“The only low point I can think of was being bitten by hundreds of mosquitos”
Amina Smith-Gul on her expedition last summer to the Amazon

“I think I’m grateful overall for having subconsciously blanked out chicken supreme from most of the last 40 years”
Former Young Explorer from our Norway ‘79 expedition
WELCOME TO THE CAMPFIRE

Since 1932 over 11,000 Young Explorers and Leaders have participated in expeditions with us around the world. Our members are a diverse group of people. You are a collective of individuals who, through your adventures together, have forged friendships for life and become part of a unique community with shared experiences, values and perspectives on the world.

With this magazine, we want to provide a community space for members, celebrating members, with content from members. We want to encourage you to share your adventures, past, current and future.

We also want to keep you up to date with what’s happening here, as many of you have told us you have a continued interest long after your expedition.

We hope you enjoy your first edition of The Campfire.

Honor Wilson-Fletcher
CEO British Exploring Society

What’s in your magazine

Over the page you can read about what’s been happening recently at British Exploring Society. And on page eight, we ask for your views on what membership with us means to you.

You’re introduced to Amina on page four, an inspirational young woman who visited the Amazon rainforest last year, who shares details of her experience.

On page five you can meet our most recent Chief Leader to the Yukon, Bruce Manning, as he shares some of his experiences from expeditions over the last decade.

On page seven you can watch the videos our talented Media Leaders produced from our expeditions to the Peruvian Amazon, the Indian Himalaya and the Canadian Yukon, last summer.

You’ll find information on page nine about the retail discounts you’re entitled to as British Exploring Society member, and if you’re up for a challenge this summer than look no further than page 10.

On page six we say thanks to you, our members. Some of you recently responded to our first fundraising campaign and offered some excellent words of advice and encouragement for our Young Explorers soon to depart on expedition, and we wanted to share some excerpts from these with you.

On page 11, you can find out about how some of you have been busy organising reunion events. Members from Newfoundland’69 are planning a get-together this summer in the lake district, a whopping half-century on from their expedition. Members from Norway’79 are similarly planning a reunion, but are looking to venture back to the location they visited on expedition.
We're finally setting sail. How many of you are sailors as well as hikers and climbers?

We are delivering, in partnership with Jubilee Sailing Trust, one of the most ambitious youth development programmes in the world; a multi-year expedition programme for disabled and non-disabled Young Explorers. Combined with Jubilee Sailing Trust, we have over 125 years' experience in creating and delivering personal development through adventure – Jubilee Sailing Trust at sea, and us in deserts, mountains, jungles and the arctic. Both of us understand the value that comes from offering young people genuinely challenging experiences in new and demanding environments.

Last November, 28 courageous Young Explorers (comprising of 16-18-year olds, non-disabled and disabled students from Westminster academy and students from Bristol City Council, VICTA & REACH) embarked on an educational land and sea pilot expedition ahead of the Infinity programme launch this summer. The first part of the expedition began on land with us leading the young people across Dartmoor. They spent three nights and four days on land before joining Jubilee Sailing Trust aboard one of their unique tall ships SV Tenacious at Poole, Dorset and embarked on a six-day challenge at sea.

Sir Ben Ainsle, Olympic sailor and supporter of British Exploring Society, had this to say about Infinity.

“I started sailing in a duffle coat and wellies as a child. I couldn’t have known then what my adult life was going to be like. You never know what can happen. Infinity offers an incredible opportunity for young people to discover a real taste for adventure as well as a life-changing challenge that can influence their entire future. Infinity will define lives - like sailing as a child transformed mine.”

Sir Ben Ainsle, Olympic sailor

Sticking to the theme of firsts, our Expedition team have been hard at work planning for our first ever UK based expedition. The programme will take 40 young people on an expedition in the Scottish Highlands in the Spring, and another 40 in the Autumn.

The UK Explorers programme is designed to be an accessible first step into an expedition environment. Following feedback from our Leaders and in pursuit of our strategy for broader inclusion, the programme is predominately aimed at young people aged 14-17 from schools and youth organisations. This nine-day programme will offer young people an opportunity to gain further experience in the outdoors and valuable training for those who might want to join one of our international expeditions in the future.

Did you take part on Expeditionary year in 2017/2018? If so, our thanks go out to you as your experience and feedback helped shape UK Explorers.
Amina, 20, faced a series of serious challenges in her young life, which left her homeless and contemplating suicide. With support from her youth centre, Amina, from South London, joined us through our Ambassador Explorer programme.

The programme works with school groups and partners to make taking part in expeditions possible for those from disadvantaged communities.

Last summer Amina visited the Peruvian Amazon with us and now joins the thousands of other members that make up the core of British Exploring Society, like you.

**Q&A**

**What motivated you to go on an expedition?**

Before I left for the Amazon there was lots of chaos in my life; I wasn't organised, and I wasn't clear about what my next steps would be. Life was happening, but I felt like I didn't have control. I thought I might as well get the opportunity again.

**What was your favourite moment?**

My happiest moment was watching the sunrise, surrounded by trees, animals, the seabed and the marvels of nature.

**And your low point?**

I didn't have many low points because I didn't have time to think as I was constantly doing something. The only low point I can think of was being bitten by hundreds of mosquitoes!

**What did you learn?**

I learned mapping skills, pacing and mammal traps, camera traps and lots of things about the Amazon such as the different canopies and the animals that live in the Jungle.

**What have you taken away from the experience?**

When I got back from the Amazon, I realised how much calmer I am and how much resilience I have. I am more driven and focused. I know to keep on pushing despite not knowing where I am going. I realised that the destination is always pleasing despite not knowing where you will end up.

I feel more encouraged about life. I recognised the skills I have now, like emotional intelligence. I can contextualise things and use effective communication skills when dealing with others.

**What does the future hold for you?**

I want to keep developing myself and focus on my goals. I will start my own business shortly; I want to work in sports and mental health and wellbeing. I would like to combine these three to find different ways to help others.

**Any last thoughts?**

This experience was life-changing for me. I hope more people support this programme because I think so many opportunities can be created and so many young people could change their lives for the better. I am a better person because of it. I have realised that life is about choices and I am in control of my own life and destiny.

"I realised that the destination is always pleasing despite not knowing where you will end up. I feel more encouraged about life."
An interview with Bruce Manning, Yukon Chief Leader 2018

Bruce is one of our longest standing expedition leaders, having led with us for over a decade. He is an exceptional Chief Leader and a great champion of our work, and his support for, and commitment to, our cause is admirable and unwavering. And with eight expeditions under his belt, he has plenty of material and experience to draw from to help him answer our questions.

Q&A

What motivated you to go on an expedition?

I've climbed and mountaineered on and off all my life enjoying the sharing of adventure and wild places with like-minded people. This love began at school thanks assent of a North facing glacier in Zanskar. I was leading a rope with four Explorers and a second group was led by a leader now in Antarctica. As we finally rounded this very remote summit we were more than surprised to meet a group of Trainee Leaders coming up from the South side.

What was your favourite moment?

There are many moments that I could choose that were my “favourite” in different ways. I remember making a challenging ascent of a North facing glacier in Zanskar. I was leading a rope with four Explorers and a second group was led by a leader now in Antarctica. As we finally rounded this very remote summit we were more than surprised to meet a group of Trainee Leaders coming up from the South side.

What have you taken away from the experience?

Over several years I have seen first-hand that we can and do make a huge difference to the young people we set out to help. This is an immediate effect but it is also important to allow it to continue over future decades. I am still contacted by Explorers from more than ten years ago asking for advice and references. Being retired from my professional life I am happy to help and it continues to bolster my sense of worth.

What does the future hold for you?

I am not ready to hang up my boots just yet. Nevertheless, I am very aware that I cannot carry on for ever and that whilst I take senior roles such as Chief Leader on expeditions I may be preventing younger people from stepping forward. I will be happy to take more supporting roles and to encourage new blood.

Any last thoughts?

British Exploring has meant a lot to me over several years and I hope to continue my involvement for many more. Being made a Fellow last year was a great honour and I now need to discover how best to support the Society as my physical involvement with expeditions wanes.

“Over several years I have seen first-hand that we can and do make a huge difference to the young people we set out to help.”

“An expedition can be a powder keg of emotions and fears.”

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Any last thoughts?

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THE DIFFERENCE YOU MAKE

We recently sent out our first fundraising campaign to you, our members, and received some generous responses. As a charity, we are dependent on the goodwill and generosity of our members and supporters. In addition to the donations we received, all of which will help start more Young Explorers on their journey, many of you took the time to compose inspirational messages of encouragement for 2019’s Explorers.

“Take every opportunity that is offered to you and make the most of what will be one of the best experiences of your life.”
Unknown (if this was you then please let us know)

These messages will help build their confidence as they embark on their own journeys. We wanted to share some of our favourite quotes from you, as they are too good not to.

Thank you to all of you who responded to our fundraising campaign and sent back messages. Departing on expedition can be a daunting time for young people but your words of encouragement and wisdom will help settle those butterflies.

“We have the inner strength to overcome these.”
Explorer, Arctic Scandinavia’61

“This experience is life-enriching – making you realise how far you can push yourself (a lot further than you think).”
Explorer, Arctic Sweden’66

“There will be physical and emotional challenges to face and you will find that you have the inner strength to overcome these.”
Explorer, Arctic Scandinavia’61

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Unknown (if this was you then please let us know)
EXPEDITION VIDEOS

This magazine, like British Exploring Society, is built on expedition stories, so we wanted to showcase this year’s expedition videos created by our excellent media leaders.

Do you have a video from your old expedition? We'd love to see it. Send your video to membership@britishexploring.org and perhaps it could feature in a future edition.

The Peruvian Amazon
Producer/Editor: Emma Brennard
Expedition: Amazon 2018
Position: Media Leader

Emma is a journalist, photographer & documentary filmmaker with a passion for wildlife conservation and outdoor education. She has a PhD in Environmental Chemistry and since graduating has worked in science communication across a range of media platforms.

Expedition highlight: Watching the excitement on the Explorers faces when they found a sloth in their latrine.

Next Adventure: Emma has 96 of the 214 Wainwrights left to summit, so will be working her way through them this year. She’s also keen to see ptarmigans in Scotland this year with their winter plumage.

The Indian Himalaya
Producer/Editor: Sian Lewis
Expedition: Himalaya 2018
Position: Media Leader

Sian is an award-winning travel and outdoors journalist who writes for titles including The Independent, Evening Standard, BBC Countryfile magazine and Coast. She is also the editor of Active Traveller magazine and author of The Girl Outdoors.

Expedition highlight: Living and working as part of one big team, getting to experience the highs and lows with an amazing, supportive group of Leaders and Young Explorers.

Next Adventure: Sian has recently been trekking through Chiles Atacama Desert and next hopes to cycle across parts of Japan.

The Canadian Yukon
Producer/Editor: Ben Sullivan
Expedition: Yukon 2018
Position: Media Leader

Ben is a professional science and technology journalist, having worked internationally for several magazines and newspapers since graduating in journalism from University College Falmouth in 2011.

Expedition highlight: Watching the sunrise at 4am from the top of a mountain - you could tell just how special the moment was from the look on all the Young Explorers faces.

Next Adventure: Ben hopes to be heading off to canoe in the Nordics, and is returning as a leader again this summer, this time heading to the Himalaya.
You, our members, are of different ages and from different backgrounds. However, since participating on expedition with us, you have become part of a community filled with other like-minded volunteers who share life-changing personal experiences.

One of our aims in our five-year strategy ‘Advance and Ascend’ is to ‘Foster our network of passionate, committed and technically-able volunteers and members’. So, we would like to invite you to join us around the campfire and consider how you might like to get involved.

Do you often find yourself reminiscing about your expedition experience – about the places you visited, the friendships you made or the things you learned? Perhaps you have considered advocating on our behalf, representing us at school events, helping us find the next generation of Young Explorers? Or maybe you are an athlete interested in marathons or triathlons – would you consider fundraising on our behalf? Whether it’s an interest in organising a reunion, advocating on our behalf, fundraising for us, or you just want to stay in touch, we would like to open the door to you and hear your thoughts and ideas.

We would like membership with us to be special and of value to you. We want ours to be a community where you can come together, help one another and see the benefit of being involved. We appreciate our members active involvement with us, whether you went on expedition three or 30 years ago.

And of course, we would love to hear your thoughts on your first members magazine; what you’ve enjoyed, what you haven’t enjoyed, what you’d like to see more of? Our CEO Honor has handed over a small number of our newly branded mugs to give away, so share your thoughts to be in with a chance of winning one.
MEMBER DISCOUNTS

We are excited to announce Páramo as our official kit partner for the third season in a row. Thanks to the continued partnership, you can benefit from heavily reduced prices across the whole range of Páramo products. With the discount offered to you, their prices work out to be roughly 40% off retail price, which is a significant saving for such high-quality kit. Below you will find a list of prices and can make an order by calling 0189 278 6446.

And as a reminder, as a member of British Exploring Society you are entitled to discounts at several other outdoor clothing and equipment suppliers, including Cotswold Outdoors, Snow+Rock and Runners World. Visit our website to see what discounts are available to you, and contact us if you would like us to send you details on how to access them.

Paramo discounts  More discounts
Welcome to our challenge for this summer!

We’ve got you covered. We have a limited number of places available for this year’s RideLondon 100-mile route around central London and Surrey, taking place 4th August.

Your journey will commence at the Olympic park, then follows a 100-mile route on closed roads through the capital and into Surrey’s stunning countryside. You’ll take in some of London’s most iconic landmarks, before finishing on The Mall by Buckingham Palace.

We ask that you pledge to raise £450 on our behalf, and there is a £25 registration fee to secure your place. Your pledge will help support some of the most disadvantaged young people on the margins of society, to have an expedition experience like yours. This includes young people in foster care, leaving care, not in education or employment, those with behavioural, physical, or mental health issues, and young people with disabilities.

We would support you with a fundraising pack, which would include some promotional posters, a fundraising guide offering inspiration and proven fundraising ideas to help you meet your pledge, as well as a British Exploring Society branded technical t-shirt.

If you would like to take part in this year’s event, contact Sam, our Membership Officer, or visit our website to find out more information.

Find out more | Apply
A CLASSIC RECIPE

We love it when we hear from you about your adventures since expedition, especially when it involves one another.

From time to time we learn about reunion events you are planning, such as the one Newfoundland’69 members are arranging. They are hosting an impressive get-together this summer in the Lake District, a whopping half-century after their expedition.

Chris Thorp and Chris Grace have been taking the lead on this reunion and have worked tirelessly, having almost unanimous interest in people wanting to attend, and the numbers have just grown and grown. They’ve managed to get in touch with 72 members, with 37 planning to attend.

“We can’t wait to hear more and if any of you are going along, perhaps you can give us an update about how it’s gone?”

Some go even further afield. Members from Norway’79 are currently planning a return to the Lygen Alps and their old stomping grounds. We have been fortunate enough to be involved in some of the conversations about this reunion, and it’s been amazing to witness their reminiscences. A particular highlight was on the topic of food (of course!), after one of the members managed to find and share a copy of the rations list they took on their original expedition.

“*What a tremendous reminder of our rations. I had forgotten the ubiquity of the oxo cube.*

One commented “What a tremendous reminder of our rations; I had forgotten the ubiquity of the Oxo cube. Conversely, I think I’m grateful overall for having subconsciously blanked out chicken supreme from most of the last 40 years. I suspect I might not be alone in that regard.”

Suffice it to say, we don’t think the group were keen on replicating their original rations for the reunion trip! And if you’re going on this trip, likewise, we’d love to hear more from you.
You’ve witnessed first-hand how transformational an experience an expedition with us can be. You shared amazing sights, learned about yourself and may have made friends for life. Perhaps you know someone who could benefit from the same experience — a child, sibling, niece or nephew maybe? Now’s your chance to share the experience.

Places are now available on our summer 2020 expeditions to the mountaineous Indian Himalaya and the wilds of the Canadian Yukon.

If you know someone who might be interested in starting their own journey, tell them to get in touch with us or visit our website, where they can find out more information and apply.