovery was different for each of us and twofold for all of us: an exploration of ourselves and an exploration of environment. Both provide challenges but perhaps we find the greatest in ourselves.

The 2019 Expedition to Peru took place amongst growing concerns about climate change, rainforest fires and degradation of the planet. Flights to Iquitos were turned back because of rain whilst our advanced party’s arrival at base camp was met with unseasonably high rivers; base camp was a 200m square of land, buzzing with mosquitoes and surrounded by water. By the end of six weeks, water levels were so low we are unsure if we could get boats to our adventurers or base camp itself.

Against this backdrop, three teams arrived to pit their wits against the jungle, to scrape a habitable living from the forest and explore the extraordinary living environment that echoed all around, night and day.

For some, the very fact of being away from home, of being amongst peers from far beyond their usual friendship groups, was the greatest challenge. For others, outside lavatories, bucket showers and the constant whine of biting insects tested them emotionally and mentally.

For all, the physical exertion of trekking with full packs deep into rainforest, setting up camp and preparing meals that had been planned days in advance, provided a constant test of endurance and resilience.

To say that the expedition was a success would be to underrate it. Success is measured on a case by case basis.

I am confident that the outstanding Leaders who accompanied the Fires, successfully guided the Young Explorers on their own voyages of self-determination.

Our Young Explorers were amazing: as people, as friends, as team members, as individuals. Our Fires trekked to new places and revisited old haunts.

One Fire successfully embarked on one of the longest treks undertaken by British Exploring Society for many years.

Together we collected records of over 300 species, and data on climate, water levels and tree density.

Anecdotally, we saw much less than in 2018. Late flowering caused by high-water levels meant fewer arboreal animals, few big spiders and few insects. Perhaps this is the greatest challenge this and future teams will face: as climate change insidiously shifts our baselines how do we respond?

“To say that the expedition was a success would be to underrate it. Success is measured on a case by case basis.”

The Expedition exposed us to the glorious world of the Amazon and now we must take that experience and use it to ensure future generations can enjoy it too.

Amazon 2019 was about legacy as well as youth development. Taking the lessons learned, the science undertaken, the individual growth achieved, and building on these elements to re-set baselines and raise ambitious aspirations.

Amazon 2019 was about exploring who we are and where we live, so that we can enjoy a richer future.
“I have learnt that the taking part, giving 100% and being a good, reliable team member are what matters, not necessarily the end result.”

James Dyer Chief Leader

We marvelled, we celebrated, we stumbled, we got back up, we laughed, we cried, we screamed, we fought, we hugged, we helped each other, we ate the same food, we told stories, we failed, we won...together.

“We are all on a journey, and this expedition is just another stop along that road.” This was our mantra throughout this year’s expedition. From when we first met in May through to meeting at Next Steps in October all the leaders and young people went on a journey together.

This togetherness allowed people to find themselves in a team, made up of separate elements, including our inspirational team of leaders, but all working together. We tackled huge challenges both physical and emotional, and everyone found support and focus in their individual and group journey.

Everyone was part of the success of the expedition.

There were so many individual moments that illustrate the power of this immersive experience; seeing young people who never thought they could finish, do so; watching young people develop the skills to explore their feelings and emotions; witnessing a young man lift his eyes so I could see them, allowing him to speak eloquently about his experience in front of the whole team; enjoying young people embracing each other’s creativity - allowing less confident Members to shine.

One memory stands out for me as Chief Leader. At the end of the expedition at the final campsite the teams all came together and after everything was packed away, while waiting for the bus to pick everyone up, I looked around and saw everyone involved in something. Some leaders and young people were just chilling, other were involved in small group conversations about music or what food they were going to eat first when they got home, other were throwing a frisbee. There was no arguing, no difference between leaders and young people and everyone was just content. Like one big family relaxing in the living room on a Sunday afternoon.

It was a testament to the power of the experience; the chance they’d had to explore a remote environment, to learn about themselves and others, to cut away from their usual lives and find out who they were, and what they might want to do next, and to look at the choices in front of them.

Now they were all ready for the next challenge.
“...We were all sitting around the campfire looking at shooting stars next to a glimmering lake, listening to the distant wolf howls coming from the huge forest surrounding us.”

Simon White Chief Leader

“I feel great!” – was the shout that woke the rest of our campsite. It was just after 7am. The sun was glistening off the water and clearly something momentous had happened. Looking out over Lake Saimaa watching one of our Explorers rise from the water, the answer became clear. This could be a pivotal moment in his life. A young man had just faced one of humanity’s most visceral fears – encountering, no, embracing deep water. Where would you choose to take on such a challenge? A swimming pool? Possibly a warm sunny beach? Or the deep, dark waters of a lake far from home – on your very first expedition?

A group of us had incredible fun the previous day. At the end of a day’s canoeing, we went swimming in a rainstorm - relishing the power of nature as the rain stung our faces, whilst the cool of the water kept us moving. Unselfconsciously playing games, ducking underwater, doing handstands, jumping, laughing. Thinking of nothing but being completely submerged in the environment, enjoying the moment.

Sat on the bank that same Explorer was obviously uncomfortable. Clearly longing to join in, but something was stopping him. The young man (who at our training week was always in your face wanting to help, wanting to be involved in everything) was now sitting on the bank looking grumpy. Was there something more to his look than just grumpiness?

Once we were out of the water, he walked away. It seemed our fun was almost too much to for him to bear. One of our Leaders noticed this and could not let him walk away alone. The conversation was revealing. He was a young man determined to achieve much, determined to be involved and take every opportunity offered him. Yet somehow, he has ended up on a canoeing expedition and has discovered he fears the water. He has already bought into the idea of challenging himself. But can you at 17 years old show weakness? Can you lose face in front of your peers? Can you go from the leader of the pack to the back of the pack?

Our Leader (Molly) was not willing to leave it at that. She was at his side, supporting, encouraging. But it was not her idea for a swim the following morning. A swim before the rest of the Fire (group) were up! But she said yes anyway. The Leader and I were there at 7.00am convinced he was not coming. Then a quiet voice drifts over to us – ‘Molly will you still come swimming with me?’ She looks at me, the morning is cold, the mist is rising off the water. But she does not hesitate and heads off to get changed.

It ends with a young man so proud, so full of self-worth that he has to shout out how great he is feeling. And those of us who hear him, share his pride.

92,874 PADDLE STROKES
Bruce and Jennie: Our expeditions to Ladakh are always challenging. For most young people this is their first, and daunting, experience of a remote wilderness. The high valleys of the Himalayas feel very alien and one is on constant alert. Altitude is a major concern. A new dynamic this year was our shared leadership of the programme. This allowed us to witness change in our Explorers in a new way.

At April training we met a quiet group of enthusiastic, helpful Explorers who listened to lectures, asked intelligent questions, and joined in.

Jennie: My first thought at UK training was...this is nice. My second was to wonder what they were hiding and what we were going to find out on expedition... (I wasn't due to join them until the second half of the expedition).

Bruce: On arrival in Leh Explorers faced long drop toilets, mud and stick roofs, no clean water, strange food and breathe-taking altitude. This was compensated for by the ever-friendly people we met everywhere.

Over a week, the expedition moved from 3,500m to basecamp in the Zara valley at 4,800m. Camping was now tough and exposed but had clean river water and fabulous mountain views (weather permitting). We were within the range of a family of Tibetan Wild Asses and the stallion would regularly strut around camp, making it clear this was his territory. I was keen to get each Fire (group) on to snow for training and to assess the safety of local glaciers. All have retreated to above 5,100m making them difficult to access. Most Explorers got training on snow and one Fire spent time at the base of a glacier studying it and learning the dangers of travelling on or near it. For five weeks we explored the valleys and nearby mountains, pushing higher each time.

I received a message that an Explorer was sick. They required help to descend to basecamp. Leaders with the casualty and in base camp organised an evacuation: a stretcher-carry from over 5,000m. They encountered high winds, heavy rain and a river crossing. The extraordinarily successful evacuation was down to the efforts of Leaders and Explorers working together as professionals. A UK mountain rescue team would mobilise many more highly trained people for a similar exercise. Everyone involved can feel great pride in their contribution.

Jennie: Joining the expedition I greeted the same faces, albeit a little scruffier, I had met in April - but with a very different dynamic. Leaders enthusiastically told me about our Explorers: "look out for X", "Y has been brilliant", "Z is hilarious"; "X has made pizza on a cow-dung stove". Young people had emerged as leaders within their team; those who were able to motivate; those who were always looking out for the team; those whose humour helped their team to gel; and of course, those relied on to get the stove going and plan the next meal. These changes are not uncommon on expedition. But having missed out on a chunk of the process in between, the differences really hit me. Perhaps a little insight into what friends and family see when their Explorers return to them?

The Himalayas continued to deliver unpredictable conditions to challenge us all. But blessed with good weather on our last day at basecamp and with our efficient and motivated team (Leaders and Explorers) on pack up, the work we needed to do back in Leh was minimal. As a result we were able to enjoy a fantastic last day and meal of Indian and Tibetan specialities together before the journey home.

Ladakh is never predictable but is always worth the journey.

Bruce Richardson & Jennie Manning
Chief Leaders

HIMALAYA 2019

WEATHER STATION
MADE IN BASE CAMP

THE HEIGHT OF BASECAMP FROM SEA-LEVEL

4,800m
6 Trainees undertook our 9 month programme of professional outdoor leadership training this year. During the programme our Trainees are taught about and guided to become reflective practitioners, to look critically at their values, behaviours and actions to help them become better leaders.

In the first 3 modules they looked at what a professional expedition leader does; their personal attributes, what leadership is and what sort of leader they want to be. They looked at how expeditions are planned, risk and benefit assessment and management.

“A number of exceptional candidates have gone on to be selected to lead on expeditions since.”

These modules include practical outdoor experience and a chance to put their leadership and instructing skills to the test while working with our expedition Leaders and Young Explorers.

The next 2 modules help build their technical knowledge and skills, initially on their 16hr Outdoor First Aid course, before heading to North Wales and the National Mountain Centre at Plas Y Brenin. There, working alongside their British Exploring Society course staff and instructors from Plas Y Brenin they undertake the training for their Mountain Leader (Summer) Award, and Water Safety Certificates. During this week they learn the practical and theoretical skills of leading groups in wild environments, and start pulling together their learning so far.

The Trainee Leader Programme is just as experiential as all British Exploring Society expeditions. Module 6 immerses the Trainees in a remote wilderness environment on a British Exploring Society expedition working alongside the expeditions leader team to assist with the delivery of the programme. This might involve helping set up base camps, taking part in reconnaissance before main groups arrive, teaching and instructing groups, leading tasks and de-briefs, starting to put their development into practice and gaining experience at the ‘coal face’ of expedition leadership. This year our Trainees were deployed in this phase to the Peruvian Amazon and to the Indian Himalayas.

On their return they attend a final module where they review their performance and development, and undertake final assessments for their Offsite and Water Safety qualifications.

Having watched and mentored the Trainees through the year it is this final weekend that the Directing Staff look forward to most. This is where we see the real development come to fruition. This year I was impressed by the maturity of our Trainees. They all demonstrated that the experience was something that had changed them and how they look at leadership. They had clearly matured in outlook, decision-making and awareness of their own leadership and how they would want to lead in the future.

The programme has been running since 2014 and coached nearly 80 participants. A number of exceptional candidates have gone on to be selected to lead on expeditions since, whilst others are continuing to build their expedition and outdoor experience. Even if they don’t lead for us, which of course is a fantastic result, others progress to success in their careers in business, medicine, as well as outdoor instructors and teachers.

Supporting our participants to become reflective, confident, and more values-driven in their leadership thinking and practice is a great process to witness and be part of. It pushes the team of delivery staff to keep wanting to improve the programme and to keep delivering at the highest levels.

“Our confidence soared through the roof which meant when I got back home, I was able to do so much more than previously.”
OUR MEMBERS TODAY

Working hard
Depending on the time of year, there are likely to be up to four times more professional volunteers than paid staff delivering our programmes for us. These are our Leaders – a significant chunk of our Membership – who volunteer their time, and expertise. Theirs is an annual donation of over £300k of expertise and tens of thousands of hours.

Having fun
Our Members constantly surprise us. ‘Chris and Chris’ (Newfoundland’69) having already tracked down 62 out of 69 of their colleagues for last summer’s spectacular reunion in the Lake District (see Edition 2 of the Campfire, our Members Magazine, to find out how they achieved this) are now planning another get-together this summer. An enthusiastic team from Norway’79 came to see us armed with photos and a plan: to return to the Lyngen Alps in Norway and their boyhood stomping grounds. They even retraced the route of their ‘long march’.

Being generous
We cannot thank or recognise everyone – but we’d like to at least recognise the sheer scale and range of contributions from our Members this year. David Glyn Hughes provided invaluable and sage IT advice, Jane Park-Weir and Doug Oppenheim continued to serve with commitment and energy on our board, Tori James champions our work in schools and travelled all the way to London from Wales to attend our Dinner with the Explorers fundraiser alongside stalwart James Dyer. Marvin Rees agreed to become our President. Dr Pete Allison introduced us a while ago to a gifted PhD student who completed her 3 year study this year on the impact of our work over decades on the lives of our Explorers (and brought us a slide projector too!) Amina Smith-Gul who became a member just two years ago and has consistently supported us agreed to speak at the Explorers Direct conference, Brittany Harris shared her experiences of setting up her own environmental business, and our Members across the country continue to champion what we do in schools and businesses, and to introduce us to new and invaluable friends (thanks to Alan Gibbs, Bruce Manning and Roy Wood for starters).

Members generously fund our work, fundraise themselves, share ideas and always, always, give us more energy for the work still to be done. They amaze us with their generosity, community spirit and desire to give back.

Our Members in future?
Several thousand strong, from an array of backgrounds but with a single powerful shared experience, set of values and perspectives on the world, our Member community is bristling with capable, independently minded individuals. We think there is enormous potential for Membership to become even more of a force to be reckoned with.

We are convening a group of Members to learn how they think Membership could evolve. We have no doubt there will be surprises – and that our Members will continue to floor us with their generosity and skills.

If you are a Member and would like to learn more or get involved, please contact Sam, our Membership Officer.
PAST EXPEDITIONS

Some things don’t change over the years. Every expedition is full of memories of food (appreciated or yearned for), unexpected discoveries, good and tough days, weather, unshakeable friendships, sore feet, wet socks, amazing Leaders & incredible places. Our archive is where we capture some of those memories every year, alongside our more formal records. Please get in touch if you’d like to know more about our archive.

For a list of all past expeditions please visit the Archive page on our website.
How we work

Our focus is on a small-scale, high-impact work with those who can benefit most.

Our effectiveness comes from enduring expertise developed over 87 years and from a commitment to learn from every programme we deliver.

Our scale comes from the life-long community and economic contribution of our Members and from the social action and volunteering which participants undertake as part of their programme with us.

Our young people increasingly come from trusted partners who introduce us to, and continue to support, young people who most need access to our programmes. The main beneficiaries of the charity’s work are young people between the ages of 14 and 24.

Notable activities and achievements in 2018/19

In 2018/19 the charity successfully delivered 8 programmes to build on specific commitments made in its five-year strategy, ‘Advance and Ascend’.

The charity continued to increase the diversity and inclusion of participation on its programmes and implemented a further new programme, UK Explorers, to improve the accessibility of its work. This year saw the full delivery of the Dangoor Infinity Programme, bringing together disabled and non-disabled explorers on a sea and land programme through a partnership with Jubilee Sailing Trust. The charity also delivered a commitment to commission and implement a new CRM and website.

About this year

In the year to October 2019, the charity delivered 8 youth development programmes which included 6 overseas expeditions, a Trainee Leader programme and our first UK expedition. The charity continues to support some of the UK’s most vulnerable young people through its work. We are an enduring organisation. We have been in operation for over 8 decades – long enough to witness, document and adapt to significant changes in the needs and aspirations of 11,000 young people – and to respond to significant shifts in approaches to parenting, education and in public attitudes towards challenge and risk. Using the same core programme approach, we know that we can continue to respond through our work to deliver life-defining benefits to a diverse range of young people. Working with young people with very diverse experiences of life has provided infinite rewards for us and driven rapid change in the organisation. We need to ensure that those changes are embedded, sustainable and manageable.

Excerpts from the Annual Report of Council

President

Marvin Rees (Appointed 12th August 2019)

Members of our Council

Doug Oppenheim (Chairman)
Rupert Eastwood (Treasurer)
Joanna Wolstenholme
Susan Redshaw
Deidre Sorenson (Resigned 26th June 2019)
Jane Park-Weir
Michael Blakey
Rahul Moodgal (Joined 23rd July 2019)
Carolyn Young
John Hartz (Resigned 29th November 2018)
Patrick Van Daele
Jon Gisby
Ian Maginnis (Appointed 10th August 2019)
Toby Salt (Joined 27th Sept 18; Resigned 26th June 19 to become Advisor to the Board)

President
the long term. We are now working against a backdrop of increasing child and youth poverty and reduced funding for the poorest households and communities – and where there is reducing funding for the services that support them, including in school. Continuing to tackle these external challenges requires us to build capacity in key areas of the organisation, and that commitment is reflected in these accounts.

We continue to diversify and increase our fundraising.

Our income has increased this year from £1,576k to £1,762k. We’re diversifying our income for a more secure future – with a strategy focused on slowly growing our major donor programme, corporate and regular giving alongside our Trusts and Foundations. This offsets the drop in income from Explorers as we reach out to young people who need our support to participate. We have established a dynamic, active Development Board to support our fundraising.

The in-kind contribution of our Leaders continues to provide one of the single largest donations to the charity. Our volunteers contributed over £315,000 in time in 2019. We are working more closely with our Members.

We are proud to have appointed a new President, Marvin Rees, from our membership. Rees was brought up in very modest circumstances and went on expedition with us. He later completed the World Fellows Program at Yale University.

“T came back from expedition knowing I’d done something of note, something not many people had done. It was life defining for me. I went on to academic success and now I am the Mayor of Bristol, my home city.” Marvin Rees, President of British Exploring Society

### Expeditions

#### Dangoor Infinity – Land and Sea

Available to disabled and non-disabled young people experiencing significant disadvantage referred by partner organisations who meet the application criteria for this programme. Supported by the Dangoor family, delivered by British Exploring Society and Jubilee Sailing Trust together. The month-long programme involving a sail from Scotland to Iceland and expedition activities in North East Iceland.

#### Dangoor Next Generation – Iceland

Generously supported by the Dangoor family, and by our partnership with Catch-22, available to a diverse group of 16–21-year-olds who are referred from different services within Catch-22 with keyworkers or support workers who support their applications to join the programme. Catch-22 is a not for profit business which focuses on building resilience and aspiration in marginalised or disadvantaged communities.

#### Landmark - Finland

Available to young people referred by our Landmark programme partners, with a particular focus on reaching young people leaving care. As this programme is designed to reach severely marginalised young people, our continuous focus on providing reliable adult role models and positive affirmation in response to challenging learning experiences is even more essential. Supported by funders, including the Sir John Cass’s Foundation.

#### UK Explorers - Scotland

Available to 14 – 16 year olds in year 10 referred to the programme through our partnership with participating schools. This programme has been supported generously by the Peter Cundill Foundation.

The UK Explorers expedition lasts from 9 to 12 days and operated in and around the Speen Bridge area, NE of Fort William and the wild and remote Ardnish peninsula. Our delivery partner for the programme is Scottish charity Venture Trust.

#### Peruvian Amazon

Available to any young person meeting our general application criteria and via partner referrals. A group of Explorers and Trainee Leaders joined this programme which included 3 or 5 weeks in the Amazon. British Exploring Society continues to operate in the Pacaya-Samiria National reserve in North eastern Peru.

#### Yukon

Available to any young person meeting our general application criteria and via partner referrals. A group of Explorers from all over the UK and Bahrain joined this programme which included 3 and 5-week itineraries in Yukon in Canada.

#### Indian Himalayas

Available to any young person meeting our general application criteria and via partner referrals. A group of Explorers and Trainee Leaders from all over the UK joined this programme which included a 5-week only programme in the Himalayas with a Base Camp at 4800m in the Zara Valley, Ladakh.

### Pre and Post-Expedition preparation, reflection and review

All British Exploring Society programmes include UK training and evaluation weekends. In 2019 our Expeditions were followed by a UK ‘Next Steps’ event in London at Kensington Aldridge Academy with facilitation sessions, certification, and celebration presentations with our new President, Marvin Rees, along with families and friends.

### Trainee Leader Programme

6 Trainee Leaders enrolled and took part in Expedition programmes to the Amazon and Himalayas, as well as in pre- and post-overseas phase training as part of the British Exploring Society TL programme.

### Training activities

In 2019 we delivered 1,559 training days.
Improving our training
We have developed more and better training for staff and volunteers in the last year:
- More technical training.
- Mental health first aid for all Leaders.
- More Explorers undertaking longer UK programmes.
- Training on the use of our assessment tools and coaching; and
- The introduction of more professional skills into our Trainee Leader programme to support progression into employment in the outdoors.

Financial Review; Highlights
British Exploring Society generated £1,762,053 of income (2018: £1,576,049). The increase was primarily as a result of increased restricted funds received for programmes in partnership.

The total cost of expeditions amounted to £1,599,990 (2018: £1,360,928). The increase was mainly due to expanding programmes delivered in partnership.

We awarded £166,514 grants to individuals, mainly delivered by our Ambassador Programme (2018: £176,270). This was funded through restricted bursaries.

There was net expenditure on the unrestricted, restricted and endowment funds of £62,093 (2018: £53,939 net expenditure). The Council restricted and endowment funds of £62,093. There was net expenditure on the unrestricted, programme (2018: £176,270). This was funded mainly delivered by our Ambassador

Reserves Policy
The minimum amount to be designated as Reserves is designed to be enough to maintain ongoing operations and programmes for a set period. The target minimum is equal to 3 months of average operating costs. The maximum level of the Reserves is equal to 6 months operating costs.

The balance held as unrestricted funds at 31st October 2019 was £171,766 of which £107,899 are regarded as free reserves, after allowing for funds tied up in tangible fixed assets.

The balance held as restricted and endowment funds at 31st October 2019 was £205,811.

Statement of Public Benefit
The trustees of British Exploring Society have taken note of their responsibilities to deliver public benefit and are confident of the impact of British Exploring Society in the following areas:
- The advancement of education – through the development of individual capabilities, competencies, skills and understanding;
- The relief of those in need because of disadvantage – through specific programmes to provide progression opportunities for young people most at risk in society;
- The advancement of community development – through the active promotion of volunteering and civic responsibility;
- The advancement of Science – through research, and independent research projects; and
- The advancement of environmental protection – through the promotion and better understanding of sustainable development and biodiversity.

Statement of responsibility in relation to fundraising
British Exploring Society takes its duties in relation to fundraising under Data Privacy and Protection regulation and per The Code of Fundraising Practice seriously. The Data Protection and Privacy Policy was reviewed and revised alongside its Ethical Fundraising and Partnerships Policy in June 2019. The Code of Fundraising Practice outlines the standards expected of all charitable fundraising organisations across the UK. Those standards were developed by the fundraising community through the work of the Institute of Fundraising (IoF) and Public Fundraising Association (PFRA). Standards in fundraising at British Exploring Society (as executed by staff, and as supported by the Development Board) are monitored on behalf of Council by the Finance Committee.

We rely on fundraising received as:
- Restricted and unrestricted donations from Individuals or Members;
- Corporate donations;
- Sponsorship;
- Legacy or donating in memory; and
- Trusts and Foundation giving.

Our fundraising activities are delivered by our in-house fundraising team, who are obliged to observe our policies and the highest standards in fundraising. The Head of our in-house fundraising team and our Trusts Manager are Members of the Institute of Fundraising.

We received no complaints in relation to fundraising activities in the 2018/19 financial year. Finance Committee had no cause to suspect that someone we engage with through our fundraising activity is lacking capacity or is in vulnerable circumstances, we will take steps to terminate any contract or commitment in a way which seeks to protect that person and their dignity, having due regard for any desire they have expressed to support British Exploring Society.

Members’ Liability
British Exploring Society is a company limited by guarantee. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member.

Going Concern
The Financial Statements have been prepared on a going concern basis as the Members of Council believe that no material uncertainties exist. The budgeted income and expenditure is sufficient with the level of reserves for the charity to be able to continue as a going concern.
Independent Auditor’s report

On 6th February 2020 Stephen Tanner, the Senior Statutory Auditor, signed for and on behalf of Kreston Reeves LLP an unqualified audit report on the statutory accounts of British Exploring Society for the year ended 31st October 2019.

Stephen Tanner BSc(Econ) FCA, Senior Statutory Auditor
For and on behalf of Kreston Reeves LLP,
Statutory Auditor
Third Floor
24 Chiswell Street
London
EC1Y 4YX

Our full Financial Statements are available on our website, on the Charity Commission Website and from Companies House.
## Fixed Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note</th>
<th>Unrestricted Funds (£)</th>
<th>Restricted Funds (£)</th>
<th>Endowment Funds (£)</th>
<th>Total 2019 (£)</th>
<th>Total 2018 (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>63,867</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>63,867</td>
<td>7,384</td>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Current Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unrestricted Funds (£)</th>
<th>Restricted Funds (£)</th>
<th>Endowment Funds (£)</th>
<th>Total 2019 (£)</th>
<th>Total 2018 (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash at bank and in hand</td>
<td>165,254</td>
<td>158,345</td>
<td>47,466</td>
<td>371,065</td>
<td>520,362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debtors</td>
<td>132,895</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>132,895</td>
<td>99,886</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total current assets</td>
<td>298,149</td>
<td>158,345</td>
<td>47,466</td>
<td>503,960</td>
<td>620,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</td>
<td>(190,250)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>(190,250)</td>
<td>(187,962)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net current assets</td>
<td>107,899</td>
<td>158,345</td>
<td>47,466</td>
<td>313,710</td>
<td>432,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net assets</td>
<td>171,766</td>
<td>158,345</td>
<td>47,466</td>
<td>377,577</td>
<td>439,670</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## The Funds of the Charity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Endowment funds</th>
<th>Restricted income funds</th>
<th>Unrestricted income funds</th>
<th>Total charity funds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>158,345</td>
<td>47,466</td>
<td>171,766</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31st October 2019

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31st October 2019...
Once again, our warmest wishes to the families again of:
Adrian Stanford, Doreen Welchman, Jeremy Davies,
Dr. Terry Adams

Our thanks to the relatives who have chosen to continue to support more Young People taking part in our programmes each year, in particular thanks to the families of:
Jean Sinclair, Tim Ward-Wilson, Micheal Garvey, Les Morgan,
Alexander Eastwood, A Croft

Individuals and Members
Our Members remain at the heart of what we do. We are particularly grateful to those who have donated or got in touch through our new campaigns. A special thanks goes to those who have joined as Patrons or Explorer Club Members. They are making it possible for future generations of young people to take part in our programmes through their regular donations.

THANK YOU ALL

“I found it refreshing to see the joy of others, as this reminded me of how I felt the first time I... completed a river crossing or summited a mountain.”

“We are delighted to help young people leaving care develop confidence, resilience and life skills by supporting the Epic Adventure [now Landmark] Programme with a grant from the Mercers’ Charitable Foundation. This work aligns closely with our own programme to create positive change in young people, giving them the chance to live a fulfilling life now and in the future.”

Liz Rayment-Pickard, Head of Young People & Education, The Mercers’ Company

£20,000
RAISED THROUGH OUR DECEMBER 2019 BIG GIVE
PATRONS

CHARITIES, TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS

OUR PROGRAMME PARTNERS

“I learned not to underestimate myself and the abilities I have the potential to develop.”

COMPANIES

OTHER KIND SUPPORTERS

OUR PRESIDENT
Martin Rees

OUR CHAIR
Doug Oppenheim

OUR TRUSTEES

OUR LEADERS
Thanks to our 86 Volunteer Leaders, whose combined talent and generosity make our expeditions possible

OUR FELLOWS

OUR DEVELOPMENT BOARD

SCHOOLS

IMAGE CREDITS

“I learned not to underestimate myself and the abilities I have the potential to develop.”

This was… a start of something new in my life, a new journey that I didn’t want to end. From land to sea, every moment, every second was worth it.”

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This Impact Report is also available as a PDF on our website.

Registered Charity 802196