

# WELCOME

## to FIELDNEWS

Certainly no rest for the Fieldskills team over the last few months. An ever expanding training portfolio in the UK, the successful completion of exciting rafting and climbing trips in Borneo and a project to bring first aid training and defibrillators to remote Borneo lodges are keeping all of us on our toes. Also with all our clients preparing to head off on expedition its an exciting time. Best of luck to everyone - let us know how it all goes... *Dom*



## Pushing the

## B O U N D A R I E S

## in Borneo

With a range of trips over the last three months our Borneo team has continued to push the boundaries of remote adventure in Borneo.



In the last Fieldnews we described the recce trip for a new **rafting** journey and we are delighted to be able to say that a team of British ladies from the charity 'Journey of a Lifetime' became the first UK based team to descend the Kuamut river in the Malaysian state of Sabah, North Borneo.

It being only the second time that the river had been run, the team faced conditions and difficulties that could not be accurately predicted.

A log-jam and 10 metre waterfall had to be overcome as well as wild camping in sites where elephant and Leopard footprints were evident, not for the feint hearted!

The final day of the expedition proved to be the most challenging. A ten-hour paddle on mostly flat water was followed by a nighttime transfer by power boat for 6 hours along the Kinabatangan river, a river famed for its crocodiles, through a huge storm. The day lasted from 06.00 until 02.30 the next day and the team managed it all with smiles and songs!

This trip was followed up with the arrival of a **mountain bike** journalist from Australia. He was sponsored by Malaysian Tourism to visit the Fieldskills team and spend a few days riding with us, we did our best to break him but these Aussies are pretty hardy characters!

We did lots of breakneck downhill, technical single track and a beautiful evening ride in the rain. The heat beat us on the last day as we attempted a ride on the coastal plain in the heat of the midday sun but it was a good opportunity for him to learn what it is like riding here in all conditions. We await his articles in the Australian mountain biking press - a great launch for our all-new mountain biking itineraries. Big trips, expedition rides and short holidays. We intend to provide the sort of riding that mountain bikers crave; off-road excitement.

Finally our **rock climbing** revolution in Sabah is really taking shape. Berhala island now has bolted routes and is ready for people to come and climb, it has it all, steep and hard, multi pitch adventures, childrens' climbing and some excellent beginners and mid-range climbing. Watch out for the article in Septembers BMC magazine The Summit.

Sabah Climbing Centre is now started, our team are working 7 days a week to install the first climbing centre in the state. It will include a childrens' wall, a cave, a technical slab and a fiberglass leader wall. We aim to be open by September and have big plans to get the youth of Sabah into this great sport.

# Blood, sweat and tears in Namibia

Alex  
Bamford

On the 11th April 2009 I embarked on a challenge to raise money for Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice. A challenge that I knew would be tough.

I was attempting to run 78 miles under 24 hours through the Namib Desert. I knew physically that I could do this; it was only ever a question of what time and what position I would finish in..... I was wrong.

I cannot describe in words the extreme nature of the event. It far exceeded my expectations in terms of how challenging it would be. After 26 miles I was found by the patrol vehicle staggering around in a dried up river bed in 40 degree heat with hardly any water, raging cystitis and blood in my urine. I was hardly able to talk because of the pain. I was offered a lift in the 4x4, but managed to stagger the 4km to the next check point.

I was immediately assessed by the expedition doctor who decided that I was suffering from rhabdomyolysis which was causing severe cystitis and blood in my urine. Essentially I was peeing muscle and if left untreated this can lead to kidney failure. I began taking on litres of water mixed with diarolyte to try and rehydrate and prevent the muscle cramps from getting worse. I was also given a strong dose of codeine to help the pain.

Within an hour I was beginning to feel a lot better and made the decision to continue with the race. I struggled another 20km to the next check point. Upon arriving my symptoms began to return and the pain killing effect of the codeine was wearing off. By now I had been going for nearly 12 hours.

For the second time I was strongly advised to stop as there was a real danger of doing long term damage to my kidneys. With a very heavy heart and one of the hardest decisions of my life I took the advice of the doctor.

In total I covered 40 miles in the most extreme conditions of the day, a truly humbling experience. I must admit I underestimated



*"The most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well."*  
Pierre de Coubertin

the severity of the conditions and was complacent in believing that I would finish. The desert quite literally put me on my ass and owned me in a big way, which I am incredibly grateful for. One of the most defining moments of my life, a priceless experience and education.

People always ask; why do you do it!? Although difficult to explain, it is these priceless experiences that really change and shape our lives.

It is in our moments of greatest challenge that we find out who we truly are.

Alex started expedition life on a Borneo expedition which I led. When I heard what he was up to I was one of those who asked 'why'.  
Dom

One answer is he was raising money for Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice and its not too late to donate. See:

[www.justgiving.com/alexbamford](http://www.justgiving.com/alexbamford)

## CAN YOU HELP.... See what some fieldnews readers are up to and how you can help...

**Urgent: Doctor required for Amazon Expedition**  
Due to a leader withdrawal, we currently have a space on our Amazon expedition for a qualified doctor. Dates: 21 July – 22 Aug 2009  
**Costs:** £1380 (all BSES leaders are volunteers and as such contribute the flight payment and a £200 expedition contribution).  
**Please contact** [patrick@bses.org.uk](mailto:patrick@bses.org.uk) or 020 7591 3141 ASAP.  
[www.bses.org.uk](http://www.bses.org.uk)

a recent ECOLOGY GRADUATE with several tropical and European field experiences, keen to keep contributing to real-world conservation this summer. I'm available June through August inclusive, and am open to do and learn anything that could help your current team. Drop me a line on [sorri98@hotmail.com](mailto:sorri98@hotmail.com).

Want an extra pair of hands on your conservation adventure? I'm Tori,

Tell us what you are up to and we'll give you some PR in the next issue...

## TRAINING:

## New Offsite Safety Management

## and Business Courses

In the last few months the UK training side of Fieldskills has made two more major additions to its training repertoire.

Dom was delighted to gain accreditation to provide the RGS's Off-site safety management (OSSM) course. The OSSM was designed in response to concerns about safety in off-site activities. It addresses legislation in this area alongside practical scenarios to explore the application of this legislation. The OSSM course will be appropriate for



those working in a range of different situations where they are responsible for taking children/young people/adults out of their everyday environments (e.g. on geography or environmental field trips, on sporting away events, on organised activities). It aims to equip attendees with the ability to apply knowledge, understanding and problem solving skills in a range of contexts and will be a valuable addition to the range of bespoke options Fieldskills can offer its clients.

Also, working with old friends, Kevin and Karen Albin, Fieldskills have put together a range of bespoke course options for the business

## SIGN UP NOW..

### COURSES COMING SOON:

#### Tropical Forest Safety Courses:

20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> June Oxford

LAST MINUTE PLACES LEFT – SIGN UP NOW

12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> Sept Oxford

#### Outdoor First Aid:

22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> June Oxford

LAST FEW PLACES

14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Sept Oxford

12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> Oct Lakes

#### Expedition Leadership and Planning:

10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> Oct Oxford

More details, further dates and to book go to [www.fieldskills.com](http://www.fieldskills.com)

community. We are now offering a range of bespoke courses which combine first aid training with other outdoors skills such as emergency planning and outdoor risk management. By tying these skills together with our usual combination of hands-on scenarios and practical day to day skills we can combine our expertise in training with experience in managing activities in remote areas.

As well as these new courses we've enjoyed running a range of existing courses including tropical forest safety, overseas travel safety and first aid courses over the last few months.

## A Taster of Recent Feedback...

*The first-aid course was very well received by colleagues. They renew their outdoor first-aid every three years and many were raving about it being the best one they had ever been on. They were praising both presenters as being the best two they have had.*

- Outdoor First Aid Course

*The course is very well thought through and delivered. - very useful for any group - Tropical Forest Course*

## Outward Bound Across Continents - cyclist's solo epic journey



Ken Roberts is in the final stages of preparation to cycle solo across the principal inhabited continents - Europe, Asia, Australia, the Americas and Africa. Setting off on 2 September this year, he expects to cover in excess of 45,000 miles over the next four years. He aims to raise funds for a UK educational charity, The Outward Bound Trust, that uses outdoor experiences and challenges to help young people unlock their potential.

As part of his preparations, Ken recently cycled over 1,000 miles from his home in Somerset to visit The Outward Bound Trust centres at Aberdovey, Ullswater and Loch Eil. During his travels he stopped off in the Lake District for some specialist training with Fieldskills to help prepare him for living in deserts, tropics and Savannah. Inspired by his own experiences at The Outward Bound Trust's Eskdale centre in 1985, Ken is a long-standing supporter of The Trust's work with young people. Struck by strong resonance between the

charity's core values and those of his own forthcoming epic endeavour, he is keen to use the opportunity to help raise both funds for, and awareness of, The Outward Bound Trust.

An experienced touring cyclist, he nevertheless sees the bicycle as really just the means of travel rather than an end in itself. He explains "The real challenge is the ability to solve problems - as diverse as finding enough food to sustain the physical effort, arranging visas, dealing with changing political situations en route, to simply driving oneself forward in the face of adversity - and gaining a better understanding of people and places encountered on the journey."

In the last edition of Fieldnews we covered Dr Steve Fabes' plan to cycle solo across the six continents, setting off in January 2010. The two have already met on a training course at the Royal Geographical Society earlier this

year. Ken adds "We're going opposite ways around the world so it would be really great to meet up on the road, maybe exchange a few tips!"

*I greatly enjoyed working with Ken and we wish him all the best.*

Dom

Find out more at:  
[www.acrosscontinents.org](http://www.acrosscontinents.org)  
[www.theoutwardboundtrust.org.uk](http://www.theoutwardboundtrust.org.uk)

### EXPED NEWS

Some items that caught our eye from the rainforest news:

Wildlife experts were astonished to see some very unusual orangutan behaviour in a river on Borneo.

'This is a rarity - to see orangutans coming down for a swim is unheard of in the wild,' says Simon Husson, scientific consultant for the Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation.

'However, we know that orangutans are intelligent and innovative. They try out different behaviours, or ways of solving problems in their environment, and over time develop cultural innovations. Also, in this area there is a very low to non-existent crocodile population which may have been noticed by the orangutans.'

Photographer Ardiles Rante got some amazing pictures which can be seen at the daily mail online amongst others.

#### Flying Car To Save Lives in the Amazon?

see:

[www.theadventureblog.blogspot.com/](http://www.theadventureblog.blogspot.com/)

58-year old Steve Saint is a former missionary to Ecuador, a country his family moved to back in the 1950's when they were working with the Quechua Indians, and later the Huaorani as well. Saint, acutely that it can be a huge walk through the jungle

to the nearest hospital decided to design a flying car that could take off without the need of a runway.

The result is the "Maverick", a vehicle that is equal parts dune buggy, power boat, and paraglider which can hit 80 miles per hour on pavement then transition to an off road vehicle for trails, before taking off into the wild blue yonder through the use of the kite.

The eventual plan is to make these cheap, easy to operate, and available for remote tribes in the Amazon to use as an emergency vehicle when necessary. Check out the story for more details, including the amazing story of Saint's interaction with the Huaorani tribes.