

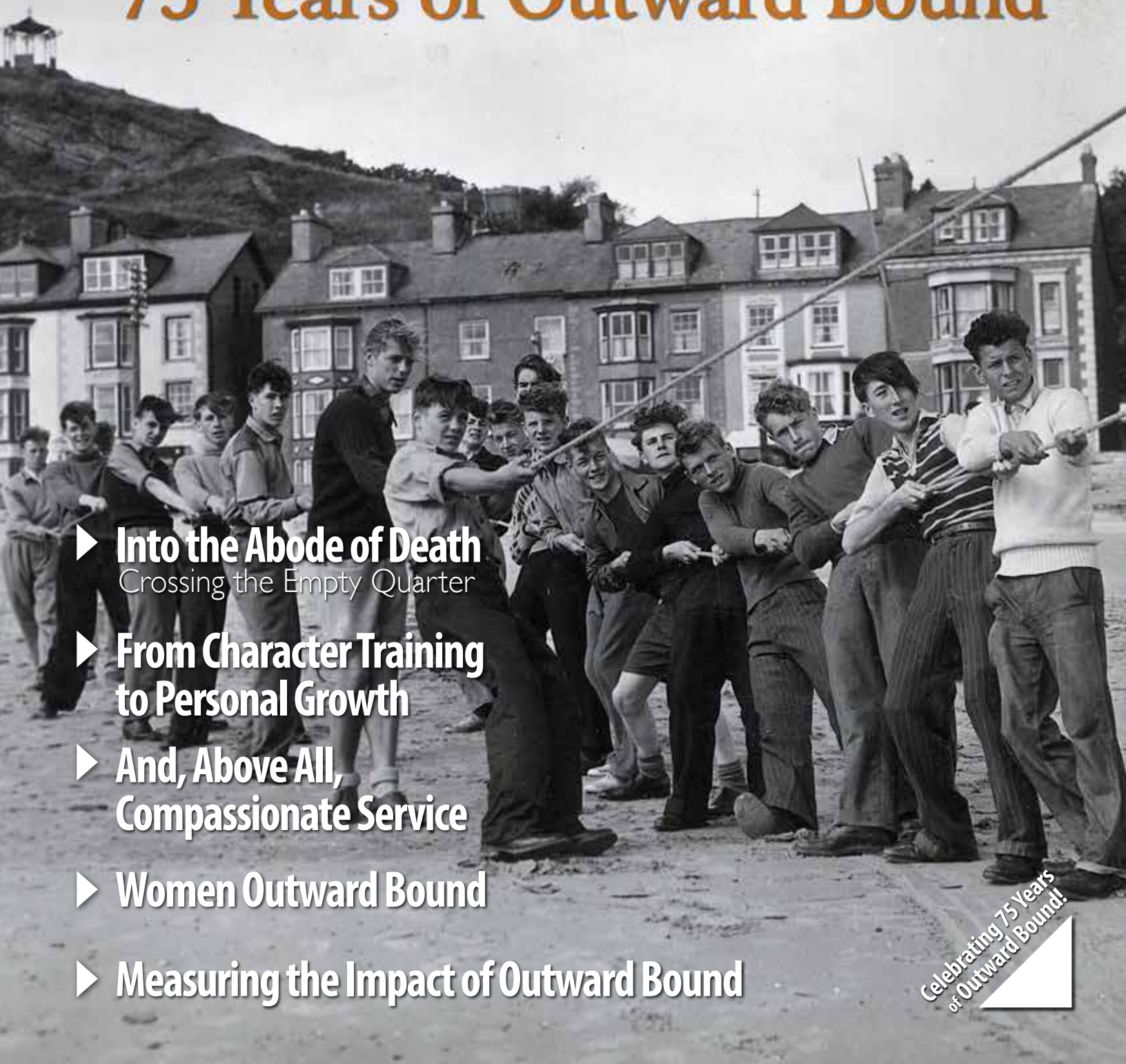


OUTWARD BOUND INTERNATIONAL™

2016 Edition

Journal

75 Years of Outward Bound



- ▶ **Into the Abode of Death**
Crossing the Empty Quarter
- ▶ **From Character Training
to Personal Growth**
- ▶ **And, Above All,
Compassionate Service**
- ▶ **Women Outward Bound**
- ▶ **Measuring the Impact of Outward Bound**

Celebrating 75 Years
of Outward Bound!

**LIFE IS LIKE A CAMERA...
FOCUS ON WHAT'S IMPORTANT
CAPTURE THE GOOD TIMES
DEVELOP FROM THE NEGATIVES
AND IF THINGS DON'T WORK OUT
TAKE ANOTHER SHOT.**



**THE
OUTWARD
BOUND TRUST**

Celebrating 75 years of Outward Bound!

From the Editor



As the British novelist L. P. Hartley reminds us in his 1953 novel, *The Go-Between*, “The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there.” Anniversaries are our ephemeral doorways to the past; they stay open just long enough for us to contemplate history’s temporal inflections, and then close securely behind us as we return to the present and look forward.

They serve to recalibrate the receding importance of history with the looming potential of the future. They take us away and bring us home again. It is consequently fitting, as Outward Bound’s 75th anniversary year nears its end, that OBI Journal takes a look at our own past, recalling through articles and images what has changed and what has not during the nearly eight decades since Kurt Hahn and Lawrence Holt founded the Outward Bound Sea School at Aberdovey, Wales in 1941.

Signposting the march of time is uniquely important for mission-driven international organizations like ours, whose institutional memory must repeatedly pass through the many essential prisms of national identity and culture. While the Outward Bound motto, “To serve, to strive and not to yield” (adapted from Tennyson’s poem “Ulysses” by Jim Hogan, the warden of the first Outward Bound school) still captures the distilled essence of worldwide Outward Bound, we have come a long way from 1940s Aberdovey. Moreover, we have grown from one school in one country to a network of schools—each a unique reflection of local needs—operating in 34 countries. And every year we work with nearly as many participants as the approximately 275,000 served by Aberdovey during its entire 75-year history.

However, like the mythical hero Ulysses, we must return from our foreign country; therefore, in this issue, we also include several articles that speak to contemporary Outward Bound. Read how Outward Bound Hong Kong collaborated with Australia’s Monash University to convene outdoor adventure educators from around the world (see page 74). Follow Mark Evans and Mohammed Al Zadjali (Outward Bound Oman) as they retrace the 1930 journey of explorer Bertram Thomas across the Empty Quarter of Arabia (“Into the Abode of Death—Crossing the Empty Quarter,” page 49). Join 72 sophomores and 10 adult chaperones from the American School in Switzerland as they set off for a winter course in Bavaria with Outward Bound Germany, and learn how Outward Bound Japan hopes to introduce the spirit and core values of Outward Bound into the mainstream school education system (see “Spreading the Spirit of Outward Bound,” page 62).

Of additional note, this issue acknowledges a relatively minor anniversary: the tenth year of publishing OBI Journal. (You can see the covers of each issue on page 91.) To mark the occasion you will notice a fresh design that reflects our new Global Brand Standards. Lastly, we offer a special thanks to Dan Hill, Anassa Rhenisch, and Erin Moore, who over the past 10 years have each unfailingly made each issue better than the last.


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Back Cover photo (Sailing Boats at Outward Bound Malaysia-Lumut) Rob Chatfield.

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C O N T R I B U T O R S



Pete Allison

Back to Roots

Pete Allison is associate professor of recreation, park, and tourism management at Pennsylvania State University. He was previously Head of the Graduate School of Education and Sport at the University of Edinburgh for 15 years. He is passionate about experiential learning and cross-cultural education through expeditions, and is committed to personal development. Pete worked at Bradford Woods in the early-to-mid-1990s, for Outward Bound in Malaysia and Oman, and for various organisations in the UK. He founded the Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning and reviews for a number of journals. He is a keen skier, canoeist, and mountaineer. Expeditions in the Arctic, Himalayas, and Arabian Peninsula are his favourites!



Maxine Davis

Women Outward Bound: The Documentary

Maxine is a storyteller who has been making video biographies for ten years (www.tellyourhistory.com). She has worked in the Minnesota film industry for 33 years as a production manager and location scout for hundreds of TV commercials, films, made-for-TV movies, rock videos, and photo shoots, and was the production coordinator for Prince's movie *Purple Rain*. Maxine moved into documentary filmmaking in 2005 and has won awards for her short films such as *In the Shadow of the Acropolis*, which have shown in film festivals and on public television. *Women Outward Bound* is her feature-length documentary debut as a director.



Mark Evans

Crossing the Empty Quarter
Mark Evans (www.markevans.global) is the Executive Director of Outward

Bound Oman, the first Outward Bound school in the Arab world. He is Patron of the Andrew Croft Memorial Fund (www.acmf.org.uk), and the founder of Connecting Cultures, an educational initiative endorsed by UNESCO that uses the desert wilderness to bring young people together on journeys of intercultural dialogue.

Evans has been travelling in wilderness environments for 38 years, and has, among other things, spent an entire year in small tents on Svalbard, which included four months of total darkness; crossed Greenland in 26 days by parachute and ski, on the trail of Nansen; and kayaked solo the entire 1,700-kilometre coastline of Oman. He is the author of four books. In 2002 he was named a Pioneer of the Nation at Buckingham Palace for his services to the field of youth exploration, and in 2012 was awarded the MBE for his work using expeditions to promote Intercultural Dialogue.



Mark Freeman

From Character Training to Personal Growth

Mark Freeman is a historian of education, focusing on adult education, youth movements, and informal education in modern Britain. He is currently a co-investigator on a large Arts and Humanities Research Council funded grant, "The Redress of the Past: Historical Pageants in Britain 1905-2016". He has published widely on modern British social, educational, and business history.

He joined the UCL Institute of Education, University College London, in 2014, having previously worked at the University of Glasgow. He is a co-editor of the journal *History of Education*.



Jim Garrett

And, Above All, Compassionate Service

Board member of Baltimore-Chesapeake Bay Outward Bound in the USA, Jim is an OB USA National Advisory Board member, and has been affiliated with Outward Bound since 1964 as a Hurricane Island Outward Bound instructor, Trustee, and Corporation Member. For thirty years he taught

school-age students in the fields of English, world religions, and human values. He also established outdoor adventure programs for International College, Beirut, Lebanon, and The Gilman School in Baltimore, Maryland.



Katie Newsom Pastuszek

Philadelphia Outward Bound School's The Discovery Center

The daughter of a career foreign service officer, Katie often says that she was born into a life of adventure. She did her first Outward Bound course at 14 and credits that challenging experience—along with her world travels—as having given her the motivation and drive to live a life of service to others.

Katie's career in non-profit management began at the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia in 1980. In the early 1990s she reconnected with her adventure roots by consulting with regional adventure education programs. From 1997 to 1999, she sat on the Advisory Board of the Philadelphia Friends of Outward Bound before resigning to serve as the Philadelphia Program Director. Working in collaboration with Baltimore Chesapeake Bay Outward Bound and other Outward Bound Schools nationwide, Katie has led the expansion of today's Philadelphia Outward Bound School together with a dedicated Board of Trustees.

Katie received a BA from the University of Vermont and a MS in Organizational Development and Leadership from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. She has completed intensive executive seminars in leadership and non-profit management at both The Wharton School and the Harvard Business School.



Ana Patel

Outward Bound Peacebuilding: A Partnership Model

Ana Patel is the Executive Director of the Outward Bound Center for Peacebuilding, leading the organization's work using active learning in the outdoors to

challenge and inspire leaders in divided communities to build peace together. She brings over 25 years of experience in international peacebuilding, development, and human rights with organizations such as the U.S. Peace Corps, the Andean Development Corporation, and the International Center for Transitional Justice. Ana is a 2016 Rotary International Peace Fellow and was recently named a Hearts on Fire Visionary of the Month (September). She graduated from Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon and received a Master's of International Affairs from the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University.



Mark Zelinski

Outward Bound Photographer

For more than 30 years Canadian photographer and publisher Mark Zelinski (www.MarkZelinski.com) has traveled to Outward Bound Schools, United World Colleges, and Round Square schools worldwide to capture the action-based programs portrayed in his books: *One Small Flame: Kurt Hahn's Vision Of Education*, and *Outward Bound: The Inward Odyssey*, volumes 1 and 2. In 2010 he launched the "Books That Heal" initiative, donating 7,000 copies of his books to charities in more than 30 countries. These charities use the books to aid child abuse prevention, homeless youth, addiction counseling, literacy, crime prevention, and rescued victims of human trafficking.

His books are a tribute to the heroes of the world—the social workers, teachers, volunteers and charities that work every day to help others. He believes we need to see the human race as a family, and it's exciting for him to use his photography books as a gift for children and a tool for charities. Mark makes his home in Hamilton, Ontario, where he recently photographed an Outward Bound course—a first for him, Outward Bound, right in his backyard.



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Looking Back: The Evolution of Outward Bound

MALAYSIA

By Karl Chandran

When Kurt Hahn founded Outward Bound he established a core set of educational principles. Each course would have a balance between fitness, skill, initiative, perseverance, respect, and service. His approach to education was not only focused on experience, but also had a distinct need to be value-centered. Traditional Outward Bound programs develop powerful learning experiences, surmounting mainly physical challenges in a natural setting through which the individual builds his or her sense of self-worth. At Outward Bound Malaysia Lumut we have always endeavored to keep our programs consistent with this core of Hahn's philosophy.

In the early days in Lumut, the Outward Bound Educational Process Model, which began with the participant undertaking a series of physical activities and group problem-solving tasks, was particularly important in developing an understanding of the experiential education process. We learned that tasks

needed to be introduced incrementally and have real consequence; that problem-solving tasks should be holistic; and that their solutions required the individual's mental, emotional, and

physical resources. This is reflected in the design of the Standard Course program, later to be renamed the Classic Course, a 25-day course which is still in practice today.

The earliest participants came mainly from government departments, the police, and plantation companies. This was due to the need to cultivate individuals with the key personality and leadership traits required to lead the country upon attaining independence. At this time the activities—kayaking,

trekking, and sailing—had a strong emphasis on regimentation, with a strong adherence to rules, do's, and don'ts. This approach was a key practice through the 1970s.



During the 1980s, the Outward Bound Malaysia programs evolved towards incorporating and linking transformation with the change in social trends. In this era, the components of our programs were skills training, stress and hardship, problem solving, community service, reflection, and evaluation, sequenced as a training phase, expedition phase, solo, final expedition, and concluding phase. At this time, the activities ostensibly remained the same, though new ones were introduced—particularly high rope courses and the flying fox. Enrollment had also evolved to include programs for women as well as courses for children and youths.

By the 1990s, the Outward Bound approach to teaching and learning had become more than a set of methods and activities. The instructors' role, while always important, proved to be more relevant particularly when the relationship with the participant grew more facilitative. Instructors needed to be diverse in ability and approach, and to have the communication skills to both instruct and facilitate learning. To do this, instructors had to adhere to the following process:

1. The instructor imparts knowledge
2. Knowledge becomes experience
3. Experience allows for applications of knowledge
4. Time is allotted for solitude and reflection on the knowledge and experience gained (at this time the solo camping activity had become an integral part of our programs)

We also began believing that adventure is the backbone of knowledge and experience, and that physical fitness is also key. We helped our students find the metaphorical significance of their experiences on our courses, so they could turn that knowledge into personal and social value. We also encouraged teamwork as the ultimate goal, reflecting the need for this process to be continuous and ongoing.

By the 2000s and early 2010s, we had adopted a more holistic approach to produce programs that stimulate self-development as well as fulfill prescribed course objectives, particularly in (corporate) professional development programs. The course components now are:



- **Course design:** This includes a holistic approach that integrates a variety of activities and involves personal reflection.
- **Range of activities:** This includes a balance of activities that are social, physical, creative, reflective, group, and individual challenges, that use all the senses, and that integrate emotional, intellectual, and spiritual considerations.
- **Variety:** This requires an element of surprise and change of the rhythm of the program.


• **Progression:** Activities increase in social, emotional, and physical challenge throughout the course, such as a creative activity, then one with more demands, and finally independent preparation of a theatre performance.

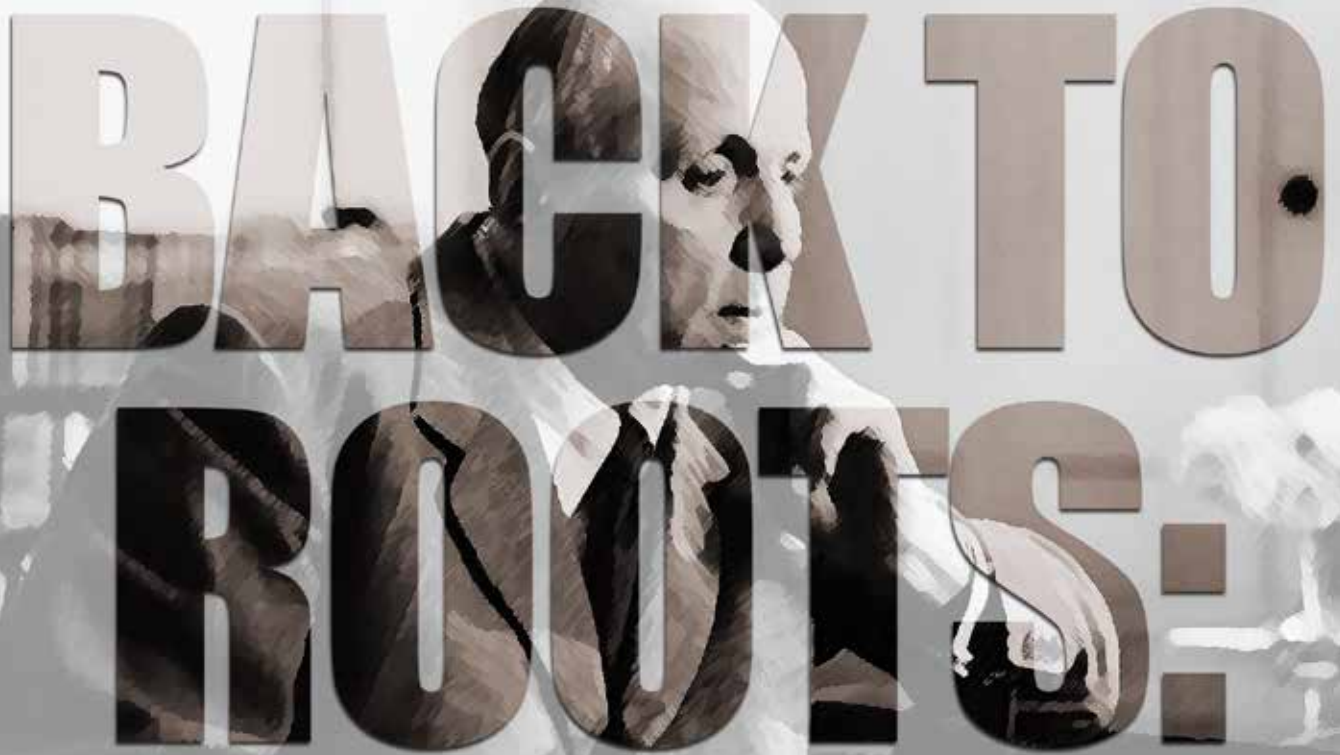
• **Tailoring:** This offers a much more flexible and energized approach for instructors and, for participants, the benefit of programs aimed exclusively at them.

• **Atmosphere and learning environment:** This includes physical and emotional safety and creates a supportive atmosphere that allows participants to interact.

• **Participants:** A diverse group of individuals who are willing to participate in activities and to think about themselves and others is important to the holistic learning process.

• **Instructors:** The instructors' facilitation methods and experiences are critical to the program success, especially since each instructor team has individuals of different strengths, abilities, and skills.

Outward Bound Malaysia Lumut began with the need to cultivate leaders to bring our country into independence and prosperity. From the rigid kayaking courses of the 1970s to the looser structure of the 1990s to the holistic approach of today, our focus has changed very little: we have always stayed close to Hahn's core educational principles and his beliefs in balance and in values. However, today we have evolved into an organization that trains leaders as well as functional individuals and citizens of Malaysia. As the Outward Bound motto says, we continue "to serve, to strive and not to yield." 



BACK TO ROOTS:

An Historical Account of the Development of Outdoor Education Centred on Kurt Hahn pre-1944

By Nick Veevers and Pete Allison

Introduction

Kurt Hahn has had a significant influence on the fields of outdoor and experiential learning, adventure education, progressive schools and, not least, badge schemes throughout the world. If he were alive today he would be referred to as an experiential educator and part of the progressive schools movement. His vision of education has continued beyond his life in four main organisations, all of which epitomise his values in their philosophies, objectives and everyday practices. Despite the enormous influence he had during his life and the organisations which have continued there is relatively little published on his philosophy of education despite a great deal of practice being undertaken in his name. In this paper we outline his early life, the main influences on him and the two main themes that run through his philosophy: inclusion and expansion, and “disability” as opportunity.

The four main legacies that Hahn inspired are Outward Bound, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, United World Colleges and Round Square Schools. These organisations involve enormous numbers of young people. Outward Bound operates in over 30 countries and serves approximately 250,000 students each year. There are more than 80 Round Square Schools around the globe and 13 United World Colleges. The Duke of Edinburgh Award involves over 275,000 young people in the United Kingdom (UK) annually. He was also influential in the founding of Schule Schloss Salem (Germany, 1920), Schule Birklehof (Germany, 1932), Gordonstoun (Scotland, 1934), Anavryta (Greece, 1949), Louisenlund (Germany, 1949), Battisborough (England, 1955), Rannoch (Scotland, 1959), Box Hill (England, 1959), Atlantic (Wales, 1962) and Athenian (USA, 1965).

The concept of the four pillars is key to Hahn’s work. The pillars are physical fitness; an expedition that provides challenge and adven-

ture; a project that develops self-reliance and self-discipline; and a sense of compassion through service. These themes can be traced in many of the organisations mentioned above. For example, the Duke of Edinburgh Award is organised around four themes: volunteering, physical fitness, expedition and skill development.

Hahn strongly believed that the type of education he advocated should be available to as many people as possible and this was demonstrated throughout his life. From the scholarship scheme discussed before the opening of Salem School in the 1920s and introduced at its inception, to the one at Gordonstoun which continues today, through to the Duke of Edinburgh Award (known outside of the UK as the International Award) and the badge schemes which preceded it. Alongside this were his attempts (and successes) to bring this type of education to a UK-wide audience.

Hahn was born in Germany in 1886 and early in his life became critical of contemporary education. At age 24 he published his first book, *Frau Else’s Promise*, and spent the rest of his life involved in education in various ways. He was committed to personal growth and to education that engaged people.

Leafing through books from the fields of alternative and non-formal education, outdoor and experiential education, and many more, it is hard to get beyond the first few pages without finding at least some mention of Hahn, his life, his work and his philosophy. In what might be referred to as key texts, Stewart, Skidelsky, Stabler and Rohrs have carried out detailed examinations of Hahn’s educational theories. James and Richards have produced various articles on Hahn over a number of years. Richards carried out his Doctoral thesis on Hahn in 1981, and is known to have lectured on him for Outward Bound. Day, a former Headmaster of a Round Square School, also produced a Masters thesis on Hahn in 1980.

Many works contain historical accounts but they do not illustrate the manifestations of Hahnian values in the organisations he inspired. Understanding this historical context sets the scene to understand Hahn's philosophy of education, rationale and events leading to the development of the four organisations and their expansion.

Historical Framework and Influences

Kurt Hahn was the founder and Headmaster of, among others, Salem School in Germany in 1920 and then Gordonstoun School in Scotland in 1934. At both of these fee-paying schools activities such as sailing and hill-walking, often through expeditions lasting more than one day, played a prominent role in the education of the students. At Gordonstoun, Hahn expanded his educational ventures through the use of badge schemes to include young people from the surrounding district who were not students at his school. Hahn's badge schemes involved local children partaking in set activities including an expedition, which could be sailing or hill-walking, organised by Gordonstoun which, on completion, resulted in a badge being awarded.

Hahn tried to expand his badge schemes, firstly across Morayshire in which Gordonstoun was situated, and then across Britain. Outward Bound, a training centre where students could go for four-week courses, followed the badge scheme syllabus. It was founded by Hahn and Lawrence Holt, a ship-owner, at Aberdovey in Wales in October 1941.

On a number of occasions before 1944, Hahn tried to influence national educational policy to include badge schemes in the education of all children. The badge schemes were brought to the attention of the Norwood Committee, set up by the UK government to investigate educational change, and mentioned in its report in 1943.

Outward Bound, although not explicitly stated in the report, was also brought to the attention of the committee by at least two associates of Hahn—Sir Lawrence Holt and Mr A.D. Lindsay, Master of Balliol College, Chairman of the County Badge Experimental Committee. There were, of course, other influences on the Norwood Committee, perhaps most notably The Scout Association and Braithay Hall, who both had similar ideas to Hahn's. Cook has produced several papers, relating to the history of outdoor education, which provide the reader with an account of these other influences.

The influence of Kurt Hahn and Outward Bound extended to the United States in the 1950s through an American, Joshua Miner,

who taught at Gordonstoun School. Once established in the United States, Outward Bound influenced others:

Someone once said that Kurt Hahn was the 'moving spirit' of Outward Bound when it began in Britain during World War II. Imported to the United States two decades later, Outward Bound, in turn, became the moving spirit of the experiential education movement.

Hahn, through Outward Bound, is considered influential in the wider context of experiential education. This influence is illustrated by the Association for Experiential Education, in 1983, inaugurating the Kurt Hahn Address which has continued since. This Address is awarded annually to the person who exemplifies the Kurt Hahn spirit in contributing to the development and advancement of experiential education.

Hahn's influence has reached other countries through Outward Bound but also with other organisations and people such as Project Hahn in Australia, and Professor Matti Telemaki in Finland.

In a UK context, Hahn, alongside the scouting movement and Braithay Hall, is cited as having had an important influence on the provision and philosophy of outdoor education. Various authors believe that this influence extends to much of the current practice seen in the UK. None of this is particularly surprising given that Hahn lived most of his life in the UK and is probably best known for starting Gordonstoun School and Outward Bound at Aberdovey.

The name Outward Bound is now an international brand and is so well known that in many locations the term is now being used synonymously with outdoor pursuits. Wurdinger and Steffen state that "the Outward Bound phenomena also spawned an entire movement of adaptive Outward Bound programs." Although they were referring to the United States we believe this can be seen around the world.

The extent of Hahn's influence can also be seen through The Duke of Edinburgh Award. The award was first introduced in 1956 at the instigation of Hahn but it was a direct descendent of the badge schemes operated by him at Gordonstoun. Each participant in The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme has to complete an expedition to obtain the award. Since 1956, four million people have taken part in the award in the UK. On an international scale there are 59 National Award Authorities operating in different countries along with 200 independent operators in over 60 countries. Over 2 million people have taken part in the Award outside of the UK.

What is perhaps less well known is Hahn's association with Round Square Schools and United World Colleges. Together these organisations have a membership of over 80 schools around the world and they both follow Hahn's educational philosophy. All Round Square Schools contain outdoor activities in their school curriculum. Twelve United World Colleges teach the International Baccalaureate which contains a Creativity, Action, Service (CAS) section which can include outdoor activities. The Round Square association's one prize, named after Kurt Hahn, is earned by a student at one of their schools for an outstanding act of bravery or service.

Inclusion and Expansion

Salem was inclusive in its outlook and scholarships were considered an extremely important part of the school. A meeting before the school was even founded stated the intention to have scholarships and by 1924, 75% of the student population were on a full or part



scholarship. Hahn's personal support of this is seen when he states that "he would rather see the school shut down than reduce the number of scholarship students drawn from the least elite classes". Jocelin Winthrop-Young, a student of Hahn's at Salem, believes he was "genuinely" in favour of the scholarship scheme.

At Gordonstoun even before the school was founded there was discussion of grading the fees according to the ability of the parents to pay. The setting up of a scholarship fund was discussed again in February 1936. In November 1936, it was stated that there was a need for a greater number of poorer boys among the boarders and that the majority of students should be picked without regard to the financial position of their parents. In 1944 it was stated that fees are graded according to the ability of the parents to pay. When reading the original literature surrounding Gordonstoun during this period, one is left with the impression that the firm intention was to provide a large number of scholarships but the funds were lacking to provide the desired number.

This theme of inclusion is joined by the theme of expansion. At Salem the school expanded significantly in 13 years, from one new school in 1920 to five branches on different sites in 1932. Flavin also reports that Hahn had plans to introduce the Salem system to a day school. Alongside this school-based expansion is expansion outside the school environment. Hahn was involved in a programme, for the Confederation of Old Salemers, whereby they would take part in three months of practical social work, four weeks of athletic training (following the conditions of the German Sports Badge), and attendance on a course such as horseback riding or sail training. Training conditions, including not smoking or drinking, had to be followed during the four weeks of athletics. Hahn hoped that this course would later include ex-pupils of other German independent schools. In many ways this looks like the precursor of the badge schemes, and possibly Outward Bound as a house was to have been made available, as a sort of training centre, for the students.

Expansionist (and inclusive) aims were continued at Gordonstoun. In 1936 there were plans for a day school to be attached, presumably for local boys, with graded or nominal fees for the students. There were also plans for a seamanship school, open to local boys, and boarders who would come for six-week courses—the implication is that this would be for small boat sailing. Associated with this were plans for sail training ships, capable of carrying 30–40 boys on foreign expeditions, which were similar to German Sailing Schools. In 1936, there were also plans for a school farm and horsemanship school, each having a dormitory house with courses lasting 6–10 weeks which would be open to all boys.

In 1937, the King George's Field cinder track was built to act as a training centre for the people of the local district with Gordonstoun students acting as coaches. In 1938 local boys from Morayshire were involved in the Watchers organisation at Gordonstoun involving a mix of sailing and coastguard work.

When the Moray Badge was publicised in 1936, it was clearly stated that the intention was to expand. Even the sequence of badge names serves to highlight the expansionist and inclusive aims—Gordonstoun, Moray, County. Perhaps the best indicator of inclusion and expansion is when Hahn joined with Elgin Academy to take the scheme to a larger and wider audience. The schemes would be advocated through the twin track approach of training in schools and in training centres. Hahn stated that training centres should be used as a delivery method of the scheme in January 1938. In the same year

an independent company, the Gordonstoun Training Society, was set up to further his expansionist educational aims, partly through the Moray Badge Scheme for all students. Hahn and others used the related concepts of fitness and pre-service training in the late 1930s as a means of promoting his schemes.

It is in the contexts of inclusion, expansion, fitness, and pre-service training that the training centres can be seen — Scottish Summer Courses (1938 and 1939), Welsh Summer Course (1940), and Outward Bound (1941). In 1942 Hahn, when talking about the County Badge syllabus, stated that "what we should have done in peace time as an act of social justice, we have to perform today as a military necessity". This indicates that the scheme was first introduced as an act of "social justice" and later also included the aim of assisting the war effort. In the same document Hahn states that he "cannot rest until similar opportunities... are made accessible to an ever-increasing number of youths".

Note that the idea of social justice has undergone significant change of use and meaning since that time (when Hahn used the term). This idea of social justice is seen in 1936 when Hahn said that through the inclusion of boys from the district of Morayshire, "We shall have demonstrated that a school of public school type need not be restricted to the well-to-do classes". The concept of social justice, often with the Cistercian message of giving health to the district (which originated at Salem), is stated by Hahn on a number of occasions. This concept is supported by other Gordonstoun literature at the time.

Hahn, or other close associates, often referred to the training centres as demonstrations, trial camps, or training demonstrations. Therefore, the intention was to demonstrate Hahn's view of education, and this was to include all aspects of society. In striving to achieve the aim of expansion, through demonstrations, Hahn had appealed to private trusts and government departments for money. The meeting between Hahn and Holt and the starting of Outward Bound needs to be seen in this social justice context. The starting of Outward Bound involved more than the often-stated need to train seamen.

In 1938 Hahn had tried to convince the president of the Board of Education to include a badge for physical education in the School Certificate examination. Since the badge schemes were the only schemes involving badges that Hahn was associated with, there is a strong probability that Hahn tried to get the badge scheme into formal state education. This highlights that, along with the attempts to influence the Norwood Committee with the County Badge Scheme, Hahn's expansive aims need to be seen as an attempt to influence state education on a national scale.

The reason for this expansive aim might be seen when Hahn at a governors meeting at Gordonstoun talked about the continued existence of Gordonstoun "for the reform of the national education system." Hahn, referring to 1934, wrote that Gordonstoun had hoped "to be more than a Boarding School" and aimed "at becoming the core of a health-giving movement." On another occasion Hahn quoted Geoffrey Winthrop-Young by saying, "We are more than a school — we are a movement". Later Brereton and Geoffrey Winthrop-Young also used the term "movement" to describe Gordonstoun, the badge schemes and Outward Bound.

Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Hahn had very similar views on education. Winthrop-Young, from before the First World War to after the Second World War, stated that the education system should

include the holistic education of students through activities rather than just academic education and the cult of games. Hahn had been holistically educating his own students since 1920 and, on a number of occasions, explicitly argued that state education was based too much on academic learning. Hahn's personal support of holistic education is indicated by a student of Hahn's in the 1920s, reporting that Hahn felt he "needed real, good experiences and physical work to counteract the effects of all my reading".

It therefore appears that this movement, through demonstrations of its educational system and soliciting educational institutions, tried to change or at the very least influence the educational system at the time, to change it for one that was holistic in nature dealing with the development of the "whole" person. This was to be the Salem system that Hahn had used at his schools and which was represented in the County Badge Award with its four elements — project, expedition, service, and sporting achievement. As Huxley, a member of the County Badge Committee, stated, "the County Badge is not an organisation: it is a method." It was this method that the "movement" advocated.

Your Disability is Your Opportunity

Hahn's aim was holistic education, which was based on his and Prince Max's experiences in Germany during and after the First World War. Hahn believed that this aim would be achieved through a balanced curriculum, with activities added to academic education and that the combination of elements was important for subsequent learning. As it is likely students would have strengths and weaknesses in different areas, then it was important not only to develop these weaknesses but also, Hahn believed, to teach them how to overcome these:

Make children meet with triumph and defeat. After you have replenished their tanks of vitality, by discovering and maintaining their strengths, but not before, you should tackle their weaknesses. It is possible to wait on a child's inclinations and gifts and arrange carefully for an unbroken series of successes. You may make him or her happy that way — I doubt it — but you certainly cripple him for the battle of life. It is our business to plunge the children into enterprises in which they are likely to fail, and we may not hush up

that failure; but we should teach them to overcome defeat. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life"...Success in the sphere of one's weakness is often as great a source of satisfaction as triumph in the sphere of one's talents.

This concept of triumphing over adversity is something Hahn returns to time and time again in all of his educational endeavours. Hahn uses phrases such as, "he that overcometh, eats from the Tree of Life"; "your disability is your opportunity", or "the boy has defeated his defeatism" to describe the concept. "Make the children meet with triumph and defeat" was the second law of seven of Salem in 1930.

1. Give children the opportunity for *self-discovery*.
2. Make the children meet with *triumph and defeat*.
3. Give the children the opportunity of *self-effacement in the common cause*.
4. Provide periods of *silence*.
5. Train the *imagination*.
6. Make *games* important but not predominant.
7. *Free* the sons of the wealthy and powerful from *the enervating sense of privilege*.

These seven laws are believed to be a central part of the Salem system by authors associated with Hahn at the time. Hogan and Oldham (1941) who defined the Salem system in the booklet "The County Badge Scheme or the Fourfold Achievement" state that the value of the County Badge was deemed to lie in the combination of the four elements, as indeed was the combination of the different elements in the sporting section. The impact of Hahn can clearly be seen in this statement:

In the past a boy has too often been allowed to concentrate on the activity in which he can most likely excel. This is to encourage his strength; but he also needs to be helped to overcome his weakness. The majority of boys will face one or two tests with the feeling that they can never master them. They need to be shown how to defeat their defeatism.

The concept of overcoming your weakness can be seen in the German Sports Badge which contained different sections with certain sporting standards required to get the award. As Hahn wished to see development in all aspects of an individual, different elements were added to the German Sports Badge (service, expeditions and project).

Expeditions were added as Hahn believed they required the individual to carefully plan them and carry them out with endurance. He had found that expeditions provided the antidote to the effects of undue hero worship on the student athlete who was often "no friend of wind and weather". Therefore, expeditions provided a different type of test of the athlete and also provide the opportunity for the shy or non-games player to shine, fulfilling his aim of holistic education.

The vicissitudes of an expedition make him discover not only his 'wants' but also his unsuspected resources. On the other hand, the sturdy but clumsy games player, often humbled in face of the glories of the playing field, benefits equally by the expedition tests. Unexpected avenues of distinction open out before him; by his tenacity and care he often outshines the brilliant athlete. Thus our clumsy boy tastes that glow of importance which we would like to give to as many as possible.



The method of education that Hahn was advocating allowed for the individual to have “discovered his strength and begun to cure some of his weakness”:

The average boy when first confronted with these tests will nearly always find some which look forbidding, almost hopelessly out of his reach, others he will find easy and appealing to his innate strength; but once he has started training he will be gripped by magic — a very simple magic, the magic of the puzzle, for you cannot help going through with a game of patience that has begun to “come out” — and he will struggle on against the odds until one day he is winning through in spite of some disability. There always is some disability; but in the end he will triumph, turning defeat into victory, thus overcoming his own defeatism.

Hahn believed that the incentive to complete the scheme and gain the badge, at Outward Bound or through the County Badge Scheme, provided the individual with the motivation to overcome areas of weakness. Thereby learning would occur (or be likely to) and “the boy has defeated his defeatism, and now becomes a self-trainer, determined to persevere”.

The expedition test is one part of this method but “is considered more important than any other, for any expedition worthy of its name contains conditions of adversity”. Hahn stated, on a number of occasions, that he regarded the expedition test as “vital” and where they should be introduced: “Expeditions can be a great help in training the ‘power to overcome.’ They should have a place of honour in the timetables of schools.”

Hahn felt that the young had an innate urge to test themselves. In the context of war, education should contain “risks, supreme tests and a glamour which will make the romance of war fade”. A phrase that he used often was that these should be “conquests without the humiliation of the conquered”.

A wide variety of activities were used so that expeditions could “vary according to a boy’s tastes. It would [could] be a sailing, climbing, riding, exploring, bird-watching, or historical expedition”. Therefore, Hahn considered that the concept of overcoming on expeditions, could be applied to a number of activities not simply activities such as sailing and climbing. Similarly, when talking about the activities that Outward Bound schools are based around, Hahn states that “endless variations are possible — practical seamanship; bird-watching; a chapter of contemporary history; mountaineering; the handling of forestry tools; pre-mining training; bee-keeping; free stone-masonry; horsemanship”.

In 1936 Hahn had stated his wish to start a horsemanship school with students from outside the school who would board in their own house. In 1936 a similar scheme but this time for girls was being dis-

cussed. It appears that the intention of these hostels was the holistic development of the individual but this time through the activity of horsemanship. This notion is reiterated two years later:

The sea and the hills are by no means the only possible transmitters.... We have in mind Short Term Schools in which the training is built around the Forest, or the Mine, or Horsemanship. There is really no limit to the possible variations.

Although Hahn is associated with outdoor activities we believe it is an important and possibly overlooked point that he believed the concept of “overcoming your disability” could be applied to many activities. Expeditions provided vital tests but these expeditions could be centred on a number of activities. The important point was that the activities provided the students with the opportunity to overcome their disability. Many authors believe that Hahn developed this concept when he was recovering from a serious illness before the First World War.

Conclusion


Along with the four pillars, these two themes of inclusion and expansion and finding strength through overcoming our disabilities, are visible in the organisations that Hahn inspired and are at the heart of his philosophy of education. Exploring these twin themes

illustrates an understanding which is useful to educators in the Hahnian tradition and in the organisations that he inspired. Our hope is that articulating the views of Kurt Hahn will allow the above-mentioned people to greater understand his philosophy of education and continue to provide powerful developmental and engaging educational opportunities for people around the world. A better understanding of how we came to be where we are is the key to defining where we should go in the future.

Many readers will be aware that during the First World War Hahn was the private secretary to Prince Max of Baden with whom he subsequently founded Salem school. Hahn was later imprisoned by Hitler for asking alumni to either stand with Salem or Hitler. It seems reasonable to speculate that these experiences were important in informing Hahn’s determination to educate for compassion, which is the *raison d’être* of all of the organisations he founded. We believe that this is the hallmark of any organisation claiming to use a Hahnian philosophy today.



Note this article has no references. Readers interested in a copy with references should contact the corresponding author: Pete Allison (PeteAllison@psu.edu)

The article draws from the 2011 book: *Kurt Hahn: Inspirational, visionary, outdoor and experiential educator* by Nick Veevers and Pete Allison. Published by Sense, Rotterdam. 

Community AND CONSERVATION



Philadelphia Outward Bound School's "The Discovery Center"

By Katie Newsom Pastuszek

"How exciting for Philadelphia that The Discovery Center project brings the community together with the educational resources of Outward Bound and Audubon to reopen the East Park Reservoir for outdoor learning and conservation. In this beautiful natural place, young people and adults will discover their potential while exploring this wonder of nature."—(former) Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter, Philadelphia Outward Bound School Founding Member

Seven years ago, the Philadelphia Outward Bound School, one of Outward Bound USA's eleven regional schools, joined forces with the National Audubon Society to create The Discovery Center at Philadelphia's city-based Fairmount Park's East Park Reservoir. These thought-leaders in environmental stewardship and youth leadership development began work in 2009 towards a shared vision of a world-class center for nature conservation and

life-changing character building experiences. The unique and fully collaborative educational center will be built on a natural wonder in the heart of the city's East Fairmount Park, on the shores of a 37-acre lake that has been inaccessible to the public for over 45 years and is Philadelphia's largest deepwater lake.

Today's vision of The Discovery Center includes indoor classrooms and exhibition space along with outdoor educational amenities such as trails, a canoe launch, a high ropes challenge course, a climbing wall, bird-watching platforms, and a bird banding station. The state-of-the-art green facility will be jointly owned and operated by the two organizations under a unique partnership, known formally as the East Park Leadership and Conservation Center (EPLACC). When open, Audubon and Outward Bound programs at The Discovery Center will collectively serve more than 10,000 children and teens and many

older community members each year. The Discovery Center will enable an intentional bridge between these two renowned and proven educational programs, and will ultimately “create the United States’ first model of experiential environmental, conservation and outdoor education that spans the early grades through high school.”

- The Philadelphia Outward Bound School and Audubon Pennsylvania expect that, through The Discovery Center:
- Hands-on exploration of nature will help students understand essential science concepts and in-depth investigation of pressing issues (such as urban land-use, wildlife adaptation, bird migration) and spark a stronger connection to nature and lifelong love of learning.
- Outdoor adventure education programs for older youth will lead to more resilient and self-reliant students who graduate from high school, complete college, and become productive, engaged citizens.

All participants will leave the Center as better-informed, more-committed environmental stewards who understand and value science, nature, active learning, and themselves.

The Discovery Center will be the rare project that preserves precious natural resources, fundamentally changes the lives of youth, and introduces a replicable model for experiential, environmentally focused education that will garner attention and respect nationwide, potentially even worldwide.

History of The Discovery Center

Audubon Pennsylvania and Philadelphia Outward Bound School stand at pivotal points in the evolution of their education programs. Both provide well-respected, effective, experiential education programs for urban and regional youth that immerse them in natural settings, often for the first time, and inspire an understanding of and desire to preserve the natural world. There is increasing demand for these environmental education programs from the diverse constituents served by both organizations.

Audubon Pennsylvania: Audubon Pennsylvania is the state office of the National Audubon Society, an organization with more than 100 years of service in conservation and education. Its priorities include standards-aligned science-based education for youth and community programs throughout Philadelphia. Today, Audubon works with approximately 2,000 students in seven Philadelphia schools, the majority of whom have very little access to nature. Audubon works with elementary and middle school teachers to develop sustained, integral, educational activities that provide students with new, exciting ways to learn, which have been shown to raise their science test scores. Students work with Audubon multiples times throughout the year, each lesson building on previous ones, enhancing classroom learning, and providing access to resources teachers would not otherwise have. Audubon works with students in the






classroom and leads field trips, but until now, Audubon has not had a permanent physical location in Philadelphia that would enable youth to interact directly with birds, water, or other natural elements. The Discovery Center will be Audubon's anchor for urban conservation, education, and research.

Philadelphia Outward Bound School: The Philadelphia Outward Bound School (POBS) was established in 1992 and is now an independently operated, chartered Outward Bound School. POBS engages students and teachers in large and small peer groups in challenging experiences that unfold in unfamiliar and often remote natural settings. All single and multi-day programs (including backpacking, canoeing, and rock-climbing expeditions) encourage students to step outside their comfort zones, take risks, persevere through challenging situations, and ultimately result in the discovery of self-esteem and confidence necessary to succeed in school and life. POBS—celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2017—maintains long-established programs in over 40 public, charter, and private schools in the Philadelphia area and serves more than 4,000 students a year, approximately 75% of whom are from low-income families. Demand

for these challenging and effective educational programs continues to grow steadily, but the small size of the organization's current physical space has prevented it from keeping pace with the many program requests it receives. The Discovery Center will be the fully-equipped physical space that enables Philadelphia Outward Bound School to provide its high caliber programs to many more students, teachers, schools, and community groups.

Audubon began to develop its first business plan focused on repurposing the site in 2006. It was not able to advance its planning, however, without first identifying a project partner who could make its vision possible. Audubon officially launched its partnership with Philadelphia Outward Bound School in 2009 and since that time both organizations, together with the region's most forward-thinking civic leaders and philanthropists, have invested years of planning, fundraising, and generous personal gifts to create this world-class center for nature conservation and leadership development.

Over the last seven years, they have established a non-profit tax-exempt entity, EPLACC, which approves all agreements and funding commitments, negotiated a 40-year lease with the City of Philadelphia for 50 acres of land and water, and the organizations have also worked closely with community members, civic leaders, conservationists, and education professionals to ensure a solid program plan with diverse offerings for the local Strawberry Mansion neighborhood and all city and regional communities.

The Discovery Center is expected to open in early 2018. When fully developed, it will provide extraordinary experiential education for many more years to come. 





And, Above All, Compassionate Service

*Kurt Hahn's Service Ethic: Its Origins and Evolution within the Outward Bound Movement
A Discussion of the Philosophy and History of the Role of Service in Outward Bound*

By James R. Garrett

Introduction

In the pages that follow, you will witness a sort of virtual panel discussion. The names of most of the panelists whose actual words you will “hear” will be familiar to students of Kurt Hahn and of the worldwide history of Outward Bound. As “moderator” of the discussion, I will attempt to guide, or choreograph, the panelists as they seek to answer questions such as these:

- What was Kurt Hahn’s mission in life? Why did he have the goal of improving conditions in society? Why was he looking for change? What was he trying to influence?
- What were the post-World War I conditions in Germany which he and Prince Max of Baden sought to change and which motivated them to establish Schule Schloss Salem? How did Salem’s curriculum seek to achieve those goals?
- What was the thinking behind the establishment of the Gordonstoun Cliff Watchers?
- What conditions did Hahn and others want to change which led to the founding of the Outward Bound Sea School at Aberdovey, Wales, in 1941?
- On what conditions did Miner, Froelicher, Burnett, et al., want to have an impact, as they worked to bring Outward Bound to the United States?
- What led to the outreach of Outward Bound to urban environments?
- Over the past five decades, how have United States Outward Bound courses enacted the first part of the Outward Bound motto: “To Serve”?
- What visions do the panelists have of the role that service takes in the future of Outward Bound in the United States?

Meet the Panelists

Philip W. Baldwin: Co-author with Gary Templin of “The Evolution and Adaptation of Outward Bound: 1920–1976,” (May 12, 1976), in *Kurt Hahn and the Development of Outward Bound: A Compilation of Essays*. Denver, Colorado Outward Bound School 1976.

Gilbert Burnett: Born in Kentucky, Burnett graduated from Princeton University in 1943 and served in the Army’s Office of Strategic Services (OSS; the predecessor of the CIA) during World War II. After the war, he taught at the Punahou School, Honolulu, and St. George’s School, Newport, RI, before joining Josh Miner on the faculty of Phillips Academy, Andover, MA. Along with Miner and Chuck Froelicher, Burnett was a driving force in the effort to bring Outward Bound to the United States.

William Sloane Coffin (d. 2006): The legendary Chaplain of Yale University in the 1960s and pastor of the Riverside Church in New

York City in the ’70s and ’80s, Coffin was persuaded in 1961 by Sargent Shriver, founding director of the Peace Corps, to be the director of the Peace Corps’ training center in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, the beachhead of Outward Bound in the Western Hemisphere. Coffin and Josh Miner had a life-long friendship, and Coffin’s philosophy and character had a major influence on Miner’s efforts to expand Outward Bound’s outreach to urban populations. Rev. Coffin presided at the memorial service to Josh Miner at the Andover School chapel in January, 2003.

Lester Davies (d. 2003): Squadron Leader Davies (Royal Air Force) served as Warden [Director] of the English Outward Bound Lake District Centre at Ullswater, in Cumbria, and later as Warden of the Malaysian OB Centre in Sabah. “During his successful 23-year spell at Ullswater, he was appointed MBE for services to the Outward Bound movement and to the volunteer mountain rescue service the school provided and developed.”

John H. Day: A faculty member of Gordonstoun School in the 1970s, Day conducted extensive research, including many interviews, about Hahn and his contributions to education in preparation for his thesis, “The Basic Conception of Education of Kurt Hahn and Its Translation into Practice,” which Day completed in 1980 while on the faculty of education of the University of Queensland.

Mike Fischesser: Mike’s first OB experience was as an NCOBS student in 1971. He went on to become an NCOBS instructor and Program Director, and then joined the staff of OBUSA. Mike left his employment with Outward Bound in 1989 when he developed and began to market the Alpine Tower. He later combined OB with the Boy Scouts to create the Scouting Outward program and went on to be the director of the American Service Corps.

Martin Flavin: As a 13-year-old American student at Schule Schloss Salem, the coeducational boarding school near Lake Constance in Baden, Germany, which Kurt Hahn founded under the patronage of Prince Max of Baden in 1920, Flavin kept an extensive diary of his schoolboy experiences. This diary, along with his broad and deep research into Hahn’s life and thought, forms the basis for Flavin’s biography of Hahn: *Kurt Hahn’s Schools and Legacy: To Discover that You Can Be More and Do More Than You Believed*.

F. Charles Froelicher (d. 2014): Along with Miner and Gil Burnett, Chuck was a driving force in the effort to bring Outward Bound to the USA. Froelicher was the Headmaster of Colorado Academy in the 1960s. He served the Colorado Outward Bound School as a board member and advisor for many years.

Kurt Hahn (1886-1974): German-born educator Hahn, who established the Schule Schloss Salem in Germany in the early 1920s, was evacuated, thanks to influential English friends, to Britain in 1933 after publicly protesting Hitler. Hahn went on to be the principal founder of the Gordonstoun School in Scotland, and of Outward Bound, the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme, and the United World Colleges.

Thomas James: Formerly Dean of the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Tom was named provost of Teachers College, Columbia University, in 2007. Born in Wisconsin, and with degrees from Harvard and Stanford, Tom has had a long association with Outward Bound. In 1978, he took a Utah Canyonlands course and in 1980 his book, *Education at the Edge: The Colorado Outward Bound School*, a detailed history of the first two decades of COBS, was published. He has served as a trustee of both NCOBS and Expeditionary Learning.

Donn Kesselheim: Montana-born and raised, he earned his PhD in education from Harvard, and has served as teacher and administrator in a variety of school and college settings in California, Colorado, Turkey, Massachusetts, and Illinois. His first OB course was with the Dartmouth Outward Bound Center in 1971. He has been an advisor to HIOBS and COBS and a member of the OBUSA Board.

Ian Lawson: Lawson was at Gordonstoun in the 1950s, and served for many years as a director of Outward Bound International.

Robert S. MacArthur: MacArthur, Dartmouth Class of 1964 and graduate of the Berkeley Divinity School at Yale, took his first OB course, a teachers’ practicum, at COBS in 1970. In 1972, he became the director of the Dartmouth Outward Bound Center.

Joshua L. Miner (1920-2002): Josh is the person most credited with bringing OB to the United States. In 1950, at the urging of his father-in-law, Jack Stevens, he traveled to Scotland to meet Kurt Hahn and see what the Gordonstoun School program looked like. He went back to Gordonstoun the following year to join the School’s faculty. Upon his return to the States, Miner introduced many of Hahn’s ideas into the curriculum at Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts. In 1960, Gil Burnett joined Miner at Andover, and they soon contacted Chuck Froelicher to begin the planning for the establishment of the first Outward Bound School in the US in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. For many years thereafter, Miner served as the admissions director at Andover while also leading OB in the States as president of OBUSA.

Rafe Parker: Born in England and a graduate of Sandhurst, the Royal Military Academy, Rafe’s first job with Outward Bound was at the original OB center, the Aberdovey Sea School, in Wales. Before he came to the US in 1968 to be a HIOBS instructor, he had served OB Schools in Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, and South Africa. After directing the Southwest OB School in New Mexico from 1978 to 1982, he served as president of the Sea Education Association (Woods Hole, MA) from 1982-2002. He has served as a member of the HIOBS Board of Trustees and on OBUSA committees.

Prince Max of Baden (1867-1929): Baden was the last Imperial Chancellor of Germany at the end of World War I. Hahn was the Prince’s private secretary and helped the Prince write his memoirs. “The prince was a scholarly, humane man who in a speech in 1917 dared to say, ‘To love your enemy is the sign of those who remain loyal to the Lord even in time of war.’ The two men shared an enthusiasm for Plato’s educational ideas, and in 1920 Prince Max founded a coeducational boarding school with Hahn as headmaster. This was Salem (shalom, salaam, peace) Schule...”

Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh: Husband of Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain. Philip, of Greek ancestry, was a student of Hahn’s at Schule Schloss Salem and a life-long supporter of Hahn and his educational institutions. Prince Philip served as the Royal Patron of the Outward Bound Trust for many years, turning over the reins to his son Prince Andrew in 1999.

Hermann Röhrs: Author of “The Educational Thought of Kurt Hahn,” in *Kurt Hahn*, edited by H. Röhrs and H. Tunstall-Behrens. London, 1970.

Robert Skidelsky: Skidelsky “...was born in 1939 in Harbin, Manchuria, of Russian-born parents who were naturalized British citizens. He went to school at Brighton College, then won an open scholarship in history to Jesus College, Oxford, from which he graduated in 1961. After postgraduate work he was made a research fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford, and in 1968 he became a research fellow of the British Academy.”

Gary A. Templin: “... director of the Colorado School (COBS) from 1974 to 1980.... Gary was one of the seminal builders of the United States. Outward Bound.... To this day, Gary continues to provide vital leadership to Outward Bound as a trustee and chairman of the Pacific Crest Outward Bound School’s safety committee.”

Meet Some Mission Statements

Third International OB Conference, Cooperstown, NY, 1988:

We must: seek to inspire self-respect, care for others, responsibility to the community and sensitivity to the world environment; proclaim our belief in the value of compassion through active help for human beings; promote greater understanding between people, especially the young, of different races and cultures; work together on an international basis to remove the barriers which separate the people of the world.

Outward Bound International, 2000:

To help people discover and develop their potential to care for themselves, others, and the world around them through challenging experiences in unfamiliar settings. Self Discovery through Adventure. Core Values: Courage, Trust, Integrity, Compassion, Cooperation

Outward Bound USA, 2004:

Outward Bound is a nonprofit educational organization whose mission is to conduct safe, adventure-based courses structured to encourage growth and discovery, and to inspire confidence, self-reliance, concern for others, and care for the environment. Core Values: Adventure and Challenge, Learning by Doing, Character Development, Compassion and Service Social and Environmental Responsibility

Outward Bound International, 2016:

Our mission is to help people discover and develop their potential to care for themselves, others, and the world around them through challenging experiences in unfamiliar settings.

Outward Bound Motto, 1941:

To serve, to strive, and not to yield

The Discussion

Let us now begin. As moderator, I propose to set the tone for our discussion of the place that service takes in the philosophy and history of Outward Bound by sharing the following familiar story.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

There was once a man who was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when robbers attacked him, stripped him, and beat him up, leaving him half-dead. It so happened that a priest was going down that road; but when he saw the man, he walked on by on the other side. In the same way a Levite [an administrator and teacher at the Temple] also came there, went over and looked at the man, and then walked on by on the other side. But a Samaritan who was traveling that way came upon the man, and when he saw him, his heart was filled with pity. He went over to him, poured oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them; then he put the man on his own animal and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. “Take care of him,” he told the innkeeper, “and when I come back this way, I will pay you whatever else you spend on him.”

And Jesus concluded, “In your opinion, which one of these three acted like a neighbor toward the man attacked by the robbers?”
“The man who gave him practical sympathy,” he replied. Jesus replied, “You go, then, and do the same.”

Why was this story—in which two people of high social status failed to help while a member of a despised “foreign” ethnic group, an outsider, “taught what it means to be a civilized human being”—Kurt Hahn’s favorite, the story he invariably selected for reading at the end-of-term ceremonies at Gordonstoun School?

Josh Miner:

“...The very heart of [Hahn’s] personal philosophy... was his profound commitment to the Samaritan ethic. He had one hero above all: the compassionate traveler on the road to Jericho. Again and again he called for the Parable of the Good

Samaritan to be read to the school. In the years to come I was to witness the growing power of his ultimate conviction—that through help to those ‘in danger and in need’ youth can strike the deepest chords in the human spirit. It would become a creed: ‘He who drills and labors, accepts hardship, boredom, and dangers, all for the sake of helping his brother in peril and distress, discovers God’s purpose in his inner life.’”

Ian Lawson:

The story is only “some 130 words long, yet in that parable, he saw three great Samaritan virtues—Compassion, Efficiency, and Thoroughness. They were the guidelines that gave a

sense of purpose and an ideal to strive for. Fifty years on, his [Hahn's] words still resonate as powerfully as ever—a spiritual legacy—which continues to inspire and to encourage as powerfully as ever.”

What were some of the influences in Hahn's early life with his family that led him to so strong an admiration for the Samaritan helper?

Robert Skidelsky and John Day:

“Kurt Matthias Robert Martin Hahn was born in Berlin, Germany, on June 5th, 1886, the second son of Oskar and Charlotte Landau Hahn, well-educated and affluent members of Berlin's cultured Jewish community. Amongst his ancestors on Kurt Hahn's father's side, there were teachers and industrialists, and on his mother's side, one ancestor was an influential Chief Rabbi of Prague. Throughout his youth, the household provided an active and stimulating environment, influenced by strong Jewish traditions, as well as by frequent visitors with social, political, and academic credentials.” “The teachings of the Torah, and also the values brought from Prussia by his mother's family, counseled that one has an obligation to love and help one's neighbor, and that ‘it was thought to be an honour to be asked to help.’”

So we can understand how Hahn, thanks to his upbringing, developed his abiding interests in international relations, in the life of the mind as well as the body, and in the spirit of *tikun olam* (“repair of this world”), the doctrine urging Jews, individually and collectively, to work to make the world a better place.

But how did Hahn jump from his strong Jewish influences to adopting the Good Samaritan as his hero, considering that not only was the parable narrated by Jesus, but also that Samaritans were despised by the Jews of that era. In addition to the similarity to “the fundamental commandment of the Torah... ‘Love thy neighbor as thyself,’” how else can this be explained?

Prince Max:

At our school, Schule Schloss Salem, I urged Hahn to incorporate “egalitarian aims into the design of the school; while Salem naturally attracted the children of the wealthy, it also made space for, and actively sought, less privileged students. Emulating the Cistercian monks who had inhabited the castle for many centuries, the students and teachers at Salem School helped the surrounding communities through various forms of service, including a fire brigade.”

Robert Skidelsky:

“...Hahn was greatly influenced by the ideals of the Cistercian monks who had lived at Salem up to 1804. They believed in serving the community, not just spiritually, but by offering

active help wherever it was needed. The Cistercians, Max told him, ‘were the road-builders, the farmers, the foresters, the doctors, the consolers and the teachers of this district.’ In Salem, then, we have the development of the ‘ideal of service’ which was later to become the grandest of Hahn's grandes passions.”

So Jewish and Christian beliefs and practices, the ways of the Torah and of the Cistercians, came together and were encapsulated, for Hahn, in the story of the compassionate traveler on the road to Jericho. But, why did Hahn and Prince Max want to establish their new school in the first place?

Thomas James:

After World War I, “when Prince Max returned to spend his last years at the ancestral castle of his family at Schloss Salem, by Lake Constance, he took Kurt Hahn with him and they discussed projects to renew the ethical traditions of German social life, traditions they believed were threatened not only by extremism on the right and left, but by incomprehension, moral failings, and lack of will in the middle. In 1920 with Prince Max as benefactor, Hahn opened Salem School in part of the castle.

“Salem represented an attempt to create a healthy environment in which young people could learn habits that would protect them against what Hahn saw as the deteriorating values of modern life. He identified the worst declines as those in fitness, skill and care, self-discipline, initiative and enterprise, memory and imagination, and compassion.”

Donn Kesselheim:

“Years later, in Britain during World War II, the County Badge Experimental Committee picked up on that theme, stating (in Hahn's words) that the Training Plan ‘... was specifically designed to counteract:

- The decline of initiative associated with “spectatoritis”;
- The decline of fitness as a result of modern means of locomotion;
- The decline of skill and care brought about by weakening the traditions of craftsmanship;
- The decline of concern about one's neighbor as a result of the unseemly haste with which daily life is conducted.

In later years, Hahn added a fifth area of concern: The decline in self-discipline due to the ever-present availability of tranquilizers and stimulants.”

In the Seven Laws of Salem we can see how Hahn sought to reverse these declines. The Third Law especially targets the “decline of concern about one's neighbor”:

“Give the children the opportunity of self-effacement in the common cause. Even the youngsters ought to undertake tasks which are of definite importance for the community. Tell them from the start: ‘You are a crew, not passengers.’ Let the responsible boys and girls shoulder duties big enough, when negligently performed, to wreck the state.”

When Hahn was exiled from Nazi-ruled Germany in July of 1933, thirteen years after the school at Schloss Salem opened, he was greatly depressed, having been forced to abandon all that he had worked for. How was he able to move on to the next phase of his life?

Josh Miner:

“When he was asked to found a new school along Salem lines, he lacked the will.... Then he returned to Moray, [in] the north of Scotland... [where] he inspected the empty castle at Gordonstoun, badly in need of repair, as a possible site for a school. Its vistas seized his spirit, and he knew again the truth that he would summon so often in guiding others: ‘Your disability is your opportunity.’”

Martin Flavin:

Hahn “... often quoted a maxim from [the Greek poet] Pindar: ‘Grow into what you are.’ What Hahn understood by this exhortation... is indicated by the more explicit motto chosen later for Gordonstoun...: Plus est en vous (you have more in you than you think).”

In addition to his own need to resume a productive life, especially a life in service to humanity, what needs did Hahn discern in Britain that he believed he could address in this new boarding school in Scotland?

Kurt Hahn:

“I regard it as the foremost task of education to insure the survival of these qualities:

- an enterprising curiosity,
- an undefeatable spirit,
- tenacity in pursuit,
- readiness for sensible self-denial,
- and above all, compassion.”

Although that well-known statement was made by Dr. Hahn during a celebration of his 80th birthday in 1966, it has a time-less quality, and, could well have been his same analysis years before when he observed the condition of many British youth in the 1930s.

Donn Kesselheim:

Agreed. “The fact that the German intellectual community failed to stand up to Nazism made a lasting impression upon Hahn. Thereafter, he was profoundly convinced that brilliance of mind amounts to little if it is not matched by moral courage—as evidenced by a commitment to action.”

Robert Skidelsky:

Yes, and further: “Was it not Gordonstoun’s mission to fulfill Prince Max’s ideal of ‘Cistercian service’ by spreading the good news abroad, placing the possibility of ‘preventive cure’ within the reach of every boy, thus setting an example of active citizenship?”

“... he wanted to fire individuals to action, rather than influence slowly the climate of opinion through books. ... The important thing was to be doing something, rather than just talking about it. Underlying... this craving for activity was Hahn’s doctrine that a man is what he does. This belief lay at the basis of his educational thinking. ... Hahn’s chief educational aim was to produce citizens rather than thinkers, men of action rather than scholars.”



Kurt Hahn:

“Before Gordonstoun was opened, I had the leisure to reflect on the course of Salem’s evolution; it became clear to me where we had been on the right track and where we had gone astray. Of one thing I was certain: we had not made enough effort to emulate the Cistercian model; true, we had indeed seized some dramatic opportunities to show ourselves helpful to the neighbourhood, but there was lacking the epic constancy of daily service such as the Cistercians had practiced and preached.”

So, what do we know about how Hahn and his faculty at Gordonstoun tried to achieve “the epic constancy of daily service”?

Robert Skidelsky:

“The discovery of suitable service came by chance. Salem had been inspired by the Cistercian ideal. Now Hahn came to hear of an eighth-century monk called Gernadius who on stormy nights used to walk along the coast opposite Gordonstoun waving a lantern to warn fishermen of rocks and shoals. Initial attempts to get the boys to emulate the efforts of this worthy man foundered. ‘They suspected me,’ Hahn wrote, ‘of trying to improve their souls.’ But it was different when two leading Captains of H.M. Coastguards visited the school. ‘You are needed,’ they said. If the boys would build a coastguard hut themselves, the coastguards would install a telephone and provide life-saving equipment. The response was apparently enthusiastic and thus the Gordonstoun Watchers were born, sitting in their watchtower ‘looking into the darkness in patient readiness lest a stranded vessel should burn an inefficient flare’. Later, fire service and mountain rescue were added, and each boy was required to join one of the three, and undergo the requisite training.”

You have written, Martin Flavin, that Hahn’s enthusiasm for “the transforming potentiality of rescue services” led him to want to start the coast watch station. Who can tell us more about Hahn’s thoughts on this means of service to the community beyond the school?

Ian Lawson:

“Hahn felt strongly that you could not impose ideas or values on young people; they might be persuaded, but the way to total support was to make them feel wanted. That is why there was never any shortage of volunteers for the Rescue Services — Fire, Coast Guard, and Mountain Rescue. It was in Rescue that he hoped they would find the moral equivalent of war.”

Could we take a closer look at that expression, “the moral equivalent of war”? The philosopher William James is credited with originating the concept. What did Hahn understand it to describe?

Josh Miner:

“No other human being, perhaps, responded as avidly as Hahn to William James’s call to seek ‘the moral equivalent of war.’ ... The answer, Hahn was convinced, lay in ‘the passion of rescue.’ His moral equivalent of war was ‘to enthral and hold the young through active and willing Samaritan service, demanding care and skill, courage and endurance, discipline and initiative.’”

Kurt Hahn:

“My second accusation against our system of education is this: it fails to introduce activities into a boy’s life ... to make him discover his powers as a man of action.



“At the beginning of this war [World War II] we experienced a remarkable change in the young. Every ounce of their human strength was claimed; the light of enterprise and daring was lit in their faces, and some of these young soldiers confessed to me that they felt a great release from their former existence, ‘which hardly could be called a life.’

“I refuse to arrange a world war in every generation to rescue the young from a depressing peace. Let us rather plan their life at school so that they can discover and test their hidden powers. Education has no nobler task... [than] to provide ‘the moral equivalent of war’...”

“He who demands much from the young commands their willing service.”

One compelling example of the power of this idea of a “moral equivalent” is cited by Gilbert Burnett, who had served in the Office of Strategic Services (the OSS) for the US war effort during World War II, and had then transferred to the Central Intelligence Agency where he worked as an international “dirty tricks” agent but had finally tired of being a “rootless kamikaze.” He vividly remembered his 1960 meeting at Brown’s Hotel in London with Hahn:

Gil Burnett:

“The philosophy that he gave me at that particular time in my own life was what I was looking for. He understood about the work I had been doing and the question that I was facing, of how to shift from being a destructive representative of the postwar period. How, instead of blowing up bridges, do you build a bridge in order to effect a rescue? That was an idea that had never before occurred to me.”

Not long after the establishment of Gordonstoun, Hahn determined that the same sorts of educational advantages that were offered to the Gordonstoun students should also be made available to the youth of the county. He created the Moray Badge scheme, which later evolved into the nationwide County Badge program. “The four key elements to achieving the County Badge have been embraced by Outward Bound and are referred to as the ‘Four Pillars.’” What are the “Four Pillars,” and how did Hahn describe the metaphor?

Lester Davies:

In a conversation with Hahn in the 1960s, “... I asked him for firm guidelines upon which to structure our programs for Outward Bound in the years ahead.

“Imagine a Roman Temple,” Hahn said. “The roof is the training program. It does not matter whether the mountains, the sea, or any other topographical medium is used for the

activities which help to develop the boy’s character. The roof must be held aloft by four pillars.”

“And what are they?” I asked.

“The four pillars of my philosophy... are as follows,” and he counted them on his fingers:

- ‘1) physical fitness
- 2) self-reliance
- 3) rescue
- 4) project work.”

So, once again, rescue is included by Hahn as a central element. Let’s investigate further his thinking about providing Samaritan service through rescue. We have often heard Hahn’s statement: “It is the sin of the soul to force young people into opinions — indoctrination is of the devil — but it is culpable neglect not to impel young people into experiences.” When we realize that the verb impel means “to urge or drive forward... as if by the exertion of strong moral pressure,” we can better appreciate what Hahn intended when he talked about how “to win the young”:

Kurt Hahn:

“There are three ways of trying to win the young. There is persuasion, there is compulsion, and there is attraction. You can preach at them, that is a hook without a worm; you can say, ‘you must volunteer,’ and that is of the devil; and you can tell them, ‘you are needed.’ That appeal hardly ever fails. I am quite certain that the young of today respond better to the service which is demanded from them in the interest of others than to the service which is offered them for their overt benefit and improvement.”

Being truly needed to serve in the interest of others gives a person a deep sense of empowerment, of contributing meaningfully to his or her community. Why did Hahn’s concept of service evolve to place the greatest emphasis on rescue, over and above other forms of service?

Martin Flavin:

“As he became involved in projects that led to the Outward Bound movement he became deeply impressed by rescue work. Its transforming effect on the rescuer captured his imagination, and he came to think it could yield more dramatic changes in the young than community service.”

Gary Templin and Phillip Baldwin:

“Hahn never advocated adventure as an end in itself, but rather as a training vehicle through which youth would mature. It was vital for adventure to be tied together with the concept of reserve [i.e., ‘sensible self-denial’] and service to the community. Through unselfish action and dramatic rescue situations youth would also learn compassion, an element Hahn thought was missing in post-war Britain.”

Once people in the United States became aware of Kurt Hahn and his Outward Bound program, Jack Stevens, Josh Miner, Chuck Froelicher, Gil Burnett, and others worked to establish an official Outward Bound School on this side of the Atlantic. What, particularly, did they see in the character of the American youth culture—and what did they think young Americans needed to discover about themselves—which they thought Outward Bound might benefit?

Chuck Froelicher:

“Without self-discovery, a person may still have self-confidence, but it is a self-confidence built on ignorance and it melts in the face of heavy burdens. Self-discovery is the end product of a great challenge mastered, when the mind commands the body to do the seemingly impossible, when strength and courage are summoned to extraordinary limits for the sake of something outside the self — a principle, an onerous task, another human life. This kind of self-discovery is the effective antidote for the indifference and insensitivity we have bred into modern youth.”

In the latter half of the twentieth century, though, and into the twenty-first, the ideas of “self-discovery” and “self-actualization,” seem to have become almost ends in themselves. In our rush to “just do it” and to “push the envelope,” we may be seeking new experiences mainly for the ego-satisfaction of each additional accomplishment. Should Outward Bound follow that trail?

Prince Philip:

“Self-confidence and self-discovery are not enough by themselves as a preparation for a responsible position in adult society. They need to be tempered with a spirit of compassion and tolerance, a sense of humanity and concern for others. That is why all Outward Bound courses lay great emphasis on the principle of service to others.”

Hermann Röhrs:

“Only in the framework of selfless enterprise do adventure and daring acquire the educative significance and go to the forming of an ethical personality.”

Josh Miner:

“On Hahn’s visit [to the National Urban League headquarters in Harlem] during his final trip to the US, a boy who had recently returned from a course at Hurricane Island told him, ‘It gives you a feeling of great power if you breathe life into a dead person.’ This was one more affirmation of the message he was carrying on his cross-country safari: ‘The passion of rescue releases the highest dynamic of the human soul.’”

Is it, then, this “spirit of compassion and tolerance,” this “ethical personality,” this “highest dynamic of the human soul,” which should be a major goal for Outward Bound today as the movement seeks to carry out the mission set by its Founder, even though his philosophy and his methodology were codified some 75 years ago? And, if the proponents of Outward Bound believe that there still is great merit in Hahn’s ideas and utility in his practices, how can we best live into that conviction?

Mike Fischesser:

“By using rescue training as a service theme, adventure educators can create the opportunity to have a greater impact on students by using dramatic, realistic, high adventure components which also help to accomplish most of the other course goals and objectives.

“The individual and group pride, morale, and esprit de corps provides [sic] the students with a sense of power from knowing that they can make a difference if someone needs them. This empowerment is one of the main magical ingredients of an Outward Bound or similar experience. If students know that they can take care of themselves and others it gives them an intense kind of personal confidence.”

Josh Miner:

“In an Outward Bound program,’ Willauer declared, ‘the place of honor must be held by the Rescue Services.’ He cited **the heart of Kurt Hahn’s programmatic thinking** [emphasis added]: ‘The experience of helping a fellow man in danger, or even of training in a realistic way to give this help, tends to change the balance of power in a youth’s inner life with the result that compassion can become the master motive.’”

There may now be constraints facing Outward Bound program managers and instructors which steer them away from including service projects and rescue training in courses. Certainly, there are time constraints: “If we have to wedge a day of service into the curriculum, what gets sacrificed?” And, for mobile, back-country courses, the chance of encountering other humans “in danger and in need” is remote. Does this mean that our only dependable type of service project, beyond the daily taking care of the needs of one another in the crew, will be trail maintenance?

Bob MacArthur:

“The life saving drama of rescue lies at the heart of Kurt Hahn’s philosophy of service, and preparation for that moment of need has been central to Outward Bond training since the program began.

"Today, however, the opportunities for rescue are remote. The proliferation of para-professional rescue units and the length, location, and structure of the Outward Bound course itself have meant that Outward Bound groups may not be called upon or may not be available when emergencies do arrive. As a result, the centrality of service in Outward Bound has retreated with the lack of compelling applications."

Given today's realities, then, should we consider other approaches to rendering service where there is a need?

Bill Coffin:

"In the early 1960s I asked this of Hahn: 'Knowing that Outward Bound tried to link compassion with adventure by training people for rescue opportunities primarily on the sea and in the mountains, I wanted to know if he felt this kind of experience could readily be translated, say, into the slums; could it be relived in the humdrum of everyday life?' 'Aren't you afraid of the lure of the dramatic,' I asked. 'Not at all,' he answered. 'We can make the glamour of war fade only by introducing drama into the life of the nation at peace. The young hunger for adventure. They long to be tested, to prove their reserves.'"

Coffin's question about translating the experience "into the slums" connects us to the long-term commitment of Outward Bound in the USA to the urban context. How and why did that begin?

Josh Miner:

"We... felt that the idea of service so central to our philosophy might be especially meaningful in the cities. Service begins in Outward Bound with the care of the other members of the small, interdependent community in which the course is experienced. On wilderness courses, it may end there, for want of apparent opportunities to come to the aid of others outside the group. But it's a different story in the cities, where service to those in need can be the central and most compelling lesson, and where there are plenty of opportunities to help others."

Bob MacArthur:

"... Coffin's question to Hahn about the applicability of dramatic service to settings other than the mountains or the sea, leads us to explore a less visible form of service..., but one which is, nonetheless, important to a renewal of service in Outward Bound. In a lecture [in 1965, Hahn stated]:

I have mentioned voluntary bodies trained for dramatic rescue. We should take equally seriously those epic labors of love which are undertaken by young people; helping old people, the spastics, the blind, the deaf, helping in hospitals, helping to preserve the treasures of nature.

"We shall use the phrase 'epic service' to refer to those labors in which the need is not as acute, the adventure less physical, and the action less dramatic than rescue service."



We might say, for the sake of simple classification, that “dramatic service” is that which is rendered “to those in danger,” while “epic service” is given “to those in need.” Looking through the pages of “To Serve: 1996 Service Report,” circulated by Outward Bound USA’s headquarters office, and through years of national Course Catalogs, one can discover numerous examples of “epic service,” in addition to several more dramatic efforts, that were performed by students and staff of the OB Schools. Further, many Outward Bound Professional courses use as their focusing activity a training-for-rescue model. Clearly, the principle of service continues to be put into practice in the US Outward Bound Schools.

But I would like to lead the discussion back to what Hahn believed to be true of the dramatic form of service: rescue. Let’s listen to Thomas James’s account of Josh Miner’s reaction to the decline in commitment to service projects in the early years of the Colorado school:

Thomas James:

“Miner... suggested [to the Board of Trustees] that rescue training was the main thing that kept the school from degenerating into either a summer camp or a survival type of school.

“Miner, Kemper, Froelicher, Holden and others were worried that without service as a major part of the program, Outward Bound would degenerate into toughness for the sake of toughness.

“Miner even went so far as to suggest, in the tradition of Hahn, that search and rescue was the primary mission of Outward Bound, and he deplored its omission from school courses after the first few seasons. He argued that climbing simply for the sake of climbing missed the point in an Outward Bound program. He saw service as the unifying force of this unique form of education. Once the school has firmly established the idea of service through rescue, the mastery of specific skills begins to make sense. And then, too, other qualities of Outward Bound seem to fall into place more readily. Adventure and challenge become implicit even on a dry-run rescue exercise. The sense of accomplishment

through participation in such an operation can result in greater self-discipline, self-confidence, self-discovery and self-respect. Having been required to extend oneself on such a drill, an individual becomes more aware of his own potential and his latent concern for others. The student learns responsibility and perseverance on such an exercise, and he develops in himself a sense of humility. The reasons for being flexible and adaptable, the ability to make decisions, the need for physical conditioning—all now begin to make sense. The student now begins to realize not only how but also why he should learn to cope with himself and with adversity.”

Those sentiments go to the core of what drove Josh Miner, and Kurt Hahn before him, to work tirelessly “to change the balance of power in a youth’s inner life with the result that compassion can become the master motive.” In his closing address to the 1965 Outward Bound Conference in Harrogate, England, Hahn asked the audience to consider the ideals they espoused:

Kurt Hahn:

“I believe that the challenge of Samaritan Service, if properly presented, rarely fails to capture young people, body and soul, not only in the Western World. I hear encouraging news about the young behind the Iron Curtain—many of them look westward, with distrust but also with hope. They ask a question which makes us blush: ‘Are you in earnest about the ideals you profess?’ Who shall give an answer? Young men and women who render hard and willing service to their fellow men in danger and in need.”

What ideals do we profess? When we say or write the Outward Bound motto, when we talk with our students about the motto’s meaning, and about Outward Bound’s Core Values, are we in earnest? Do we demonstrate those values in deed, not just in word?


It is my hope that this “panel discussion” will have encouraged us all, both individually and institutionally, to live up to, and into, our foundational beliefs and principles. By doing so, we will both honor our heritage and demonstrate our uniqueness.

To Make a Difference

The Starfish Story

As the old man walked the beach at dawn, he noticed a young man ahead of him picking up starfish and flinging them into the sea. Finally, catching up to the youth, he asked him why he was doing this. The answer was that the stranded starfish would die in the morning sun. “But the beach goes on for miles and there are millions of starfish,” countered the other. “How can your effort make any difference?” The young man looked at the starfish in his hand and then threw him safely into the waves. “It makes a difference to this one,” he said.

—adapted from Loren Eiseley, “The Star Thrower,” 1969.

Readers interested in a copy of this story with references should contact the author or Outward Bound International. 

Looking Back

Outward Bound Singapore in the 1960s: Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong recalls his Outward Bound course

Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong attended Outward Bound Singapore (OBS) while he was a school student. He shares his experience then, and his vision for OBS in the future.

"I attended OBS in 1967, when it was still run by British Army officers, just before the People's Association took it over. The course was 17 days long. The participants were Secondary 4 students from many schools, both boys and girls.

The facilities were basic, but we learnt to fend for ourselves, to rough it out in the field, and to take care of one another. It was physically rigorous. We had Physical Training every morning. Activities included sailing, canoeing, map reading, cross country runs, as well as team building exercises. At night we would sit around and sing campfire songs.

I enjoyed the experience greatly. It was challenging, but we felt a sense of achievement at completing the tasks. The most difficult exercise was an orienteering course we did on the mainland, in the Punggol area. It was tough, because we had to navigate without a compass, and had to run from checkpoint to checkpoint, and keep the whole team together. In those days Punggol was a rural area, so there were lots of tracks where we could get lost, which of course we did.


By the end of the course, we were not only physically much fitter, but had become more confident in ourselves. We discovered that we could push ourselves to the limit, and do things we never thought we could do. It was also fun. We made good friends with one another, and with the instructors, too. One of them was Mr S. Puhaindran, who was then the Scoutmaster in Raffles Institution and who later became a grassroots leader in Marine Parade. He remains a good friend today.

OBS has done well in fostering a physically and mentally rugged society. When OBS started out in 1967, it conducted ten courses

annually with just five instructors. Over time, its capacity has grown, and its facilities upgraded. Today, the OBS trains 23,000 participants annually, in a modern, purpose-built adventure centre. The OBS has expanded its programmes to cater to changing needs and expectations. It has provided opportunities for young Singaporeans to experience the Outward Bound in Singapore and other countries. It has also pioneered best practices in adventure learning, which have been adopted by many schools and training institutions, both locally and in the region.

From a small outfit 40 years ago, OBS has become one of the best Outward Bound centres in the world, recognized for its innovative facilities, progressive training methods and top-notch safety standards. When the OBS was formed, its mission was to nurture our youths to be physically and mentally robust, and to instill in them a strong sense of responsibility to society. These objectives are just as relevant today.

In a cosmopolitan and fast-paced society, the OBS must continue to develop in our young the same courage and grit, the same resourcefulness and self-reliance, and the same sense of compassion and responsibility to care for the less fortunate and contribute something worthwhile to society. Only then can we bring Singapore forward, and secure a brighter future for ourselves. OBS should continue to grow and set the standard for outdoor education in Singapore and the region. I look forward to more new and innovative programmes, and greater outreach to young Singaporeans, so that many more will have the opportunity to benefit from an Outward Bound experience: the commitment to serve the community, the determination to strive to be the best that they can be, the never-say-die spirit to overcome adversity, and try and try again until they succeed. In short, to live up to the OBS motto: To serve, to strive, and not to yield."

Excerpted from the book: *Of Courage And Character: Outward Bound Singapore: The First 40 Years.* 



A young Lee Hsien Loong at OBS. He is seated in the front row, second from right.



LOOKING BACK: THE FIRST DAYS OF OUTWARD BOUND NEW ZEALAND

As told by Katie McNabb (daughter of Hamish Thomas, First School Warden)



Our family were well into the concept of Outward Bound before arriving at the chosen site of Anakiwa in 1962. We had lived in England for the previous year, so that my father, Hamish Thomas, could visit existing Outward Bound Schools, and a pilot scheme had been set up on Motatapu Island in the Gulf upon our return.

In June that year,

we arrived in the Marlborough Sounds, my brother Jamie and I thought it would be a great holiday and brilliant place for sailing—not exactly! These were the days before television, the mail only arrived three days a week and the groceries once a week, so this was a very different experience from our former life in the middle of 1960s Christchurch.

'These were the days before television, the mail only arrived three days a week and the groceries once a week.'

Huge work needed to be done to the formerly lovely (and internationally renowned) guest house. Since the previous owner's departure, the new owners had not kept up the extremely high standards that had been insisted on by Mrs Hazelwood. My Uncle, John Moore from Kekerangu, gathered up an extraordinary army of volunteers that arrived every weekend (complete with his tractor on the farm truck) until the opening on September 1st, to turn the buildings into a school. Unfortunately, the opening



had to take place prior to the first course start in October, as Lord Cobham was due to return to England that month. With much haste, members from the Mana Cruising Club along with the newly formed Outward Bound crew and other local volunteers worked miracles and got the school ready in time.

With only hours to go, Hamish discovered that the beautiful new sign displaying the Outward Bound motto (from Tennyson's,






'Ulysses') 'To Serve, To Strive and not To Yield' had the word 'yield' spelt incorrectly (this was later fixed)! The opening was an occasion with a capital 'O'. As the press cuttings record, a veritable who's who of the time attended, with Lord Cobham leading the procession.

As a ten year old, it was terribly exciting, as the Governor-General and then Prime Minister, Keith Holyoake, along with the leader of the opposition, Sir Walter Nash, arrived by flying boat. Old curtains artfully surrounded the temporary stage where the dignitaries sat. Everyone was dressed in their best and the school was officially opened!

While the opening was the seminal moment the arrival of the first students (or boys as they were more often referred to), dressed in sports coats and ties, was a time of great nervousness for Hamish. But soon enough, it all fell into a rhythm of students coming and going. They boys arrived pale and not terribly healthy and left 21 days later, beginning to appreciate the change that had taken place.

For my family, it was like in living a village. The staff all lived on site with their families and there was always someone to talk to. Instructors took the time to teach my brother and I about boats, bush walking, and kayaking. There were often visits from famous people, Sir Walter Nash, Sir Edmund Hillary and Peter Mulgrew to name but a few. We often sat at the back of the room and enjoyed the stories alongside the students.

The school fast became a huge success and was accepted not only by the locals, but by the wider New Zealand community. Four hundred and fifty young men passed through the school in its first year. As I progressed through into my teens, I absorbed attitudes and skills that were certainly different from those of my peers. Extraordinary to think that my father gave up a successful criminal law practice and a very comfortable existence to do something he truly believed in. At the time we thought it was just what everybody did. On reflection—we realise what an amazing contribution he made to our society.

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From Character Training To Personal Growth

By Mark Freeman

Outward Bound today is a vast organisation, and more than a million people have, in the words of the Trust's website, "benefited from the Outward Bound experience". The history of Outward Bound has been told in various places, including the Generations website, where former participants are encouraged to share their experiences—and their photographs. There have been some longer accounts of the formation and early years of the Trust and the first schools in Britain, often written by the pioneers themselves. However, there is no single fully published history of Outward Bound in Britain, let alone across the world.

The purpose of this article is modest: to consider some aspects of the early history of Outward Bound in Britain, from its origins in 1941 to the mid-1960s. The main focus is on the concept of 'character-training' that was so important in the early years, and remains closely associated with adventure education in the popular mind. I will show how many of the pioneers' ideas about character, and how best to build or train it, were challenged in the first 25 years of the movement, and how the changes reflected wider developments in culture, society, and education.

Origins and early development

Some, perhaps most, readers will be familiar with the origins of Outward Bound. But it is worth giving a brief overview here, to set the scene for the changes that took place in the 1950s and 1960s.

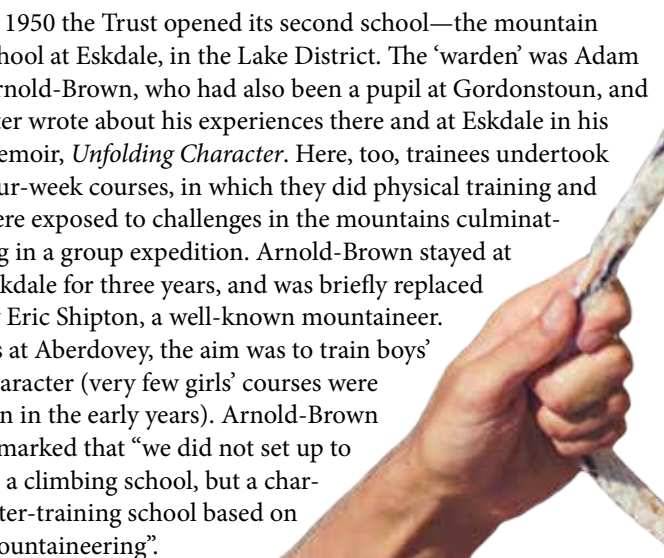
The first Outward Bound school was established at Aberdovey (Aberdyfi), on the west coast of Wales, in 1941 by Kurt Hahn and Lawrence Holt. Holt was a partner in Alfred Holt and Company, owners of the Blue Funnel shipping line. Blue Funnel had a longstanding character-training programme for its midshipmen. Hahn was a refugee from Nazi Germany, and the founder of Gordonstoun school in Moray, Scotland, which also aimed at the training of 'character'—and where Prince Philip was one of the first pupils in the 1930s.

Aberdovey ran four-week courses, in which trainees—initially merchant navy cadets but later industrial apprentices and others—were given intensive athletics training, were taught seamanship, and prepared for a land-based expedition at the end of the

course. Character-training was the declared aim of the school, which announced itself as offering not 'training for the sea', but rather 'training through the sea'.

In 1946 the Outward Bound Trust was set up to manage the Aberdovey school and also to establish new schools. This involved an impressive range of prominent individuals from the worlds of education, business, and politics. The Trust was set up in G. M. Trevelyan's rooms in Cambridge. Trevelyan, a leading historian, was also involved with the Youth Hostels Association. The Trust's chairman was the social investigator and reformer Seebohm Rowntree of York, and his son Peter was also on the committee. The Rowntrees were best known for their confectionery company, later taken over by Nestle. Other members included the mountaineer Geoffrey Winthrop Young, the iron and steel magnate Spencer Summers (who was also a former Conservative MP), and the Chief Scout, Lord Rowallan. They were joined a few years later by the trade unionist Vic Feather. The membership was drawn from across the political spectrum, which helped to ensure the wide appeal of Outward Bound.

In 1950 the Trust opened its second school—the mountain school at Eskdale, in the Lake District. The 'warden' was Adam Arnold-Brown, who had also been a pupil at Gordonstoun, and later wrote about his experiences there and at Eskdale in his memoir, *Unfolding Character*. Here, too, trainees undertook four-week courses, in which they did physical training and were exposed to challenges in the mountains culminating in a group expedition. Arnold-Brown stayed at Eskdale for three years, and was briefly replaced by Eric Shipton, a well-known mountaineer. As at Aberdovey, the aim was to train boys' character (very few girls' courses were run in the early years). Arnold-Brown remarked that "we did not set up to be a climbing school, but a character-training school based on mountaineering".



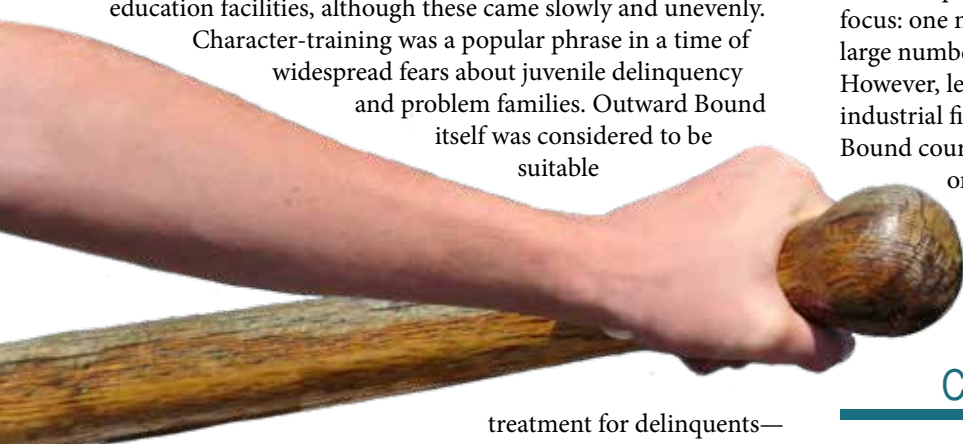
More Outward Bound schools followed: the Moray Sea School at Burghead, near Gordonstoun; a second mountain school at Ullswater; and another in Devon in 1959. A school was established in 1963 at Rhowniar, in Wales, to run courses for girls. By 1964, more than 55,000 trainees had passed through the schools, and there was a concerted attempt to establish Outward Bound overseas, notably in Malaysia, Kenya, and Germany, and in the United States from 1962.

In Britain, the majority of trainees in this period were boys aged between 15 and 19 (the school-leaving age was not raised to 16 until 1972), and most were industrial apprentices, whose employers gave them leave to attend and paid the substantial fees—£45 in 1964 (about £640 in today's prices). Each trainee who finished the course was awarded a badge, either Honours, Merit, or Membership (the names of the categories changed frequently).

Character and leadership

The declared aim of Outward Bound was to provide 'Character Training Through Adventure'. The post-war years were a propitious time for outdoor and adventure education. The 1944 Education Act, which established universal and free secondary education, also required local authorities to establish outdoor education facilities, although these came slowly and unevenly.

Character-training was a popular phrase in a time of widespread fears about juvenile delinquency and problem families. Outward Bound itself was considered to be suitable



treatment for delinquents—some borstal boys were sent on courses in the 1950s. Some members of the Outward Bound Trust—and Kurt Hahn himself—were worried about the effects of affluence and the new welfare state on individual character. Spencer Summers later recalled that Outward Bound gave young people a chance to develop a sense of responsibility, and therefore provided "an antidote to the possible consequences of the welfare state". Others were worried about what they called 'spectatoritis'—the tendency, for example, to watch sport instead of playing it. Many of these concerns already seemed old-fashioned to many even in the 1950s, but they were an important feature of the political landscape of the time.

Memories of the First and Second World Wars beset Outward Bound in the late 1940s and 1950s. Although Hahn and others abhorred the horrors of war, they also admitted that war provided opportunities for young men to display their strength of character. A key influence on Hahn, and on many pacifist educators in the interwar years, was the American philosopher William James, brother of novelist Henry James. In his famous essay "The Moral Equivalent of War", first published in 1906, James de-

scribed the martial virtues of "intrepidity, contempt of softness, surrender of private interest, [and] obedience to command", and hoped that peacetime activities could be devised for young people, in which these virtues could be trained. James declared: "We must make new energies and hardships continue the manliness to which the military mind so faithfully clings." Hahn and the other Outward Bound pioneers agreed, emphasising the value of exposing young people to the dangers presented by the sea and the mountains. These challenges, it was argued, fostered self-control, the exercise of responsibility, modesty, self-confidence, initiative, and teamwork, among other things.

In the early years, the physical element of character-training was particularly important; Hahn himself always emphasised it strongly. A programme of physical activities, focusing on field events, accompanied the specialised training in seamanship or mountaineering that trainees received in the schools. They were graded on their athletic achievements, which some in Outward Bound thought was unfair, given that some boys had obvious physical advantages in field events. Nevertheless, for Kurt Hahn and many of his followers, 'character and moral probity' were closely associated with 'physical rectitude'.

Another important aspect of Outward Bound training was 'leadership'. Again, some in Outward Bound disagreed with this focus: one noted that the ideas of character and leadership had a large number of connotations, some of them rather unpleasant. However, leadership was important for the personnel officers of industrial firms who sent their young employees on Outward Bound courses. Other trainees included those who would go on to work in the Youth Service, and some public schoolboys attended Outward Bound courses too. At Ullswater, the programme included training in public speaking, which was seen as a vital part of the requirements of leadership training.

Criticisms of Outward Bound

Character-training was always a contested notion, and many pertinent criticisms of Outward Bound were voiced at this time, both inside and outside the organisation. Some of these reflected a caricatured view of what the schools were doing, but others were quite justified, and all had some impact on Outward Bound in the 1950s and 1960s.

First, a number of unsympathetic critics argued that Outward Bound promoted militarism — a criticism that had long been levelled at the Scouts and some other youth movements. The unashamed promotion of the martial virtues by Hahn and others encouraged this view, and the language of character-training provided ammunition for those who made easy but misleading comparisons with Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. One critic in *The Times* wrote that Outward Bound was like "an ascetic cult devoted to producing golden-limbed, superior men", and even those who worked in Outward Bound admitted to 'dangers' in the emphasis on training through adversity. Arnold-Brown was so concerned about comparisons with the Hitler Youth that he spoke about them in his end-of-course addresses to trainees at Eskdale. But the use of military terminology — at Eskdale the



trainees were organised into 'patrols'—helped to ensure that Outward Bound was dogged by accusations of militarism in this period.

A second criticism, widely voiced, was that Outward Bound courses were simply too short to achieve their objectives. There were good reasons to doubt the long-term impact of a course that lasted only four weeks. As one industrialist asked bluntly, "it was all very well to be on top of a mountain one month—what about the month after that?" Many within the organisation acknowledged this, and some thought was devoted to ways of extending the Outward Bound influence beyond the courses themselves. But this remained an area of concern for a long time.

A third, related criticism reflected the difficulty of assessing the impact of Outward Bound courses. It was possible to assess how much further a trainee could jump, or throw a javelin, after four weeks, but what about the impact on his—or her—character? As character-training was the central objective of Outward Bound, it was a serious weakness that no plausible methods existed for assessing how well the objective was achieved. This problem continues to beset character education, which has recently been described as 'woefully deficient in producing systematic outcomes research'. Some educators use proxy indicators—disciplinary records, participation in voluntary service activity, and even teenage pregnancy rates—and some have used pre- and post-course personality tests, but none of these is wholly satisfactory, and none was available to Outward Bound in the 1950s. The lack of measurable impact was a serious impediment, because Outward Bound relied on course fees paid by employers and local authorities, who wanted to see what they were getting for their money.

Towards 'Personal Growth'

Things changed
changes
particularly
Important
British



in the 1960s, and many of these were prefigured in the 1950s, at the Eskdale mountain school. cultural shifts were happening in educational ideas, and in society more widely. In the 1950s, educational research was drawing on psychological insights into processes of 'personal evaluation' and the development of 'moral autonomy'. Meanwhile, in dealing with juvenile crime and delinquency, there was a shift towards more therapeutic and less punitive methods. This change was incomplete

and certainly contested, but it reflected widespread doubts about the vocabulary and practices of early post-war outdoor education. A focus on character-training was giving way, albeit slowly, to personal growth.

At Outward Bound, there were two significant developments in the 1950s. Firstly, many instructors, at Eskdale and elsewhere, were expressing opposition to the inclusion of athletics training in the programme. It had little relevance to mountaineering, and it was unfair on the physically weaker trainees. In his brief time at Eskdale, Eric Shipton made a concerted attempt to reduce the athletics component, but this met with resistance from some of the traditionalists within Outward Bound. J. M. Hogan, first warden at Aberdovey and a close ally of Hahn, was a strong defender of athletics training, seeing it as a useful means of character-training. Later in the 1950s, field events were replaced with circuit training at Eskdale, and physical tests were removed from the badge criteria, again in the face of severe resistance. Kurt Hahn himself, who died in 1974, never lost faith in the importance of physical culture to character-training.

A second change was an increase in the number of girls and young women attending Outward Bound courses. This was modest but influential. By 1964, more than 3,500 girls had taken a course—still less than 10% of the total, but the proportion was growing. The courses were single-sex at this time, but the existence of adventure education for girls led to some changes in the vocabulary and practice of Outward Bound. Some criticised the admission of girls at all, feeling that the courses were unsuitable, producing 'Tough Girls'. In fact, the all-female courses included a larger cultural component, with more time set aside for indoor activities, and many in Outward Bound were beginning to feel that the idea of manliness was outdated by the 1960s. Certainly the inclusion of girls made it more difficult for the Outward Bound pioneers to emphasise the martial masculinity that had been a central element in the early years.

The Harrogate Conference and Its Contexts

Many of the growing fault lines in Outward Bound were exposed at a two-day conference held in Harrogate in May 1965. The rapid social and cultural changes of the 1960s formed the backdrop to this meeting, and the generational divide was obvious. There is a long account of the proceedings of the conference in the British Library. As well as Outward Bound leaders and instructors, prominent educationalists such as Alec Clegg, chief education officer for the West Riding of Yorkshire, attended and spoke.

The whole idea of character was up for debate at Harrogate. Many, even some of the pioneers such as Spencer Summers and Jack Longland, recognised that it might need to be removed from the Outward Bound vocabulary. Even Hahn himself was reluctantly forced to admit that some of the language of Outward Bound might need to change. Some associated character directly with militarism. The warden of Ullswater, an RAF man himself, declared: "I do not like the term 'character-training'. It makes me think immediately of the Stiff Upper Lip and the Right Type. Phrases from the war stir uneasily in the memory." Many had had enough of militarism and the martial virtues.

A related development was the gradual downgrading of leadership in the Outward Bound programme. This reflected wider political agendas, where democracy and equality undermined the idea of education for leadership, which became increasingly anachronistic, especially in light of the movement towards comprehensive schools, which were eventually mandated by the government in 1965 the same year as the Harrogate conference. Although character and leadership were bound up in the early vocabulary of Outward Bound, this link became less important. At Harrogate, Alec Clegg was scathing about the idea of education for leadership, associating it with public school bullying, aggressive imperialism, and racial prejudice. He reminded the audience that, “if you train some to lead you must train others to be led”, and that the whole thing was a “distasteful, if not positively dangerous” idea, which had no place in a modern scheme of education.

Some, of course, mounted a robust defence of the traditional practices and ethos of Outward Bound, as they saw it. A faction, including many personnel officers, some of whom had a military background, defended character-training. One industrial delegate to the Harrogate conference declared defiantly that his company sent their employees to Outward Bound “because we believe in character training and because we believe the Outward Bound method is effective”. Another saw character-training as a remedy for what he saw as the social evils of the 1960s—including homosexuality and divorce—and even sceptics thought adventure education could address problems caused by ‘mods and rockers ... and the growing groups of aimless and undirected youth’. Outward Bound schools, after all, had insisted on ‘training conditions’, whereby trainees undertook to avoid smoking and drinking for the duration of the four-week course—although there is plenty of evidence that these conditions were breached.


What emerged from Harrogate, however, despite the persistence of conservative opposition, was a growing focus on the individuality and self-development of the young people—the word

‘trainee’ seemed out-of-date too — who attended Outward Bound courses. By 1965 even the Tory industrialist Summers had decided that ‘character-training’ was a ‘misleading phrase’, and that Outward Bound was really about ‘trying to bring out the inner strength of the boy’ (and, presumably, the girl). By the 1970s, the idea of character-training was falling into disrepute, and by the 1980s, according to one account, the term was never used at all.

Conclusion and epilogue

Echoing wider changes in the educational environment, Outward Bound increasingly adopted a vocabulary that centred on ‘self-discovery’, ‘citizenship’, and the ‘personal growth’ of those who took its courses. Even by 1970 this was increasingly the case. Yet, ironically, the actual content (and length) of the courses did not change very much in this period. They remained associated in the popular mind with ‘cold showers and severe physical toughness’, and physical training of one kind or another, expeditions, encounters with the natural world, and a mixture of self-reliance of teamwork continued to feature strongly in the Outward Bound experience. Subsequently many changes have taken place, and perhaps these could not have happened without a revision of the organisation’s vocabulary in the 1960s. As I have shown, some of the origins of these changes, as with many others in the 1960s, lay in developments during the previous decade.

In recent years, the rhetoric and practice of ‘character’ have returned to the mainstream of educational debate. The last Labour government issued Green and White Papers in 2001 that endorsed an idea of ‘education with character’ that was closely associated with the citizenship education agenda. Educational researchers have returned to ‘character’, and the idea of ‘education for leadership’ is rearing its head too. A number of educationalists are returning to the ideas of Kurt Hahn for inspiration. The early history of Outward Bound is relevant again today.

A longer version of this article was published in [History of Education](#), vol. 40, no. 1 (2011), pp. 21-43. 



B O O K S



Controversial Issues in Adventure Programming By Bruce Martin & Mark Wagstaff

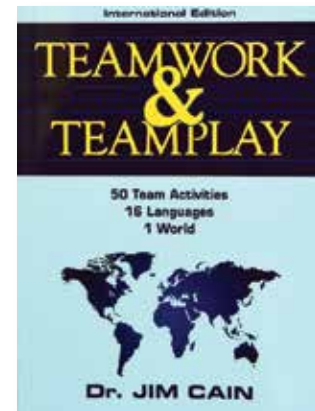
From Human Kinetics, Champaign, Illinois, USA. 2012. \$75.95 US. Hardcover. 328 pages.

Aimed at the academic community, but with relevance for policymakers and practitioners, *Controversial Issues in Adventure Programming* benefits from an interdisciplinary approach that draws on the opinions of 50 contributors from six countries. Readers are invited to critically examine 20 controversial issues, which are equally divided between the book's two parts. The first part covers issues of ongoing concern in the adventure programming industry (e.g. certification and risks vs. benefits), and the second looks at recent issues, such as online programming and the inclusion of extreme sports. For example: "Do the benefits of adventure programming outweigh the risks?" and "Should there be a professional certification in outdoor leadership?" Each issue is presented in a debate format with pro and con arguments.

The book signposts several of the persistent and emergent issues that adventure programming has encountered during its relatively short history. It serves as a valuable reminder of the importance of broadening one's understanding of the underlying assumptions that animate much of contemporary adventure programming and its ever-changing interface with society. While the audience that this book targets is not exclusively American, a reader unfamiliar with the United States could be forgiven for not understanding the relevance of questions such as "Should Wilderness First Responder be the standard of care for wilderness leadership?" or "Does Leave No Trace make a difference beyond the scope of back country environmental practices?" And it is perhaps likely that most professionals in the field of adventure programming from countries without large white populations will struggle to understand the question: "Should people of color be encouraged to participate in current outdoor adventure programs?"

Nonetheless, the editors, Bruce Martin and Mark Wagstaff, can be congratulated for having assembled an international authorship that includes robust contributions from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States. This diversity of perspective affords the reader different vantage points on many issues well worth thinking about.

In summary, this book deserves space on the shelf of any new practitioner or seasoned administrator who wishes a better understanding of how adventure programming can navigate controversial issues in the context of several wide-ranging practical and societal concerns.




TEAMWORK & TEAMPLAY: **50 Team Activities, 16 Languages,** **1 World, International Edition** By Jim Cain

From Teamwork & Teamplay, Brockport, New York, USA. 2015.

\$24.99 US. Paperbound. 224 pages.

Before Jim Cain found his way into adventure-based activities, he spent 15 years working as a senior research engineer for Eastman Kodak (think powder mechanics). In 1996, he helped create and facilitate a team-building program for NASA's Lunar-Mars Life Support Test Project to prepare personnel for extended missions. Since then he has presented team activities in 28 countries, including two well-received workshops about team and community building at the 2011 OBI Staff Symposium in Singapore. *Teamwork & Teamplay, International Edition* is Jim's latest book and his fourth published since the symposium.

The book presents 50 team activities in 16 languages. These activities from around the world appear carefully curated and generally need very little equipment to conduct. They fall under four categories: Icebreakers & Opening Activities; Teambuilding Activities & Challenges; Games Just for Fun; Reviewing Techniques & Closing Activities. The activities are presented in Chinese, Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Mongolian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Thai, and Turkish. English serves as the continuity language, figuring prominently in areas such as the table of contents, the introduction, and in the 50 activity main headings. Helpful images accompany each activity.

Teamwork & Teamplay, International Edition is a wonderful reference that is sure to be a great resource for those Outward Bound schools where at least one of the book's 16 languages is spoken. 

BLIND SPOT

NEAR MISS TRAUMA

By Brendan Madden

Several years ago, I had an instructor cancel a contract at the last minute. While this is a routine (though frustrating) situation at many OB schools, something in the instructor's voice on the phone prompted me to probe a little deeper into what was going on. It turned out that the instructor had recently been leading a whitewater canoeing program for another company, and had a significant near miss involving a flooding river and capsized boats. The very prospect of leading another river expedition had provoked extreme psychological and physical responses: she felt anxiety bordering on panic, couldn't sleep, and her muscles were so tense that she literally could not paddle a canoe. We agreed that she seemed to be experiencing some trauma related to her recent near miss experience, and that going back in the field so soon, in a leadership position, was not a healthy prospect. I found a replacement.

The instructor in this story is not alone. As our understanding of psychological trauma grows, we begin to understand that it is not the objective outcome of the event that counts — i.e., whether or not someone was seriously injured — but the subjective process experienced by the people involved. In the event of a fatality or serious injury, it is natural to expect a degree of trauma to be experienced by the survivors of the incident. It is much newer in our understanding that the survivors of a near miss — an event that could have led to a fatal conclusion but through luck

or skill did not — can be similarly traumatized. Since the event noted above, I have collected or recalled over a dozen stories that present similar examples. The likelihood is high that psychological trauma caused by a significant near miss event is prevalent in our field. In the past, we have not always seen the phenomenon, because we did not know to look. Now we know.

This trauma is known by many names, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Occupational Stress Injury. Symptoms vary, but can include:

- Re-experiencing the trauma through intrusive distressing recollections of the event, flashbacks, and nightmares
- Emotional numbness and avoidance of places, people, and activities that are reminders of the trauma
- Increased arousal such as difficulty sleeping and concentrating, feeling jumpy, and being easily irritated and angered.

In practical terms for our instructors, this can mean a reluctance to re-enter the field. Traumatized instructors who do continue to work can find their work increasingly difficult as they attempt to manage their symptoms while balancing the stresses and pressures that are part and parcel of Outward Bound work. Some begin to suspect they are developing a mental illness.

The key to understanding Near Miss Trauma lies in the intentionally unpredictable nature of a journey in the natural world. We know that there are inherent risks in our course areas, so we hire mature and capable staff, and use a combination of internal training and external certification to ensure that they have the skills and attitude required to help their students navigate the hazards of the environment. Occasionally, nature has other plans. Flooding rivers, unexpected storms, wild animal encounters, or other factors can create a situation where the threat of death is real, and instructor training is insufficient to maintain control. Usually, everyone makes it through okay. However, from the instructor's perspective, the combination of being in a position of responsibility, experiencing a near-fatal situation, and feeling a loss of control all combine to increase the traumatic potential of the event.

The good news is that with a little knowledge and a lot of care we can do much to alleviate this problem. There are three elements of a strong mentoring system that, if present in your school, will help tremendously:

1. A culture of near miss reporting
2. Effective debriefs of every course
3. A dynamic where field staff seek out perspectives from management when something is troubling them.




Recognition of Near Miss Trauma becomes easier with time. When instructors return from the field, keep an eye out for these signs, especially if you know the course has been unusually challenging:

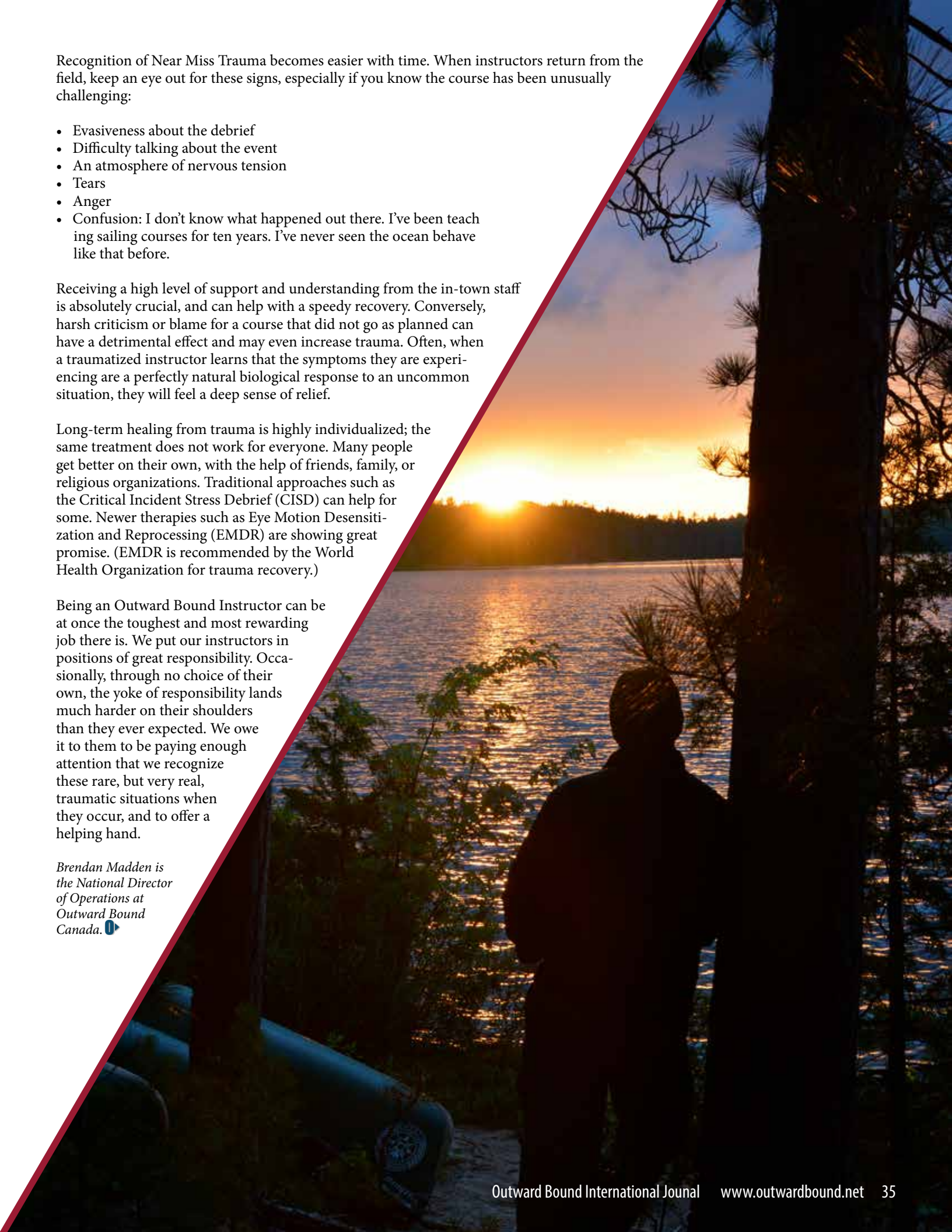
- Evasiveness about the debrief
- Difficulty talking about the event
- An atmosphere of nervous tension
- Tears
- Anger
- Confusion: I don't know what happened out there. I've been teaching sailing courses for ten years. I've never seen the ocean behave like that before.

Receiving a high level of support and understanding from the in-town staff is absolutely crucial, and can help with a speedy recovery. Conversely, harsh criticism or blame for a course that did not go as planned can have a detrimental effect and may even increase trauma. Often, when a traumatized instructor learns that the symptoms they are experiencing are a perfectly natural biological response to an uncommon situation, they will feel a deep sense of relief.

Long-term healing from trauma is highly individualized; the same treatment does not work for everyone. Many people get better on their own, with the help of friends, family, or religious organizations. Traditional approaches such as the Critical Incident Stress Debrief (CISD) can help for some. Newer therapies such as Eye Motion Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) are showing great promise. (EMDR is recommended by the World Health Organization for trauma recovery.)

Being an Outward Bound Instructor can be at once the toughest and most rewarding job there is. We put our instructors in positions of great responsibility. Occasionally, through no choice of their own, the yoke of responsibility lands much harder on their shoulders than they ever expected. We owe it to them to be paying enough attention that we recognize these rare, but very real, traumatic situations when they occur, and to offer a helping hand.

*Brendan Madden is
the National Director
of Operations at
Outward Bound
Canada.* 



LOOKING BACK

The first 60 years of Outward Bound Australia

By Tim Medhurst

*Outward Bound Australia (OBA) is now proudly 60 years old. As OBA continues to develop and grow, it is always useful to pause, reflect, and celebrate the journey to date, even while we look ahead to the future. It has also been 10 years since Helen Klaebe published *Onward Bound* — the first 50 years of Outward Bound Australia. Below are a range of selected quotes on OBA from Helen's book, followed by comments from the current Chair and CEO.*

The Australian story of Outward Bound seems even more unlikely. The combination of a Royal prompting, a challenge by an English gentleman to an Australian Changi POW survivor in a Sydney hotel and a retired Australian Rear Admiral resulted in the birth of Outward Bound Australia in 1956. (From the back cover of *Onward Bound*)

From its earnest beginnings in a climate of post-war cultural change, OBA has adapted to remain dynamic and relevant. It currently attracts some 5000 [now 8000] participants a year to its courses. (From the inside cover of *Onward Bound*)

I believe that one of the reasons for the success of the Outward Bound concept is that it meets the continuing need to help successive generations of young people to develop self-confidence and to broaden their experience as they become adults. (Forward by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh)

I don't suppose that human nature is going to change much in the next 50 years. It hasn't in the last few thousand years. It will always need all the help it can get. Outward Bound in a small but important way can help, because it reaches young people when they are impressionable. It is very hard to teach people high ideals, but on the other hand, if they live through the experience, it is something that lasts throughout their lifetime. (Sir Fredrick Chilton [aged 97 in 2003], Chairman OBA 1971–76)

Some 250,000 [now well over 300,000] have completed an OBA program and some 2000 [now around 2300] staff, Board and supporters have worked together to make this happen. This book both records and reflects on the memories and the stories of the people who have created the first 50 years of OBA's history.... Aristotle recommended that if you are to understand anything, observe its beginning and its development. This oral history does just that through the stories of its people — the core of what is OBA.... Of course, the journey goes on. (Rod Pearse OAM, Chairman OBA 2003–2015)



We have witnessed in recent years changes in the work place, in moral and ethical standards, in family relationships and in religion. With such changes... Outward Bound values are even more important today to equip people to know their own strengths and potential to handle such change. (Ian Curlewis QC, Chairman OBA 1986–91)

If every Australian spent say 30 days on an OBA course, this place would be a riveting country rather than a promising country. (Carlo Bongarzoni, Chairman OBA 1991–98)

I think that OBA has a huge role to play in communities. There is a desperate need to assist youth, particularly when families break down.... There are other organisations doing this, but not many have got the runs on the board like OBA. They have shown the ability to move with the times. (Geoffrey White, past CEO of the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation)

Rob Harris [Staff Director 1986–93] once famously commented that Outward Bound existed for the personal development of the staff — participants were recruited for staff development. (James Neill, Head of Research at OBA 1989–94, reflecting on the impact of OBA for staff)

Our history has been built on a pioneering spirit and the service and dedication of generations of staff who have firmly adhered to our ethos: to serve, to strive and not to yield. Today our staff at OBA remain our greatest asset and our greatest advocates. (Darren Black, CEO OBA 2005–2012)
The history of OBA, for me as a writer/researcher has been an

epic journey in itself. The people I have met and the stories that they have shared have shown me the extraordinary passion and such strong, emotional opinion that I would not have imagined possible at the start. All the stories are the same, in a way, but so personal to the story teller that you can't help but enjoy hearing them. To me, it was also a social and cultural journey... half a century with motivated Australians, all willing to stretch themselves and help motivate others, to find a little more inside them that they did not know existed... as one story ends, another new chapter begins. (Helen Klæbe, author, *Onward Bound — the first 50 years of OBA*)

Plus Est en Vous (There is more in you than you think) was the inscription found on the wall of a Belgian church by Kurt Hahn before World War II. This motto matched his philosophy: that each of us has more courage, more strength and more compassion than we would ever have fathomed. Kurt Hahn's calling in life was to help people around the world realise this truth about themselves. (Tim Medhurst, Instructor, Operations Director, CEO, Board member OBA 1977–2016 and Advisor, Board member OBI 1998–2016, who is still inspired by this quote after 40 years' involvement with OBA.)

And so to the present and the future — final remarks from OBA's annual report of 2016, from the current Chairman, John Atkin, and CEO, Jon D'Almeida:

As OBA marks the 60th anniversary of its first course held in November 1956, it is going through a major process of re-engagement and renewal. While the last few years have been quite challenging operationally we have a great heritage to build on and many relationships established over the years to refresh. Working with schools who share our educational philosophy based on Hahn's principles and value what we can offer their students will remain central to our business. At the same time we are aiming to partner with others in addressing the pressing social problems facing Australia in the 21st century, particularly supporting our indigenous people. And last but by no means least we want to expand our links with other Outward Bound schools internationally as we help foster broad multi-cultural relationships and understanding so necessary for the world today.

For anyone interested to purchase a copy of *Onward Bound — the first 50 years of Outward Bound Australia* please contact: mailbox@outwardbound.org.au



OUTWARD BOUND

AN INTEGRAL PIECE OF A TESIS EDUCATION



On the morning of February 13, 72 TASIS (The American School in Switzerland) sophomores and 10 adult chaperones set off for the Outward Bound wilderness center in Füssen, Germany, ready to add their own chapter to a TASIS tradition that dates back to 2000.

Education comes in many forms, and this assorted crew was about to receive a steady dose of the Kurt Hahn variety. “The aim of education is to impel people into value-forming experiences,” said the German educator, who founded Outward Bound in 1941, “to ensure the survival of these qualities: an enterprising curiosity, an indefatigable spirit, tenacity in pursuit, readiness for sensible self-denial, and above all, compassion.”

Prior to the departure, students were divided into six groups, each of which would be led by an experienced Outward Bound instructor and one or two TASIS chaperones, who were asked to provide support while staying out of the way as much as possible, as the purpose of Outward Bound is for students to “discover and develop their potential to care for themselves, others, and the world around them through challenging experiences in unfamiliar settings”—and that doesn’t happen if a teacher you’re comfortable with is solving all your problems.

TASIS Math teacher and Outward Bound co-leader Danny Schiff, a veteran of four prior trips, was a solo leader for a group of 13 students. Associate Director of Communications and 10th grade advisor Mark Chevalier, who is new to TASIS this year and had never been on an Outward Bound trip, teamed with 9th and 10th Grade Dean Sabrina Putnam to chaperone a group of 10. Below are their accounts of this year’s trip.

SATURDAY

Chevalier

We leave TASIS at 8:30 a.m., and after a long bus ride, a chance to unpack at the Outward Bound Center, a competitive group exercise in the cold, a rejuvenating dinner, and a trip to the local ice skating rink, we’re in bed at an early hour and bracing for the days ahead.

Schiff

Driving through the Swiss Alps to the Black Forest is a drive which, no matter how many times I’ve done it, gets more and more beautiful! It’s great to be back in Schwangau, Germany for the fifth time at the Outward Bound Center with a new group of teachers and students. I’ve never seen this area without snow before.



SUNDAY

Chevalier

We spend the morning with our groups and get to know Lehel, our Romanian Outward Bound instructor. He leads us through a number of team-building exercises, many of which involve shouting, aggressive posturing, and some form of physical contact. We talk about our goals and fears for the week, and I’m quickly getting to know the students, most of whom I hadn’t met before this trip.

After a break for lunch, we discover that it’s time for an “introductory” four-hour ramble that starts with a lengthy scamper up a riverbed and ends with a joyful slide down a snow-covered trail. The hike is longer than expected, and it tests the spirit of some, but we make it home in respectable fashion, enjoy a curry dinner, and spend a quiet evening in the Outward Bound Center.

Schiff

Leaving for our three-day trek tomorrow, it is already time for our students to start planning the route, making grocery lists, and packing backpacks. I love the experiential approach of Outward Bound, but with 24 hours to prepare for a trek, our students are getting a crash course in planning for a wilderness expedition. As a teacher who has done this trip multiple times already, it is difficult not to step in and offer advice to the students about estimated hiking times or delegating leadership, as teachers are asked to blend into the background. I am hoping that our group is ready for tomorrow.

MONDAY

Chevalier

Half the groups leave in the morning for their wilderness excursions, but ours won’t begin until Wednesday. We instead start the day with a recap of day one in which we praise each other for our efforts and point out a few things that could have gone better. We discuss the need to maintain a positive mental attitude—the “PMA” that Danny Schiff told us was the most important item to pack when we had our meetings in advance of the trip—and it’s suggested that attitude is usually a choice. We all have strengths



and weaknesses, but Outward Bound is about finding a way to be the best versions of ourselves.

After more team-building exercises and a break for lunch, we take on the indoor climbing wall and watch one of our leaders zip to the top in just over 30 seconds.

In the late afternoon we're back to team activities, and it's clear that everyone's patience is starting to wear thin. We're in the sweet spot between being ready for action and feeling nervous about the journey that lies ahead.

We need a break, and a trip to the thermal baths in Füssen after dinner fits the bill.

Schiff

Into the wild! As we left the Outward Bound Center this morning, our navigators immediately failed to correctly read their map as we took the longer "scenic route" along a major road to the grocery store. The cooking group bought provisions for the next few days—pasta, chocolate, apples, and a dozen eggs (of which 10 would survive the journey)—and we were finally en route to the hut.

As the snow began to gently fall, our hike took us past the tourist-heavy Neuschwanstein Castle. We hiked uphill with the snowshoes we'd attached to our backpacks, as we were passed by tourists on horse-drawn carriages sipping hot chocolate. This is no doubt a unique trek!

Our asphalt road turned into snow-covered trails past the castle, and after seven hours of trekking (more like four hours of walking and three hours of breaks), we reached our home for the next two nights—the Fritz Putz Hut, the wooden hut nestled below the mountains!

After changing out of our snow-covered jackets and boots, our Italian students prepared pesto pasta for the two groups who were staying at the hut together. After an evening meeting, everyone was tired from the day and ready to be warm in our bunk beds by 22:00.

TUESDAY

Chevalier

I am surprised to wake up and see the ground coated with snow, and when I descend a flight of stairs and arrive at breakfast, it becomes clear that we are entering a new stage of the journey. Many students complain of illness, and even the healthy looked tired. I would be okay with Lehel letting us know that the planned morning activity on the high ropes course is canceled due to the climbing apparatus being caked with ice and snow, but instead he readies us for a three-hour session.

The climb turns out to be just what we need. We take on Jacob's Ladder in groups of two, and most teams exceed their expectations. A renewed spirit of teamwork and positive encouragement washes over the group, which seems energized by the challenge. But by the third hour the era of good feelings has given way to numb fingers and toes. We're ready for lunch.

It's time to start planning for our excursion, and Lehel separates the students into four groups—cooks, orienteers, hut organizers, and equipment managers—and makes it clear that they are to take ownership of the trip. We seem ready.

Schiff

As our group made our way to the kitchen for breakfast, our first looks out the window showed that it had continued snowing all night! The tracks from when we hiked in had been completely snowed over, and there appeared to be almost a half-meter of fresh powder, with no sign of stopping! After some cereal and

bread with jam, we learned how to put on our avalanche beacons and snowshoes, and the two groups made their way to the attempted summit of Schlagstein Mountain together. It was amazing to make fresh tracks in the deep powder, and both groups enjoyed hiking and throwing snowballs together.

After nearly 500 meters climbing and several hours on the trail, our German mountain guide Faux (pronounced “Fox”) advised us that the avalanche warning was too high to continue to the summit. One student claimed about the turn-around spot, “This is my mountain top. I am proud I was able to make it here.” Tonight the second group prepared a pasta carbonara for both groups. What the pasta lacked in taste, it made up for in quantity, as everyone ravenously helped themselves to seconds and thirds after a snowy summit attempt.

WEDNESDAY

Chevalier

After a check-in at breakfast that includes the addition of a student who had recovered from an injury and the tough decision to leave behind an ill one, a 20-minute walk down the hill, a stop at a local grocer for our Italian cooking trio to pick up supplies, and a 40-minute bus ride to Rinnan, Austria, we are finally free.

We begin our trek around noon, and within a half hour we cross paths with the team returning from Reuttener Hutte and take control of their snowshoes, radio transceivers, avalanche probes, and shovels. While our spirits are buoyed by meeting a group of upbeat peers, with the packs suddenly more heavy, we begin to gain a sense of the challenge ahead.

The hike is magnificent. A recent snowstorm has blanketed the forest and hills with snow, and for a New Englander like myself, it proves to be a nice contrast to the mild Lugano winter. We let the students take the lead, and Lehel and I stay in the back for the most part. He tells me about the 15-month bicycle trip he and a friend made around Europe five years before. They took only what they could carry on their backs, spent just a Euro or two per day, and relied upon the kindness of strangers for everything else. “That trip taught me that I should always help others when it’s within my power to do so,” he says.

Not everyone is having fun. One of our Americans was not feeling well at all that morning but refused to miss the trip, and she’s starting to regret it. The last thing I’d want to do with flu-like symptoms is go on a long hike in the cold, but she pushes through—even refusing another student’s kind offer to carry her bag—and impresses us all with her grit.

After four hours and just a few small arguments about which direction to go, we safely arrive at our hut—a gem nestled in the Austrian Alps with no running water or indoor toilet. Volunteers fill up our giant water bucket at the well that’s 100 meters away, and we’re all thankful that the previous occupants dug a narrow path to the outhouse, which is also a hearty walk from home.

Our cooks prepare a pasta dinner that really hits the spot, and we meet as one team around the table and discuss the day. We address the challenges of the trek and acknowledge the perseverance, toughness, and leadership of certain team members. We’re happy to turn in early for bed.

Schiff

After two nights in the Fritz Putz Hut, our Outward Bound instructor Katja helped the group to clean and organize so that we could leave the hut exactly as we found it. After several attempts at cleaning and sweeping, they had finally reached the approval of Katja and we were hiking back towards the Outward Bound Center by 10:30.

Unsurprisingly, with the prospect of warm showers and prepared food waiting for us, the group’s speed and efficiency hiking as a group improved drastically, as breaks were eliminated and a rhythm was formed. The town of Schwangau, which we had left two days earlier, looked unrecognizable for the students as we passed through to find the castle and trails completely covered in snow.

We passed two groups who were just beginning their treks on our way back to town. Students were excited to see their friends and share a few minutes worth of advice and experiences. Our first shower in days was beyond appreciated, and to snack on warm cake and hot tea in clean clothes is a feeling one can only appreciate after three days of wearing one pair of snow pants and eating a diet of gluten.

That night ten students, myself, and Sonny, the TASIS Athletic Director, went to the spa to soak in the hot tubs and relish the sauna!



THURSDAY

Chevalier

I awake at 4 a.m. and need to use the bathroom. I tiptoe out of the bedroom, and as my eyes adjust to the dimly lit kitchen, I'm startled to see four people sitting at the table. They are either sick or lending support.

For all the talk about chaperones needing to take a back seat, we would have been in big trouble without Ms. Putnam, who would later remark, "What I'll remember most is sitting up late at night in a tiny hut in the snowy Austrian Alps with a student who was not feeling well. You can learn a great deal about each other in such remote places and hours, and I will remember that night fondly for some time."

At 7:00 it's time to assess where we're at as a group. It's decided that Ms. Putnam will stay behind with two sick students.

The rest of us pack our day bags, strap on snowshoes, and launch a steady ascent to the peak of Mount Galtjoch. The optimism of morning and the pristine Austrian forests slowly give way to forces of weariness as we enter a sunny and open climb to the summit, and at times we struggle to stay together.

But in the end we come together as a team and reach the peak in just over two hours. Worn out and hungry, we stop for a snack and some photos before barreling down the slope at a brisk pace and returning to the hut, exhausted, an hour later. Lunch is followed by a lazy afternoon of naps, games, and an hour for students to write reflections that will be mailed to them later. I'm impressed by the volume of material many of them produce. The cooking trio hits the mark again with a lovely risotto, and we're again ready for an early bedtime after a team meeting and a spirited game of charades.

Schiff

It's amazing to be back at the Outward Bound Center and to witness how far our group has come in their communication and teamwork. After breakfast, we have a day full of team-building exercises. Our group of thirteen impressed me with how much better they communicated, appreciated one another, and accomplished tasks than when they began this experience five days earlier.

In the afternoon we had a chance to climb the indoor rock wall, working on belay and climbing techniques in preparation for our high ropes activity tomorrow. We have some natural climbers in our group!

After dinner tonight, there was no structured activity, and it was great to see the students and teachers recount their trips while hanging out, playing cards, or playing ping pong before bed.

FRIDAY

Chevalier

We're up by 6:30, and everyone pitches in and cleans up the hut after a final breakfast of bread, nutella, and peanut butter. (We've already learned that ham, Nutella, and cheese does not make for a good sandwich.) We load up our gear and trash and prepare for our final hike, a pleasant two-hour descent through a light but steady snow.

Early on we must decide to take a shorter and steeper route or a longer and flatter one. After a mild argument, all the students agree that because we have people who still aren't feeling well, we should take the longer but easier route. We've come a long way in three days, and one of our quiet leaders would later remark, "We finished the hike like a real team."

The trek feels like a breeze compared to the previous two days, and we reach our bus in good spirits. After three days in the wilderness, we're ready to return to the relative comfort of the Outward Bound Center.

The long-awaited shower is magnificent, and we all head downtown for an enormous medieval feast that is most welcome after too much peanut butter and trail mix in the wilderness.

Schiff

This morning the snow began falling once again, just in time for our trip to the high ropes course. The week culminated with our group climbing ladders ten meters off the ground and walking across narrow, icy beams. Each member of our group completed the task impressively.

By the time we finished up outside, the final three groups were returning from their treks, a sensation we remembered well. Hugs and greetings were shared. In a final reflection of the week, our group thanked Katja for her guidance and recognized one another for the skills which they brought to the group and developed. I was proud to hear the students recognize qualities in one another and themselves, which helped to make the week so special.

As the nearly 100 students and teachers gathered in two buses for our medieval feast in Füssen, there was a tangible air of celebration and triumph. The students had not only survived but thrived, during their week in Germany, and it was time to celebrate with a feast of French fries, corn on the cob, and chicken legs!





SATURDAY

Chevalier

It's getaway day, and we're on our way down the hill to the bus after a light breakfast and successful room inspections. It feels like we've been away from home for much longer than a week. I'm pensive on the ride back—both satisfied and wistful. I'm happy because I know we've challenged ourselves, grown as people, and built meaningful relationships, but somber because I understand that we'll never have an experience together like this again. I suppose all we can do is store the memory, move on to the next challenge, and know we'll be better equipped to face it when it comes.

REFLECTIONS FROM OTHER CHAPERONES

Our sunrise summit hike was, without a doubt, one of the most amazing experiences I've ever had in my three years of Academic Travel at TASIS. The students got to choose what time to get up and they all agreed to get up at 4:00 a.m. in order to get to the summit in time. I couldn't believe it and thought it would be impossible, but they proved me wrong. We started out hiking in complete darkness with headlamps. At first it seemed as though we wouldn't see anything because it was very foggy, and student morale began to go down. As we ascended, however, suddenly we could start to see the blue sky above! It was clear that we were going to make it above the cloud line in time for the sunrise!

With that glimmer of hope, the students began hiking faster. We got to the top with 15 minutes to spare, and I remember seeing

some students crying (tears of joy and relief, I'm sure). The view was breathtaking with the sea of clouds below us. The moment the sun came over the ridge the entire group broke into applause. I will never forget that moment, nor the immediate feeling of warmth that came over me, both from the sun and from the feeling I got seeing the smiles on the students' faces.

Cori Shea, Varsity Cheerleading Coach and Dorm Parent

One of the most memorable parts of the trip for me was the gift of seeing numerous students challenge—and ultimately, surpass—their perceived limits, both physically and mentally. I am truly grateful for my experience on the Outward Bound trip. I was able to challenge my own preconceived ideas and forge meaningful relationships with students and faculty alike in the process. The setting in Bavaria was nothing short of stunning, and it reminded me how rejuvenating experiencing the great outdoors can be for the mind, body, and spirit.

Kat Walser, Red Cross Yoga Service Learning Leader

The memory that will stand out for me is hiking towards a summit with our students in the worst weather conditions imaginable and not knowing if we were going to make it to the top. Although we had our mountain guide, we all were waiting for him to tell us it would be too dangerous to continue. Cold, tired, hungry, and scared, we pushed ourselves and leaned on one another for support, and we made it! The warm feeling of achievement was welcoming and oh so satisfying. Academic Travel trips like these that not only challenge our students physically, mentally and emotionally are life-changing.

Sonny Lim, Athletic Director

ALUMNI MEMORIES

"I attended the Outward Bound trip in 2013. I really enjoyed doing some of the activities in the Outward Bound camp while preparing for the actual excursion. I found them to be useful in learning what collaboration is. Regarding the hike, it was tough indeed, but in hindsight I'm very glad to have done it: I think it made me stronger, and when I think back to it, not all memories are pleasant, but knowing that I made it makes me feel good about myself. Life is made of experiences, and Outward Bound is one of them."

Monica Landoni '15

"It was quite difficult to see how meaningful this trip was right away. When looking back at my vivid memories, I automatically compare who I was then to who I am now. This trip can be summed up in one African proverb: "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." I encourage all the students to go on this trip, simply because you can't experience it through someone else's experience."

Orianna Sibada '14

"Outward Bound did two important things for me: Firstly, it nourished my love for the outdoors and introduced less experienced students to outdoor recreation. Secondly, and more importantly, it made me feel confident enough to challenge myself outdoors as well as in a group/team setting. It builds leadership skills and an invaluable trust among peers."

Taylor Sayward '09

"The experience I had at Outward Bound was reflected in the years to come in my leadership skills and my understanding of terms such as resilience. This trip also helped me get to know myself better, even though I didn't see it at the time. I would love to do this again!"

Amandha Cardoso '08

"Outward Bound really pushed my limits. Walking up a mountain with a backpack that weighed more than me was a challenge. No shower for two days is another thing that I remember, as well as the outside toilet. However, I remember Outward Bound as a really positive experience and would definitely do it again."

During the "hut" excursion, I had the opportunity to get to better know some of my classmates. The trip to McDonald's and the spa when we came back was a great reward."

Ginevra Giacomini '13

"This trip made me realize what kind of leader I can be and how much being part of a team can facilitate and improve the achievement of the final goal. Even though during Outward Bound a friend of mine got injured and we had to call the ambulance—which arrived with a helicopter at the top of the mountain—and we all had to work together as a team to help him out, it was a great experience to realize what I am capable of."

Gabriele Braglia '13

"Outward Bound was an incredible experience that changed my life, especially climbing to the top of the mountain carrying other people's bags; it has increased my endurance."

Benedetto Santoboni '15

"It allowed me to get to know from the inside a culture very different than mine."

Ma Fernanda Rex '95

"It was a really great trip with a lot of activities to strengthen our way of thinking as a group. I learned that everyone in a team is really important and useful."

Giacomo Braglia '14

"It was a great experience in team building and helping each other in unfamiliar conditions."

Nicolas Martino '04

"I enjoyed all my trips, and Istanbul was also pretty great, but Outward Bound was definitely a unique experience. I was afraid of not being able to do all the activities, so I came out of it with a sense of accomplishment. It was also a very good bonding experience."

Mariana Muñoz '09 



GEAR



Goal Zero Lighthouse Mini

Illumination is important. Just ask any Outward Bound instructor who customarily leads his or her groups into the twilight hours and beyond. Darkness takes on a new meaning when you are the person responsible for the light! But Goal Zero's Lighthouse MINI lantern lightens that load by ensuring that you will never have to "go gentle into that good night." You can, instead, burn bright and rage at the night! Well, at a maximum of 210 lumens, maybe not rage, but you can definitely chase away a few shadows.

The Lighthouse Mini weighs in at 227 grams and will run up to 500 hours on low. Its fold-up legs allow for easier packing (10.5 x 5.6 cm), and dimmable dual LEDs can operate independently. You can also charge your small USB connectible devices using the lantern's 3,000mAh (swappable) battery. The Lighthouse Mini can also recharge its battery by plugging into any USB port using the built-in charging cable.

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MSR HyperFlow™ Microfilter

In the backcountry, objectively clean drinking water is important — and when it comes to water filters, so is lightness and ease of use. If a product doesn't sufficiently meet the last two conditions, the importance of the first one might suffer. The HyperFlow Microfilter from Mountain Safety Research capably bridges the divide between weight penalty and ergonomic convenience. In other words, you'll want to take it with you instead of chancing the water, and if you do bring it along, it's so simple to use that you'll actually use it.

First introduced in 2008, this water filter still deftly navigates the competing advantages of lightness (221g), high flow rate (3 liters per minute), and compact size (17.8 x 8.3 cm), while meeting the NSF International P231 protocol for microbiological water purifiers. And while the water filter does require backflushing once every eight liters (MSR offers an online instructional video to help with this less-than-intuitive task) it is otherwise dead easy to use. The included Quick Connect bottle adapter lets you filter water directly into a variety of wide-mouth containers. The HyperFlow is field-maintainable and field-cleanable, and the replaceable Hollow Fiber cartridge is rated to 1000 liters of throughput.

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A History of Challenge Courses

By Mark Wagstaff

The Origin of US Challenge Courses

As the challenge course industry continues to grow, it is important that we have a clear picture of our roots. Understanding the history of our trade allows us to chart a more intentional future. The popularity of challenge course programming has taken on a life of its own since the early Outward Bound days. The first Outward Bound Schools gave birth to the industry we recognize today. It is estimated that in the early 1980s, up to 700–800 courses existed in the United States. Today, it is believed that over 15,000 courses operate in the United States alone. This article is an attempt to add to the historical knowledge of challenge course development.

Challenge course use for educational and recreational purposes found its way into American culture through the Outward Bound School system. Joshua Miner and Joseph Bolt discuss the use of ropes courses as an integral part of the first U.S. Outward Bound Schools. They also stated that the British Outward Bound schools borrowed the ropes course concept from their military training regiment.

Jim Hogan's book, *Impelled Into Experience*, provided the first detailed account of Outward Bound's development in the United Kingdom. Hogan was hired by Kurt Hahn, the founder of the first Outward Bound schools, to organize and serve as warden of the first Outward Bound School. This significant, historical account of Outward Bound's birth did not document the use of ropes courses at any of the first British schools. Former Outward Bound Instructors and pioneers of the adventure education industry were interviewed to record their memories of the first challenge courses.

Rafe Parker, Outward Bound Instructor at Aberdovey in 1963, believes that the first challenge course was built at Aberdovey as opposed to Gordonston. Gordonston was the first Outward Bound School established in 1934 by Kurt Hahn. Aberdovey was established in 1941 by Jim Hogan under Hahn's supervision. Parker remembered his interactions with Captain Freddy Fuller, the second warden at Aberdovey and one of the original instructors. According to Parker, Fuller maintained that a ropes course had been on the Aberdovey site since its inception. The original Out-

ward Bound curriculum required that each "cadet", as they were called then, was graded according to his ability in events such as the challenge course, shot put, long and high jumps, javelin and other athletics events. Grading was based on progress made in each event.

Eskdale was the third Outward Bound School to be developed in England. John Lagoe, the third Warden of Eskdale, felt certain that the first ropes course was developed at the Aberdovey School. He stated, "the staff there have told me they have old photos of the early days, showing a ropes course. Being a sea school, it was obviously sensible to train boys to climb ropes on land before they were asked to climb rigging at sea! I suspect there'd be a ropes course there from the start in 1941—but there's no one left from that time to confirm it." Lagoe went on to describe his memories and experience with the Eskdale ropes course. "A ropes course was included from the start at the Eskdale Mountain School, clearly inherited from Aberdovey... There's a photo of the ropes course in the first brochure describing the school, and one of the staff on Course Number 4, in 1950, tells me that it had the usual vertical rope climb, a rope bridge (always known as the Burma Bridge), a rope swing to reach and regain on to a horizontal rope, a scramble net. A zip wire, luridly called the Death Slide, was added a little later."

Eskdale Outward Bound Instructor, John Lott, recalls distinct similarities between military and Outward Bound ropes courses. Lott was a British Marine in 1956 and 1957. Lott recalls that the assault courses he experienced in the military were almost mirror images of the courses found at the Outward Bound schools. From the beginning, the core group of original Outward Bound instructors had significant military experience. It is not surprising that these military trained instructors integrated their prior experience into the developmental process of the Outward Bound curriculum. While we know the inspiration behind the first ropes courses, the author of this article has yet to find undisputable documentation that determines who and where the first course was built within the British Outward Bound system. While the Outward Bound movement is responsible for challenge course development in the United States, it is also important to know that challenge course curricula were not unique to the British Outward Bound Schools.

A movement in France must be mentioned that integrated challenge course type experiences into educational settings in the early 1900s. This movement was known as *hébertisme*, which was derived from the name George Hébert. From 1895–1903, Hébert served as a French Navy officer where he cared deeply about the physical conditioning of his sailors. He later became responsible for the physical training of the French navy. In 1913, he gave a demonstration of his training methods before the French Physical Education Congress. “Hébert’s view on education was return-tonature approach with emphasis on development of ‘moral values and virile character’”. He was opposed to analytical exercise and controlled movements when nature offered so many opportunities for varied physical movements. He developed obstacle courses in natural areas that required the use of fundamental movements such as jumping, climbing, running, walking, crawling, balancing, throwing, lifting and carrying. Drawings of *hébertisme* obstacles, found in Cousineau’s manual, resemble modern-day challenge course elements. In addition to emphasis on physical conditioning, *hébertisme* created opportunity to discover personal potential and limitations while moving in a natural environment. In 1949, *hébertisme* was first implemented in North America at Camp Ecole Trois-Saumons located near Québec City, Canada. Two Canadian army officers who served in France during WWII brought it to Canada. It has yet to be determined if Hébert’s original thinking influenced Outward Bound challenge course programming

The First American Challenge Courses American educators interested in Kurt Hahn’s educational model brought Outward Bound to the United States in an effort to immerse American youth in this new brand of educational reform. The first Outward Bound School was established in Marble, Colorado, which opened for business in 1962. The challenge course, along with many other outdoor adventure activities, became an important part of the first Outward Bound curriculum. “Tap” Ernest Tapley, designer and builder of the Marble base camp, constructed



the first Outward Bound challenge course in the United States in 1961. Tapley was sent to the United Kingdom to take an Outward Bound course at Eskdale and experienced a ropes course as part of his preparation to become an Outward Bound Instructor. Tapley brought back what he had experienced and built the first course in an aspen grove with the help of fourteen students from the Colorado Academy in Denver. Tapley also picked up design ideas from his past service with the US Army's 10th Mountain Division. British Outward Bound instructors, Nigel Peacock and Ralph Cough later approved the course and made a few minor adjustments. The entrance to the course was a forbidding 35-foot rope ladder. According to Miner and Bolt, the challenge course produced apprehension in the students the same way rock climbing and rappelling did.

Tapley also served as mountaineer advisor for the Colorado Academy in Denver. The headmaster and founder of the Colorado Academy, Chuck Froelicher, was also a founding member of the Colorado Outward Bound School. Froelicher believed deeply in the Outward Bound process and integrated key principles into his school's curriculum. Froelicher asked Tapley and academy students to build a small challenge course in a one acre wooded area on academy grounds area known as Sherwood Forest. This was probably the second course built in the United States for educational use. Students participating in these first US challenge course experiences were put on belay and encouraged to take a practice fall so student belayers could practice catching a fall. Students were debriefed after the event to bring out the whole experience. The use of challenge courses for educational purposes had taken root in the United States!

Continued Push Toward Mainstream Education

Early American Outward Bound instructors began taking their expertise to other settings. Programs were slowly being established in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Outward Bound instructors built a challenge course at Lincoln-Sudbury High School in Lincoln, Massachusetts. Mike Stratton, former Colorado Outward Bound Instructor, constructed a few elements for the Carroll School near Walden Pond in MA. Stratton created a climbing wall out of boulders, sometimes over 100 pounds each, by imbedding them into a cinder block, gymnasium wall. Karl Rohnke, NC Outward Bound instructor, created a challenge course for Southern Illinois University.

The Outward Bound phenomena also spawned an entire movement of adaptive Outward Bound programs that promoted challenge course use. One of the most influential organizations in challenge course development has been Project Adventure. Project Adventure is noteworthy because its focus was on reforming the traditional education system. Jerry Pieh, principal of Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School, M.A., had a genuine interest in educational reform. Jerry had helped his father, Bob Pieh, start the Minnesota Outward Bound School. Jerry developed a deep appreciation for the power of the Outward Bound experience. Jerry and a colleague, Gary Baker, submitted a grant proposal to the federal office of education to integrate Outward Bound into mainstream education. The new program, developed in 1971, was called Project Adventure. Jerry was able to hire staff with Outward

Bound background to help Hamilton-Wenham faculty develop the new curriculum.


Staff member Karl Rohnke and a group of after school high school sophomores built a challenge course used primarily in physical education classes. The course was built behind the school's football field in a stand of beautiful, mature beech trees. The course was constructed with whatever materials were at hand—goldline and manila hemp ropes, 1/2-inch cable and a ladder. The height of elements went only as high as the ladder or tree climbing would allow. High elements included a cable Zip Line, Two Line Bridge, Cat Walk, Commando Crawl, Belly Buster and Cargo Net Swing. Goldline belay ropes were hung through single alloy or steel carabiners. Low elements constructed included an All Aboard, Everybody Up Stumps, Vertical Pole and Tire, Tension Traverse, Barrel Pull, Wall, Beam, Spinning Spool, Hickory Jump, Sneaker Graveyard and Flea Jump. Debriefing the experience was primarily a question and answer session similar to what had been passed down from the Outward Bound process.

The majority of the new curriculum focused on the 10th grade physical education class. "But, English, history, science, theater arts, and counseling were also explored in the context of what became to be known as 'adventure activities.'" Bob Lentz, former Outward Bound instructor, teacher and principal, became the first director of Project Adventure. "Bob found in the Project Adventure curriculum a way to help students become more 'alive, alert, and responsible' inside schools, and to institutionalize the process". In 1972, Karl Rohnke built the first Project Adventure indoor climbing wall for Newburyport, another northeastern high school.

Birth Of An Industry

All courses in the 1960s and 1970s were constructed in-house reflecting individual ingenuity. No universal standards or formal risk management protocol existed to manage these programs. No formal staff training existed, so experience was gained through trial and error. There were no national organizations promoting the use of courses, which left the early pioneers of challenge course programming isolated. The first formal gathering of challenge course professionals occurred in 1988 at the North Carolina Outward Bound School. In 1991, this seminal group of professionals decided to form a national organization to support the development and standardization of challenge course practices. This was the formation of the ACCT.

Tracking down the information contained in the article was difficult but rewarding. Much of our history has been oral and as a result the true facts may be somewhat distorted. While Outward Bound can be singled out as the first educational curriculum to jump start US challenge course programming, you could see that many individuals added their own brand of creativity to shape our present. I invite readers of this article with historical knowledge to contact me if you feel facts are inaccurate or misrepresented. It is important that we accurately record our past before it is lost!

NOTE: This article has been adapted from a chapter in *Developing Challenge Course Programs for Schools*, edited by Wurdinger and Steffen. Used by permission of Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company
Note: This article has no references. For a complete list of references, please contact the author mwagstaff@radford.edu. 



Into the Abode of Death

Crossing the Empty Quarter

By Mark Evans

On January 27, 2016, after 1,300 kilometre and 49 days on foot and by camel, Outward Bound Oman Training Manager Mohammed Al Zadjali and Executive Director Mark Evans, with Bedouin Amur Al Wahaibi, arrived at Al Rayyan Fort in Doha, having followed the 1930 trail of forgotten explorer Bertram Thomas across the Empty Quarter of Arabia. Their successful crossing was the first time anyone has attempted the journey in 85 years.

The 1930 achievement of the little known Thomas and his Omani guide Sheikh Saleh bin Kalut, have been lost in the sands of time, overshadowed by Wilfred Thesiger's beautiful black and white images and poetic writing. One of the aims of the recent journey, the first time since then anyone had been given permission to attempt the same route from Salalah in southern Oman, to Doha, the capital of Qatar, was to put Thomas back on a pedestal, and give him the recognition his achievements deserved. It was also

an opportunity to celebrate the 45th year of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Al Said, and the deep and enduring trust and partnership between Oman and the United Kingdom.

Thomas was born into a humble background in the village of Pill, near Bristol. His father was a pilot on the Avon River and his mother ran the post office. In the First World War he signed up for the North Somerset Yeomanry and found himself in Mesopotamia, mixing it with the greats that were Gertrude Bell and Arnold Wilson. His talents did not go unnoticed and once the war was over, Thomas found himself appointed as financial advisor to The Sultan of Oman, where over a period of four years, aware that Philby in Riyadh had similar desires, he secretly hatched plans to cross the largest sand desert on earth.

The world of exploration at the time was a vibrant one—Peary and Cook had both laid claim to the North Pole, Amundsen had

reached the South Pole, and Mallory and Irvine were at the cutting edge of efforts to reach the summit of Everest. With the poles claimed, attention was focused on the vast interior of Arabia. The exploits of T.E. Lawrence in the Hejaz had attracted the attention of the American reporter Lowell Thomas, and the moving images he captured of the dashing Lawrence played to over 4 million people, from Covent Garden in London to Madison Square Garden in New York. The world was obsessed with the romance of Arabia, and in 1930 the race was on to become the first person to cross the Empty Quarter.

On December 10, 1930, Bertram Thomas set off from Salalah, walking into the unknown, with no maps to follow. He would survive through his own wits, good fortune in terms of rains and grazing, and the skills of a local Bedouin, Sheikh Saleh bin Kalut. Sheikh Saleh was the only person who accompanied Thomas all the way to Doha, other Bedouin only daring to go to the edge of their tribal areas. Much of his journey took place during the holy month of Ramadan and was racked with constant uncertainty, as relay teams of camels and men were needed for him to achieve his goal. Had rains not fallen the previous year, there would have been no grazing, and no grazing meant there would be no people, and no camels. In such a situation, the only option would have been to retreat back to safety along the line of wells they had followed to date.

After 56 days, having crossed what he later described in his book *Arabia Felix* as “an abode of death”, Thomas and bin Kalut walked into the Emir’s mud-brick fort in Doha. Such was the level of interest that the news quickly made the front page of *The Times* in London, and in New York. Thomas first lectured at The Royal Geographical Society, where he was awarded the Founders Medal, and his early images of southern Arabia are carefully stored in the archives today. His contribution to science was considerable, not only through his anthropological work, but also through the collections he made of flora and fauna.

2015 was the 85th year since Thomas and bin Kalut had left Salalah, and coincided with the 45th year of the reign of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos as the ruler of Oman; the planets were in alignment to attempt to retrace this historic journey. His Highness Sayyid Haitham bin Tariq Al Said was appointed Expedition Patron in Oman, along with HRH Prince Charles in the UK and His Excellency Sheikh Joaan bin Hamed Al Thani in Qatar.

Our main challenge was to find the key to unlock the door, and get permission not only to enter Saudi Arabia at a remote, unmanned location, but also to spend one month walking with camels across the sensitive eastern province. An issue of equal concern was to find camels tough enough to withstand the demands of walking 30 to 40 kilometres per day, for 50 or so days, with limited food and water. Camels, like humans, have gone soft in recent years—rather than wandering the sands in search of rain-fed grazing, today they tend to lead static lives, with water trucks bringing water to them and locally grown fodder crops being served up each day.

To give them every opportunity of succeeding, and to protect the sensitive pads on the base of their feet, we parked our four camels (all female, from the Royal Cavalry) at a Bedouin community on the southern edge of the sands, and on December 10, 2015, 85 years to the day since Thomas and bin Kalut started their own journey, my two Omani companions, Mohammed Al Zadjali and Amur Al Wahaibi, and I set off on foot from the old souq in Salalah, on the edge of the Indian Ocean. As we did so, playing in cinemas throughout Oman, and on the Oman Air In-Flight entertainment systems was an awareness raising 60-second video clip that used some of Thomas’s original footage shot in 1930, digitized in a project funded by the society.

Our journey, which took place primarily thanks to the unstinting efforts of His Excellency Sayyid Badr Al Busaidy, secretary general at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Muscat, did not set out to be a first, or fastest, but was, amongst other things, a celebration of slowness that attempted to reconnect Omani, Saudi, and Qatari people to their rich culture and heritage, and to show a side of the Middle East different to that which normally dominates the media. With the Empty Quarter now being emptier than it has ever been, many of the waterholes used by Thomas are long abandoned and full of sand. With much uncertainty regarding water supply, we made the early decision to use two 4x4 support vehicles to carry tightly rationed water, which would be supplemented by the possible discovery of water in the sands—Thomas had used a sextant to record the location of the wells he used, accurate enough for his needs, but little help in reality when searching for a small well on the ground in what could be an area of up to 15 kilometre square.



At the start of the journey, our vehicles carried 50 days'-worth of food, carefully labelled, packed and sorted into 25 plastic crates. In the first two weeks we barely touched a crumb, overwhelmed by more than 1,000 unexpected visitors who sought us out even in the most remote of locations in southern Oman each day. A desert expedition in Arabia is no place for a vegetarian. "You cannot enter the land of the Al Kathiri without accepting our hospitality," announced a proud Omani Sheikh, and in an ongoing effort to out-do the hospitality of the previous gathering, by the time we had reached the border with Saudi Arabia we had consumed twenty-seven goats, in addition to several camels and sheep. Any hope we had of losing weight was initially slim. Amongst the visitors were some so old (none knew exactly how old, as nothing was documented at the time of their birth) that, despite having limited sight, and being unstable on their feet, several produced well-preserved black and white images of them as young men, standing proudly with Thesiger and his camels at a water-hole.



After trekking through the frankincense-clad Qara Mountains, where we followed the footprints of striped hyenas and discovered 4,000-year old pre-Islamic rock art, we were re-united with our own camels. Our passage across the border into Saudi Arabia was uncertain until the eleventh hour. Verbal assurance had been given, but we had nothing as yet for us to show a dubious, heavily-armed border guard at one of the most remote of unfenced and unmarked borders. One day from arrival, word reached us that we were in, by Royal Command of the King himself. The enormous star dunes of Dakaka, where it had not rained for seven years, made for the most beautiful of landscapes, and whilst the nighttime temperatures dropped to a low of 0.4 degrees C, for the most part a northerly wind made daytime progress bearable.

On days when that wind did not blow, temperatures rose and camels bellowed, kicked, and spat in protest. Our daily routine was a simple one; each night we would sleep on the sand, Amur would rise first before dawn to pray, and by 0630 we would have un-hobbled the camels and be on the move, keen to get as many kilometres under our belts in the cool morning air as we could. We would always walk for the first couple of hours, by which time the camels would have settled, ready for us to ride along at a

steady speed of 6 kilometres per hour. Our day would end some 30 to 40 kilometres later, an hour before sunset, when we would hobble the camels, gather wood for the fire, bake bread under the sand, and settle down for the nightly star show.

After a few weeks that saw us following a line of small wells to the northwest, the large dunes of Dakaka gave way to the flatter sand sea of Sanam, and we were able to start what Thomas described as 'The Northward Dash' for Doha, still several hundred kilometres ahead. As we steadily descended to the Arabian Gulf the sands gave way to gravel, and eventually to the dreaded subkha, a salt-encrusted mudflat that after rains can be treacherous territory for the camels.

Like Thomas, at this point we were beset by several days of heavy dew and thick fog, making navigation a challenge, but hiding the sun from view until midday.

On January 27, 2016, some 49 days after we had left Salalah, riding fresh camels sent by the Emir of Qatar, we arrived at Al Rayyan Fort in Doha. The Empty Quarter had been crossed!

As with all expeditions, the end of the physical journey does not mean the end of the project. One of the key aims of our journey was to create role models to which young Omanis could aspire, and to that end Mohammed and Amur have been busy delivering a series of 30 lectures to more than 5,000 young people at schools and colleges throughout Oman, promoting Outward Bound Oman's aim to develop the next generation of leaders for the nation. Twenty-three hours of film are being edited into a documentary, due to be released later this year, and the book is scheduled to launch on December 1, 2016.

Remaining firmly in the footsteps of Thomas, a lecture is scheduled at the prestigious Explorers Club in New York, where Thomas was made an honorary member in 1932. On November 28 an exhibition will open at The Royal Geographical Society in London, which will run until December 16, 2016. The RGS was the first place Thomas lectured on his return from Arabia. His expedition images are stored in the archives and will form the basis of an evening lecture to be held in the Ondaajte Theatre on December 1, 2016, to be followed by the book launch. A UK lecture tour, funded by the Anglo Omani Society, will take place in the spring of 2017, and will include Bristol, where Thomas grew up, and Cambridge, where he studied.



**An excerpt from the forthcoming book,
Crossing the Empty Quarter, Chapter One:**

Closing an Epoch

The metal blade of the shovel hit what might have been a human bone, and I had an increasingly uneasy feeling that we shouldn't be doing this. We had been digging for 20 or so minutes in the graveyard of St George's Church, in a small village just south of Bristol, and from the directions I'd received from both the local council and the local historical society, I was convinced that we were in the right place. But I had been pacing up and down between graves for some time, unable to find the headstone that I was looking for. The two old gardeners had joined me, and for some time they had been watching with justifiable suspicion.

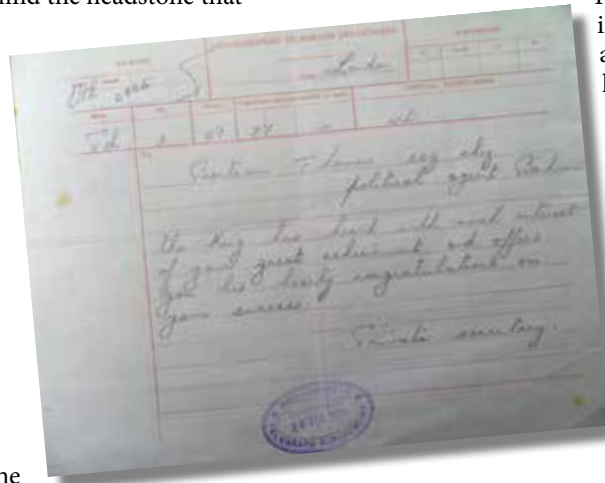
"I'm looking for the grave of a local man who went on to become a famous explorer just over 80 years ago," I said, "with the name Bertram Thomas".

"Never heard of him", said one, whilst the second scratched his head, took off his cap and, having given it some thought, agreed, and suggested that we start digging in the location marked on the map, just in case the headstone had fallen forward and was now covered by grass.

Wet, defeated, and worried that continued digging might end up exhuming something unpleasant, we retreated into the church to shelter from the relentless rain, and to search for something that might help us find what I was looking for. At the very least, the hand-written burial records book stored in the small room behind the altar confirmed that Bertram Sidney Thomas, from the village of Pill in Somerset, had indeed been buried here on June 1st, 1951, aged 58 years old. Armed with fresh enthusiasm, we stepped out once more into the rain, and counted out the number of rows and columns that should lead to the correct spot. And there in front of us, it was; it turned out I had counted my rows and columns from the wrong point initially. A small, angled tablet of stone, hard to read not only because it was covered in lichens and moss, but also because all of the lead had been stolen from inside the lettering, lay in the shadow of his mother's and father's much larger headstone. It read,

In proud and loving memory of Bertram Sidney Thomas, CMG, OBE, PhD, Arabian Explorer, who passed into higher life on December 27th, 1950, aged 58 years.

And that was Bertram Thomas, the first documented westerner to cross the largest sand desert on earth, a forgotten explorer who I had been researching for several years; no fuss, understated, no grand towering grave to draw attention to himself or his achievements. Yet at the same time, always shrouded with a hint of mystery and intrigue; passing away on December 27th, but not being buried until June 1st the following year, despite dying in the house where he was born close to this very churchyard.



His father was a harbour pilot, guiding boats through the mud-banks and currents of the River Avon, and his mother ran the local post office. Thomas's early horizons were limited to the local area, until he signed up for the Somerset Light Infantry and the First World War took him to the battlefields of Belgium, and then on to Mesopotamia (now Iraq). By the time the war ended, Thomas had made Arabia his home, and had been seduced by the challenge of the unknown desert at its heart. He was appointed assistant political officer, working under such influential characters as Gertrude

Bell, Philby, and Arnold Wilson, from whom he learnt a great deal. Described as a quiet and serious man, Thomas was undeterred by the inhospitable terrain, merciless heat and fractious tribes. His plans began to take shape during the winters of the late 1920s. In 1925, he had been appointed to the Council of Ministers of Muscat and Oman as Financial Adviser, a position he held for five years, until 1930. His prime role was to sort out the Sultan of Oman's finances, something he proved not to be very good at. Looking back, it is clear Thomas arrived in Oman with a burning desire to become the first person to cross the vast and unexplored Rub Al Khali, or Empty Quarter desert.

The virgin Rub Al Khali, the great southern desert! To have laboured in Arabia is to have tasted inevitably of her seduction, and six years ago I left the administration of Transjordan for the court of Muscat and Oman. I already cherished a secret dream. The remote recesses of the earth, Arctic and Antarctic, the sources of the Amazon and the vast inner spaces of Asia and Africa, have one by one yielded their secrets to man's curiosity, until by a strange chance the Rub Al Khali remained almost the last considerable terra incognita...





This pre-occupation led to criticism of Thomas from the local British political agent, “for paying insufficient attention to his duties in favour of his travels and exploration, resulting in financial laxity and mismanagement”. He chose to work through the stifling heat and humidity of the summer, which enabled him to use the cooler winter months for exploring. In the winter of 1926 he completed a two-week journey on foot and by camel from Muscat to Sharjah (in what is now the United Arab Emirates), followed in the winter of 1928 by a much longer journey along the coast from Bani Bu Ali, to Salalah, the main city of Oman’s southernmost province, Dhofar. It was on this journey that he developed the relay system of tribal teams, and fresh camels that would see him achieve success on the biggest challenge of all.

All of these journeys did little to hide his secret desires, and whilst Thomas never publicly declared his intent, it was clear that Sultan Taimur, the ruler of Oman, had an inkling of his dreams.

“Why aren’t you married, Oh Wazir?” I expatiated on the difficulties under which a Christian laboured, especially one serving in the east, and pointed to the comforting doctrine that for a man it was never too late. “Ah” said the Sultan, knowing my secretly cherished desire. “Quite right. Insha’allah, I will help marry you one of these days to that which is near to your heart – the Rub Al Khali, Insha’allah!”

“A virgin indeed”, quoth Khan Bahadur, his private secretary.

Thomas was not going to let anything stop him. On October 4th, 1930, he slipped quietly and secretly out of Muscat to board a British oil tanker that would carry him along the coast to Dhofar and the southern city of Salalah. After being carried ashore by dhow, he rode along the coast by camel to make his base for preparations. Despite a sleepless series of days, Thomas immediately started an exploration into the frankincense-covered Qara mountains, where he remained for two months, undertaking scientific and anthropological research before returning to Salalah, suffering from dysentery.

That expedition was a prelude to the main feat: to cross the Empty Quarter. One problem was that Thomas knew that if he told anyone of his ultimate intention, he would have been prevented: the official position of both the Omani and British authorities was that tribal disputes made exploration foolhardy.

My plans were conceived in darkness, my journeys only heralded by my disappearances, paid for by myself and executed under my own auspices. The desert crossing would never have been sanctioned. Salalah knew of my presence: it must not know of my plans. Secrecy was imperative. To disclose them would be to invite hostility and the news would spread abroad, as all news spreads in Arabia, with the speed of the telegraph, and unauthorised accretions that would not disgrace a London evening newspaper....

It was in Salalah that Thomas was to meet Sheikh Salih bin Kalut Al Rashidi Al Kathiri, the only Omani who would ultimately accompany him on the entire journey from sea to sea across the Empty Quarter. As a result of this, bin Kalut has evolved into an Omani hero, about whom legends are still told today. Whilst the team that made up the first ever crossing was made up almost entirely of Omanis, Sheikh Salih was the only member of the team to complete the entire crossing, with others only willing to go to the edge of their own tribal areas.

Bin Kalut's skills of organisation, desert navigation, and leadership of the men were critical to the success of the journey. Even more critical were his skills as a diplomat. As the group travelled from one tribal area to another, there was always the potential for problems, even fighting; the fact that neither of these became serious issues was in many ways thanks to his skills of negotiation.

I took an immediate liking to Sheikh Salih. He bore the most magical name of bin Kalut – Kalut, the most famous lady in all the sands, daughter of a famous warrior, and mother of three warrior sons. Salih was a short man, big of bone, with a rather large head, bald – unusual for a bedu, even of Salih's 60 years, and a heavy jowl. His brow was big, perhaps from his baldness, and his eyes large, his countenance open and frank, his voice slow and measured; he inspired confidence

Wilfred Thesiger, the famous desert explorer dubbed Mubarak bin London (our friend from London) by his Bedouin colleagues, met bin Kalut in Dhofar in 1945, and described him as "...immensely powerful. His body was heavy with old age, so that he moved with difficulty, and rose to his feet only with a laboured effort, and after many grunted invocations of the almighty. He seldom spoke, but I noticed when he did, no one argued".

Thanks to the skills of bin Kalut, and the tenacity of Thomas, on February 5th, 1931, some 58 days on foot and by camel after they had left Salalah, they approached the mud brick towers of Doha (the capital of Qatar); the journey was over, the race had been won, and legendary Arabic hospitality awaited them.

Thomas's purpose was never solely to get to the other side of the desert. Despite fears of their purpose being misunderstood, he carried scientific instruments as well as a still and a cine camera so that he could collect and record the flora and fauna he found on his journey. He collected 400 natural history specimens, 21 of them new to science, and many of which are today stored in the Natural History Museum in London.

News of the success, sent by telegram from Bahrain, caused a global sensation, making the front pages of The Times in London, and the New York Times. In the years to follow, Thomas lectured far and wide, sharing tales of his journey with audiences around the world, and he was honoured with some of the highest medals that can be bestowed on explorers, including the Founders Medal of the Royal Geographical Society, the Cullum Gold Medal of the American Geographical Society, and the Burton Memorial Medal of the Royal Asiatic Society.

His book, *Arabia Felix*, was quickly published in 1932, and in the foreword, T. E. Lawrence wrote, 'few men are able to close an epoch. We cannot know the first man who walked the inviolate earth


for newness' sake, but Thomas is the last; and he did his journey in the antique way, by pain of his camel's legs, single handed, at his own time and cost. He might have flown an aeroplane, sat in a car, or rolled over in a tank. Instead, he snatched, at the twenty third hour, feet's last victory and set us free—all honour to Thomas'.

Other than a black and white photograph taken by Thesiger in 1945, and a mention in his classic book *Arabian Sands*, little is known of what became of Sheikh Salih after they had reached Doha. Like many Omanis at that time, there is no written record of when he was born, but it is known that he outlived Thomas, and passed away in Dubai, where he had been seeking medical treatment, on December 15th, 1953, some 22 years after his great achievement.

This book tells the tale of men and a journey largely forgotten in the sands of time; it also tells the tale of my own journey and those who made it with me, to follow loosely in their footsteps, some 85 years later.

About the Author

Mark Evans (www.markevans.global) is the Executive Director of Outward Bound Oman, Founder of The University of the Desert, and Patron of the Andrew Croft Memorial Fund. He was awarded the MBE in 2012 for his work in the field of intercultural dialogue.

On December 1st, the expedition book will go on general sale. Advance orders can be placed at crossingtheemptyquarter.com/book/ 



POWERING OMAN'S NEXT GENERATION

HOW SHELL'S SOCIAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME,
OUTWARD BOUND OMAN, SUPPORTS YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



Omani youth account for half of the country's population and will be entering the workforce in increasing numbers over the coming years. As a founding member of Outward Bound Oman (OBO), Shell is committed to supporting the country's next generation by complementing the academic training they receive in schools with key leadership skills to prepare the country's youth for Oman's rapidly evolving economy.

Unlocking human potential is at the heart of OBO, which "focuses on developing skills that are not normally developed in schools," explains the Chairman of the Arab world's first Outward Bound school, Hilal Al Mawali—a Shell secondee who has been tasked with leading this emerging success story into its next phase of growth. With a strategic focus on the two most important aspects of success: supporting youth development in Omani and the long-term sustainability of the programme, it is abundantly clear upon meeting Al Mawali that he is up for the challenge.

Nurturing the Character of Omani Youth

Launched in May 2009 with the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Education, in strong collaboration with founding partners Shell, Dentons and Suhail Bahwan Group, OBO's mission reflects the importance His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said's government places on preparing young people for the future. OBO operates in some of the country's most inspirational outdoor settings, providing hands-on, journey-based courses that expand young people's horizons, giving them the confidence to achieve things they never thought possible, as well as a fresh perspective on life with tangible and lasting benefits to increase their leadership skills and employability.

Outward Bound: Human Resource Development

While OBO's success is a direct reflection of its partnership with Oman, Outward Bound has a long global legacy of helping to nurture, develop and enrich the lives of countless programme graduates from nations around the world. Founded in the United Kingdom in 1941, this year Outward Bound celebrates its 75th anniversary as one of

the world's oldest human resource development organisations. Today Outward Bound reaches participants in more than 30 countries, who take part in the challenging journeys of fostering personal growth and development while increasing employability and environmental awareness.

"OMAN IS HOME TO THE ARAB WORLD'S FIRST AND ONLY OUTWARD BOUND PROGRAMME"

"Outward Bound Oman gives us the opportunity to equip our students with very important skills for the future," says Dr Nasser Al Ghanabousi from Oman's Ministry of Education. The flourishing partnership of a shared vision between Oman and Outward Bound receives praise from the participants both anecdotally and from independent research conducted by the Ministry. Dr Al Ghanabousi adds that the Ministry is looking for ways to develop and expand the programme to provide additional opportunities for Omani

youth to cultivate '21st century skills' which encourage personal and professional success.

"The sort of leadership skills that we are developing, like self-confidence, communications, time management and planning, are all for the purpose of preparing youth for the work environment," adds Al Mawali. By supporting leadership development, Outward Bound's ambitions compliment Oman's long-term vision both from an educational and economic perspective, according to Dr Al Ghanabousi who supports the OBO team through the Ministry of Education's partnership.

Shell's Social Investment in Outward Bound Oman

"We are a long-term investment in the grassroots of Oman because the future of this country lies in its young people, and it's a matter of making sure that they are prepared for the future in a rapidly evolving country," says Mark Evans, General Manager of OBO. In line with Shell's pledge to corporate social responsibility, through its investment in OBO, Shell is demonstrating its continuing commitment to the Sultanate of Oman's local community development as a responsible corporate citizen that cares about the future of young Omanis. With the right values in place and programmes that fill in the gaps between education and employment, Omani youth are growing more confident and realising that anything is possible.



Courses are all journey based, taking place in the deserts, mountains and wadis of Oman.



Journey's end; Amur Al Wahaibi, Mark Evans and Mohd Al Zadjali at the gates of Al Rayyan Fort, Doha, Jan 27, 2016.



The original Khanjar carried across the desert by Sheikh Saleh bin Kalut in 1930.



Thomas described the central sands as 'An Abode of Death'.

OUTWARD BOUND OMAN RETRACES HISTORY: GENERAL MANAGER COMPLETES HISTORIC EMPTY QUARTER DESERT JOURNEY



The original Khanjar carried across the desert by Sheikh Saleh bin Kalut in 1930.

85 years ago, British explorer and former Shell employee, Bertram Thomas and his Omani guide Sheikh Salih bin Kalut Al Rashidi al Kathiri, led the first recorded crossing of the Empty Quarter, or the Rub Al Khali, the largest sand desert and one of the most dangerous landscapes in the world. The site is also one of the world's most oil rich places on earth encompassing four countries. This year Outward Bound Oman's General Manager, Mark Evans, Mohammed Al Zadjali, OBO's Training Manager and Amur Al Wahaibi rewrote history by completing this journey in January of 2015. Evans serves as an inspiration for the OBO participants and hopes that his crossing of the Empty Quarter shows that the impossible is possible through perseverance and partnership, encouraging Oman's youth of their own potential.



"THE FUTURE OF THIS
COUNTRY IS ITS YOUNG
PEOPLE"

Courses in Oman are normally single sex; Outward Bound Oman has three full-time female instructors.

Inside the Outward Bound Oman Experience

To see first-hand the impact OBO is having on the local community, imagine for a moment a beautiful sunny day in the middle of Oman's winter. The young team sits under a shaded tree taking a short rest on their 4-day long journey. The young boys have already become a team, evident by the jokes and smiles exchanged between the small group and their trainers—most of whom are Omani. Asked about their experiences, they grin widely. They've learned so much. "Time management," "the importance of team work," "managing our responsibilities," and so forth.

What is clear is that the vast, immense terrain and natural beauty of Oman make it an ideal environment for such a journey. "Oman is the key to the success of Outward Bound and Oman," says Evans, because "the future of this country is its young people."


A journey inside a day in Outward Bound vividly reflects Evans' words. Shaded from the winter's sun, the group has formed a semicircle on the desert ground. The Outward Bound staff enquire what the students have learned at this juncture of the journey. The deaf young students boast proudly in sign language that their confidence, teamwork and time management have all been put to the test. During this journey they have failed at times, but that failure is what they have been learning from during the course.

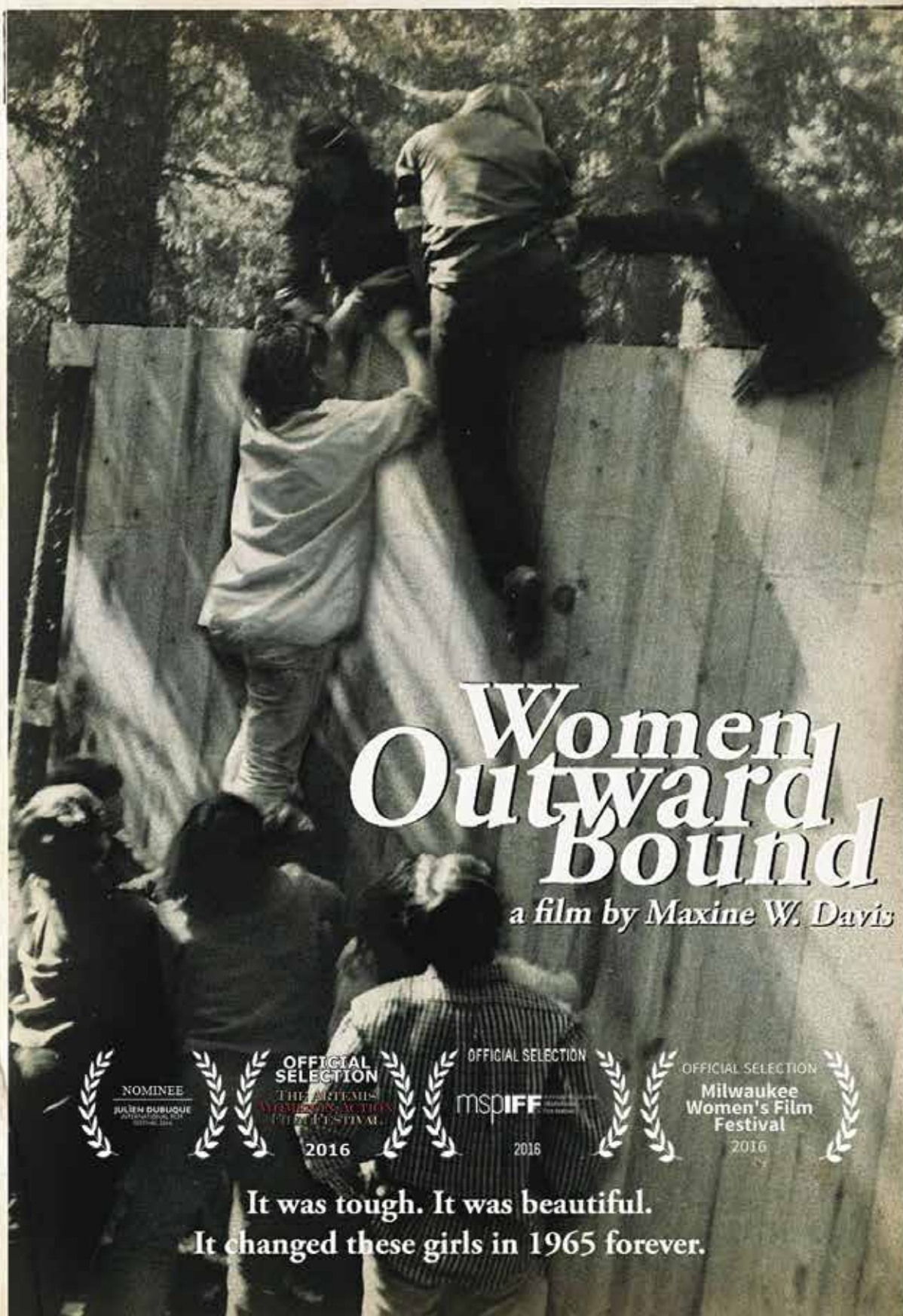
Teamwork and partnership, core skills emphasised in every Outward Bound course were appropriately what brought Outward Bound into the country in the beginning of its journey in 2009. Together, the partners have made Outward Bound an effective youth programme which is having a remarkable impact outside the traditional classroom. A continued strong collaboration will be key to OBO's next chapter of progress.

From a Single Room to the Top of Oman

Since its establishment in 2009 in a single room without any desks and chairs, this year alone the programme has trained more than 1,351 participants, conducted 82 courses and now has 18 full-time staff. And OBO's growth includes plans to build three world-class centres in the heart of the country's outdoor classrooms: from the desert of Oman to the top of Jebel Al Akhbar, part of the mountain range that includes the highest point in Oman and in eastern Arabia. Today, Shell is an integral part of OBO's growth with a deep commitment to Oman's future demonstrated through the secondment of Al Mawali, former General Manager of External Affairs, Shell Development, who now serves as the Chairman of Outward Bound and who will oversee the next phase of Outward Bound's growth.

Partnering to Unlock the Future of Oman's Youth

Shell is active in Oman across its oil and gas industry, through OBO and other social investment programmes, contributing to the sustainable development of the country by advancing the development of the country's greatest assets: its next generation. While Oman's Outward Bound is just a few years old, it is beginning to make a profound difference as Oman's youth take steps toward the future. Similar to the journey participants go through in the Omani wilderness, Evans says: "the end of the Outward Bound course is the start of the journey, and if we've done our job right, they should go home wanting to make a difference." 



Women Outward Bound

a film by Maxine W. Davis



OFFICIAL SELECTION
THE ART ENSEMBLE
WOMEN'S ACTION
FILM FESTIVAL
2016



OFFICIAL SELECTION
mspiFF
2016



OFFICIAL SELECTION
Milwaukee
Women's Film
Festival
2016

It was tough. It was beautiful.
It changed these girls in 1965 forever.

• AUG • 65



By Maxine Davis

It's 1965 and 24 teenage girls are about to have an experience that will change their lives forever. Who were these girls and what did they do? *Women Outward Bound* is a documentary about those girls, what happened to them, and how 30 days in the wilderness taught them they could do more than they ever thought possible.

Outward Bound opened its first school in Great Britain in 1941. Its mission: to give young seamen the ability to survive harsh conditions at sea by teaching confidence, tenacity, and perseverance, and to build experience in harsh natural conditions. The first American Outward Bound school opened in 1962, in Colorado. Three years later, at the recently established Minnesota Outward Bound School, 23 young women and I signed onto a course held in the Boundary Waters region in northern Minnesota. Ours was the first women's Outward Bound course held in the United States.

Gene Caesar wrote of our expedition in *Seventeen* magazine, "I had expected an assortment of muscle-molls.... Instead, I saw two dozen feminine young women, several of whom, as a north woods guide would say, wouldn't have weighed a hundred pounds wringing wet — which they were destined frequently to be."

Along with most others, he thought "... the country's teenage girls are soft, pampered creatures." Were we? Or, as girls, had we just never had our chance to find out?

Most likely most of us watched Miss America walk her runway with tiara and tears. We wouldn't see the likes of Venus Williams or Hillary Clinton for years.

We each had our reasons for signing on, but none of us knew how those weeks would change our lives.

We boarded a bus that took us to the edge of a wilderness back-country covering some 2.2 million acres of lakes, rivers, granite outcroppings, bogs, rivers, and waterfalls. We soon learned that we'd get dirty and wet — but could also clean up and dry out. We paddled white water. We climbed rocks and ropes and plunged into very cold water. We gained the physical strength and mental tenacity to travel safely in "brigades" through the wilderness for the next 30 days.

Those girls and I came to Minnesota Outward Bound School with such different backgrounds, abilities, and weaknesses. When we left, many of us took something with us that we didn't realize we'd found — what I call "grit."



Close to 50 years have passed, and girls need grit more than ever. What is grit? Perseverance, cooperation, risk-taking, dreaming big. How do we develop these qualities in girls? Whether a girl wears shorts, a hijab, or a sari, when they take leadership roles as women, our entire world will be better for it. With *Women Outward Bound* we have a rare opportunity to follow a group of girls who early on learned to value grit and take it into their lives as women.

Today, so many girls and women feel judged for everything from their looks to their grades. Trees and water and rocks don't care what you look like. They don't judge. When a girl fords a brook, climbs a rock face, or

sits quietly listening to wind, she can truly be herself.

How girls and women change when they spend time in nature is difficult to explain. Instead, this new documentary, produced and directed by one of those first girls in 1965, shows it.

For further information about *Women Outward Bound* please visit www.womenoutwardbound.com 



SPREADING

the Outward Bound Spirit

By Koichi Inasawa

Like in many other parts of the world, Japan is facing economic difficulties. As a result, many households and young people have less income than in the past, and many consider recruiting students to have become increasingly difficult for our Outward Bound School. This not only makes running Outward Bound Japan more challenging, but it also means that fewer young people are getting the valuable experience that our courses offer for economic reasons.

The most important time to teach people the values of our motto is when they are young and still developing their adult personality. OBJ therefore came up with the idea of proactively working with elementary, junior high, and high schools, either directly or through their school boards, to try to persuade them to provide elements of our Outward Bound courses in their curricula.

The current problem with the Japanese education system is an overemphasis on academic knowledge over life skills. Many students have a narrow sense of values, resulting in problems including bullying, absenteeism, a lack of the consideration for others, a decrease in communicative competence, and lower levels of motivation. The emphasis on students performing well academically has made many of them depressed and unconfident. None of this leads to the strong cooperation between people with different values that we need in today's globalized world. Indeed, the Ministry of Education has decided to reform the university entrance examination process for 2020 to address some of these issues. It will focus not only on the quantity of academic achievement, but also on the power of self-expression, good judgement, reasoning ability, self-decision making, and cooperation. These are also the main themes of youth development that Outward Bound Japan has been focusing on since its establishment.

"The most important time to teach people the values of our motto is when they are young and still developing their adult personality."

Our new initiative focuses on spreading the Outward Bound spirit and core values of our philosophy into the mainstream school education system. The Ministry initially requested that we provide camping experiences for students. However, schools were placing the emphasis on entertaining their students through fun events, rather than focusing on educational elements. Therefore, Outward Bound Japan has started working to improve the education system in a number of ways.

1. Our first initiative is to send Outward Bound instructors to schools to give lessons on building relationships and improving interpersonal communication skills. This year, Outward Bound Japan gave this 'Communication Course' to first-year students aged 15–16 at a high school in Hyogo Prefecture. Interestingly, each school we have visited has given this program an original title such as 'Adventure' or 'Force for Human Improvement.' One student who took this course stated: "Through this class I learned about the difficulty of speaking and listening to others. It was a really meaningful experience because I didn't realize that this kind of communication was so important until now."
2. Our Outward Bound Japan staff now accompany students on school camping events to introduce our 'Adventure Program,' which we are currently running at a junior high school in Okayama Prefecture. In addition to providing guidance for the outdoor activities, we also teach pre-camp classes in which we help students to set a target for the camp, and the post-camp classes in which we discuss how to reflect on the experience to help them with their school life.

3. Outward Bound Japan also provides training for teachers, to spread the concept of the Outward Bound spirit in their day-to-day educational activities. Our staff travel to schools and provide lectures for teachers, or meet with them to discuss how to take advantage of what they have learned in the classroom and through OBJ camping trips. In Japan, teachers need to update their license every ten years, and because Outward Bound Japan is accredited by the Ministry of Education to offer updated training sessions, many teachers attend our courses every year. During this training, teachers talk to us about the real problems happening in their schools.




4. Our final initiative is to hold workshops for parents to spread the concepts of Outward Bound education to home education and family values, something parents often worry about. Parents need to understand that their children must take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour, rather than relying on their parents to make these decisions for them.

In order to deliver these initiatives effectively, it's important that we train high-quality leaders, especially as we are planning to get our staff more involved in school education in the future. Once a year, Outward Bound Japan provides a Japan Adventure Leadership Training (JALT) course which involves advanced outdoor training. This year, we had seven participants who joined and successfully completed this 73-day course from May 1 to July 12.

As of last year, we started a 'Community Service' course to add more variety to our JALT program, to teach students how 'To Serve,' one important element of the basic Outward Bound philosophy. Our founder, Kurt Hahn, said that the purpose of Outward Bound education should be, "The development of the execution type citizen," meaning proactive citizens who put every effort into improving their own community by learning deeply about the region they live in and providing the necessary services.

To this effect, this year we once again held JALT's "Joint Campus" activities in the Maki district of Nagano Prefecture, an event with a 40-year history. The citizens of this region are semi-self-sufficient and far removed from the conveniences of modern life. For one morning activity the JALT students had to carry 'kaya,' or materials used to thatch roofs, for an hour-and-a-half along a challenging mountain path, as they struggled to maintain their balance over the difficult terrain. That afternoon, the students' teamwork was put to the test as they were challenged to pull heavy logs to the local sawmills. The hard work freed their minds as they enjoyed being at one with nature and came to understand the feelings and lifestyle of the local people. After sweating and growing hungry from the hard work, they all ate a large, delicious dinner of local foods! For these students who will later educate others, it was a wonderful opportunity to think about who they are, what society is, and the joys of living such a rural lifestyle. On the final day, the JALT Completion Ceremony was held with staff members from Outward Bound Japan, who gathered at the Nagano school where Koichi Inasawa, Chairman, gave certificates to each student and praised their efforts to overcome the challenges of the course.

This year we have also established the Leadership Training Committee, which is chaired by one of our Board members, Professor

Minoru Iida, to find better methods of training leaders. This will help our organization positively affect young people as we strive to spread the most important aspects of the Outward Bound philosophy into the school education system. This committee will discuss the necessary qualifications related to leadership, and it is also inviting members from other organizations to ensure a variety of effective opinions. Outward Bound Japan will keep striving to become a more effective organization for youth education in Japan. 



Outward Bound **PEACEBUILDING** *a Partnership Model*



By Ana Patel & Flavio Bollag

Introduction

“Trees communicate not through their branches, but through their roots,” states Héctor Tello, Executive Director of Outward Bound Mexico. He is addressing a group of adults, predominantly Mexican professionals and students who work on youth and violence prevention issues. The program is an Experiential Peacebuilding Training delivered jointly with the Outward Bound Center for Peacebuilding in April 2016. We are about to do our solo in one of the last remaining cloud forests in the western hemisphere, the Sierra Juárez range in Oaxaca, Mexico. This tropical evergreen forest feels like something out of a dream-cape. The cloud cover rises like smoke from the forest floor and abundant lianas and epiphytes hang from the canopy. Only the occasional cry of a bellbird breaks the silence of our afternoon solo. In the quiet you can almost hear the trees talking.

The Experiential Peacebuilding Training is a five-day semi-residential program of Outward Bound Center for Peacebuilding (OB Peacebuilding) for professionals and students interested in conflict transformation and peacebuilding. The crew in Mexico included local government officials, the executive director of the biggest LGBTQ shelter in Mexico City, two sustainable forestry experts focused on community outreach, university researchers, and a number of teachers. The facilitator team included a pair of lead instructors, one each from OB Mexico and OB Peacebuilding working together, one assistant instructor from OB Mexico,

one person on logistics support, and the executive director of OB Peacebuilding, serving as the principal peacebuilding lecturer for the course. A big team, but this pilot program was also an opportunity for professional development and curriculum sharing between the two OB staffs. The local knowledge that OB Mexico offered of the cultural, environmental, and ethno-political history of area was critical for the program. The OB Peacebuilding team brought its unique curriculum integrating conflict resolution, non-violence, conflict transformation, and peacebuilding into the Outward Bound approach. The two teams worked together to design the program, develop a marketing strategy, recruit participants, and deliver the course. In 2017, OB Peacebuilding will offer the first Experiential Peacebuilding course in Brazil in partnership with Outward Bound Brazil, and will repeat the successful program with OB Mexico.

For our school, the opportunity of threading together the net of regenerative interactions is both challenging and inspiring. The Experiential Peacebuilding Training with Outward Bound Peacebuilding was a wonderful experience of OB collaboration. Not only did we begin to see the potential for a new area of programming for our School, but it was a real opportunity for professional and personal development for our staff and collaborators.

—Héctor Tello, Executive Director, Outward Bound Mexico

Outward Bound Center for Peacebuilding

Outward Bound Peacebuilding uses the Outward Bound approach of experiential learning in the outdoors to challenge and inspire emerging leaders in divided societies to build peace. Beginning with a wilderness experience that encourages participants to push their limits and move beyond their comfort zones, Outward Bound Peacebuilding works with partners around the world to design programs that encourage compassionate leadership, cooperative learning, and creative action.

Licensed in 2014, OB Peacebuilding is one of the newest Outward Bound Schools and one of the few with a thematic, rather than a geographic, focus.

We call our approach experiential peacebuilding. It joins the power of experiential learning, or learning by doing, together with peacebuilding skills and practice. Our theory of change for this approach is founded on two convictions: 1) Experiential learning in the outdoors is a powerful tool for advancing leadership, building trust, and creating transformational experiences for individuals and groups, and 2) Peacebuilding requires investment and support of local leaders, who are best positioned to bring positive change to their communities and societies.

Why an Outward Bound Schools for peacebuilding? At the close of 2015, the United States Institute for Peace cited the highest ever tide of people displaced by war, violence, and persecution across the globe. This movement of people not only reflects the international map of conflict, but also contributes to growing tensions between peoples within nations. The Institute for Econom-

ics and Peace, in their 2015 Global Peace Index, notes among many others a disturbing trend. Over the past eight years, average country scores show deterioration, driven downward particularly by one factor: decreasing indicators of internal peacefulness. The challenges of the near future will be defined by conflicts within nations—and the need for local leaders to sustain and reinforce the foundations of peace has never been greater.

Even in its earliest days, Kurt Hahn saw a role for Outward Bound on the international stage. Upon the founding of the first school in Wales in 1941, he said, "...Our aim is to lay the foundations of class peace and of religious peace. We want to educate citizens not subjects, qualified for international cooperation." (Fletcher, Basil 1971) Throughout its history, various Wardens, School Directors, staff, and alums, recognized that Outward Bound is in an optimal position to utilize its strengths to facilitate peace leadership in situations of conflict. The result has been programs such as the Outward Bound Global Leaders Program, the Outward Bound South Africa Post-Apartheid, the Unity Programs of North Carolina Outward Bound, the Connecting Cultures Program of Outward Bound Oman, the Police-Youth Challenge of Baltimore Chesapeake Bay Outward Bound Schools, and others.

In establishing OB Peacebuilding in late 2007, the founders aimed to build on and support these efforts to apply Outward Bound's philosophy, expertise, and methodology to the needs of individuals living and working in situations of conflict throughout the world. Our approach is rooted in our belief in the power and efficacy of community-level action, and of compassionate leaders who can be peacebuilders in political, economic, and



interpersonal actions. We all see examples of these in Outward Bound alumni and partners everywhere.

Outward Bound Peacebuilding engages peacebuilding leaders through two kinds of programs.

Our **deep engagement programs** focus on multiple years of programming with local partners in divided communities such as the Palestinian-Israeli Emerging Leaders Program for next generation leaders from Israel and Palestine, offered since 2009.

Our **education and training programs** aim to empower others to use the experiential peacebuilding approach and include

- Practicum on Experiential Peacebuilding, a ten-day expedition course for professionals and graduate students of conflict resolution and peacebuilding, delivered in partnership with Costa Rica Outward Bound and the United Nations University for Peace
- Peace Matters Expedition, a five-day expedition course for students, delivered in partnership with Voyageur Outward Bound School and the Nobel Peace Prize Forum
- A variety of workshops and other learning experiences with a variety of partners, including universities and NGOs.

Since 2009, OB Peacebuilding has engaged and supported more than 220 participants, representing 25 countries and six continents. More than 70% of our alumni are women, and many have traveled to places and met people with whom they would otherwise never have interacted. Today, 80% of our alumni are living or working in countries ranked in the lower half of the Global Peace Index, produced annually by the Institute for Economics and Peace.

Partnering

Partnering with Outward Bound Schools is the primary mode of program delivery for the Outward Bound Center for Peacebuilding. Our past partnerships with ten different sister OB schools have included short and long-term relationships, and the aim is always to strengthen and expand the Outward Bound brand and model.

The longest collaboration thus far has been with OB Croatia on OB Peacebuilding's Palestinian-Israeli Emerging Leader's Program (ELP). ELP encompasses 25 program days, spread over a year for young Israeli and Palestinian professionals between the ages of 25 to 40. The heart of the program is a ten-day expedition, which has most often been delivered with OB Croatia. Croatia as a destination makes sense for this program because of relatively easy and cheap flights from both Tel Aviv and Amman, it sits in the same time zone avoiding jet lag issues with participants, and as a member of the EU, Croatia accepts the various types of Palestinian travel documentation. It is also a country with many possibilities for spectacular program areas.


Partnering with Outward Bound Peacebuilding school is a great experience and very beneficial in so many ways for us. It is inspiring and much more easy and simple to work with an organization who share the same mission, values, goals, and understand organizational process of our programs. Also, it is a good learning opportunity for our staff to compare and improve programme delivery process, safety, and quality standards, as well as social interaction. At the end, it makes us all feel as a part of a big Outward Bound community across the globe.

—Lovorka Šimunec, Executive Director, Outward Bound Croatia

Better together: OB as a global community

Outward Bound's greatest strengths are its strong brand, its history, and its global reach, offering unrivaled diversity of program models and locations—yet collaboration and partnerships between schools are the exception rather than the rule. OB Peacebuilding offers a new opportunity for interested OB Schools to define a truly beneficial partnership by:

- Expanding program reach with new models and curriculum
- Engaging new audiences, clients, and participants
- Deepening the alignment to classic Outward Bound values like inclusion, empathy, and transformative leadership
- Enhancing revenue sources by opening doors to new grants and donors
- Building added capacity for instructors in a new and relevant peacebuilding curriculum
- Exploring each OB school's and region's interests and needs and developing a course that best fits local communities and context.

At Outward Bound Peacebuilding we draw strength from Outward Bound's legacy of unrivaled excellence and from shared history and values. Like the cloud forest in Oaxaca, we grow together and speak to one another from our roots. 





Mark

Zelinski

MarkZelinski.com

For many of us in the Outward Bound community, Mark Zelinski has become the de facto photographer of record for international Outward Bound. For over three decades, Mark has travelled the world, capturing compelling images of OB participants and staff in the many spectacular wilderness and urban areas that are our organization's unique classrooms.

It all began in 1984, says Mark, with a volunteer opportunity at the Canadian Outward Bound Wilderness School: "I found myself shooting for several days in Northern Ontario during heavy rain for the first two days of my visit to 'Homeplace', the base camp on Black Sturgeon Lake, and my frustration was building. Then, on the third morning, I was awakened by a brilliant sun gleaming across the lake through a white blanket of mist onto my sleeping bag. I raced to the lake to catch the sunrise, and was soon joined by a group about to embark on a canoe marathon. I clicked the shutter as the group paddled into the mist, and I felt a quantum shift — like a new door opening. I did not know it at the time, but my global odyssey with Outward Bound had begun."

MarkZelinski.com



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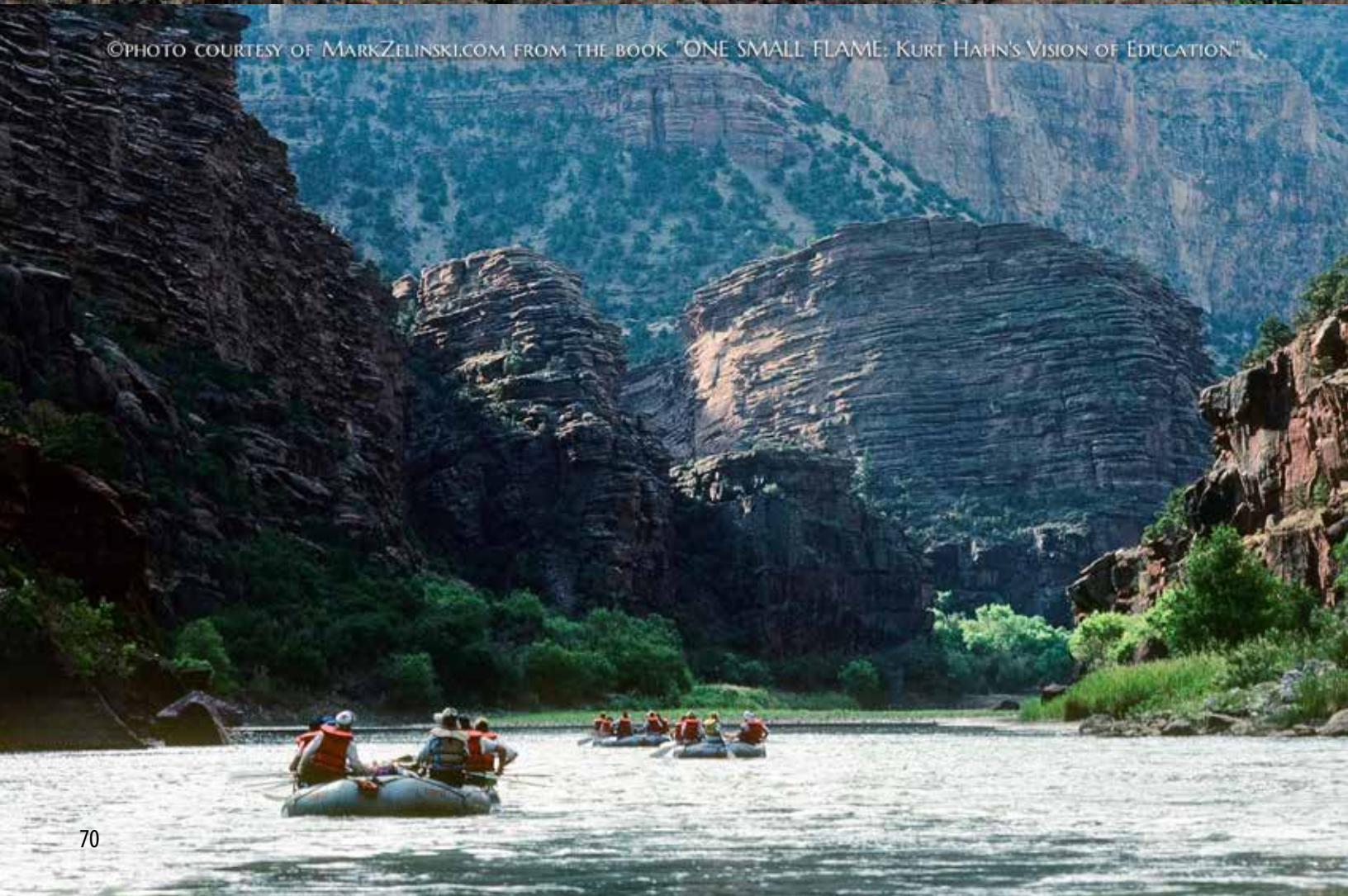


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Since then, Mark has travelled through that opened door repeatedly, visiting each of the so-called Hahn organizations (those founded by Kurt Hahn): Outward Bound, United World College, and Round Square, and photographing more than 100 Outward Bound courses in a journey that has taken him across oceans and deserts, to many mountaintops and rainforests and cities. His travels allowed him to photograph wildlife, remote environments, and portraits of people of diverse cultures.

Mark's photographs have in many ways become matchless posterns to a world usually reserved for Outward Bound's students and their instructors. As he puts it, "I've seen hundreds of people experience life-changing growth within schools inspired by educator Kurt Hahn. To witness firsthand the power of these courses to transform adversity into triumph has long been a great inspiration for my art as well as a personal blessing."

We are therefore very pleased to present these photographs that Mark has created over his decades-long outward-bound journey, beginning with his very first, taken at the edge of Black Sturgeon Lake in 1984. 

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF *outward bound*

By Nick Cotton

Measuring the impact of an Outward Bound experience is a challenge we have all grappled with repeatedly. What questions do you ask? When do you ask them? How reliable are the answers? Here at Outward Bound Hong Kong we have what we believe to be a robust and externally validated system which not only measures the changes in specific outcomes recorded by participants, but also allows us to quantify those changes. This can be hugely powerful when reporting back to client organisations, who can now quantify day-to-day changes and therefore make a more credible case for further funding.

However, it doesn't quite tell the whole story. Condensing the benefits of a course into a number ignores the layers of impact that a course can have; the personal stories, the friendships forged in a tent in a storm, or the shared laughter of the group all seem to be lost in the quantification of the experience.

This is why it was a welcome surprise when, after taking over as Executive Director of Outward Bound Hong Kong, I discovered a file of

papers that included a course report written by a young professional participant of the very first OBHK course. The author, a Mr. Howard Young, had gone on to serve in the Hong Kong Legislative Council but, more importantly, also became a central figure in the Outward Bound Alumni Association (OBAA). Page three of Howard's report (his "Description of the Course") states, "The course can be concisely described as a strenuous course consisting of tough outdoor physical activities designed to help young people discover and develop their potential."

Clearly the course was not too strenuous as Howard went on to be a founding member of the OBAA, a group of OBHK graduates who meet regularly to extend their passion for the outdoors and maintain the bonds created at OBHK. The OBAA, perhaps more than any impressive number on a report, represent the true impact of an Outward Bound course.

Since 1971 this group of 'Outward Bounders' have been held together by their appreciation of the OB experience and their willingness to volunteer time to keep the spirit alive. Volunteers meet up once a month on a piece of land donated to them, to keep it looking smart and to share stories

and a drink. This base is also used to facilitate regular group activities such as sailing, hiking, and kayaking trips for those who remain interested. Additionally, the Association makes its mark on the local community by organising the Tolo Harbour Canoe Race, which has introductory and competitive categories in distances from 5 to 21 kilometres. The race has been running for 43 years, a testament to the enthusiasm and determination of the members, but even more impressive is the competitor who has appeared in every year of the race!

In July of this year, the OBAA were at it again, organising a kayak expedition from Hong Kong to Macau. This event has been held every ten years since 1982 but was brought forward in 2016 to mark the 45th anniversary of OBHK. Sixty paddlers departed from the western island of Lantau after an official send-off and battled through 45 kilometres of challenging conditions before arriving in glitzy Macau just before sunset. The paddlers were made up of OBAA members as well as paddlers from three local secondary schools who had been working with OBAA volunteers to gain experience and fitness for the crossing. It was a great day which highlighted the sense of shared values and spirit amongst the alumni, all enhanced by a celebratory dinner for the tired paddlers. If ever there was an embodiment of the Outward Bound impact, it was surely the energy and joy that was evident in that room in Macau, generated by a group of now 'mature' enthusiasts.

Howard Young's OBHK story did not end with his participation in Course One. Yes,

he went on to sit in Hong Kong's government and co-found the OBAA, but he also served on the Executive Committee of OBHK and maintained his enthusiasm for our work. When he felt that the time was right to step down, he was replaced by his son Jeremy, who has now been charged with maintaining links between the school and the Alumni Association. In that course report written in April 1970 Young stated, "I shall never forget that I was on the first Outward Bound course in Hong Kong and shall strive to keep up the name of an 'Outward Bounder.'" Howard, along with so many of

"I shall never forget that I was on the first Outward Bound course in Hong Kong and shall strive to keep up the name of an 'Outward Bounder'."

the members of OBAA, has lived that spirit and has a great deal to offer OBHK and the young people we serve. As such we are looking forward to hosting him, and them, at our base in November to celebrate our 45th anniversary.

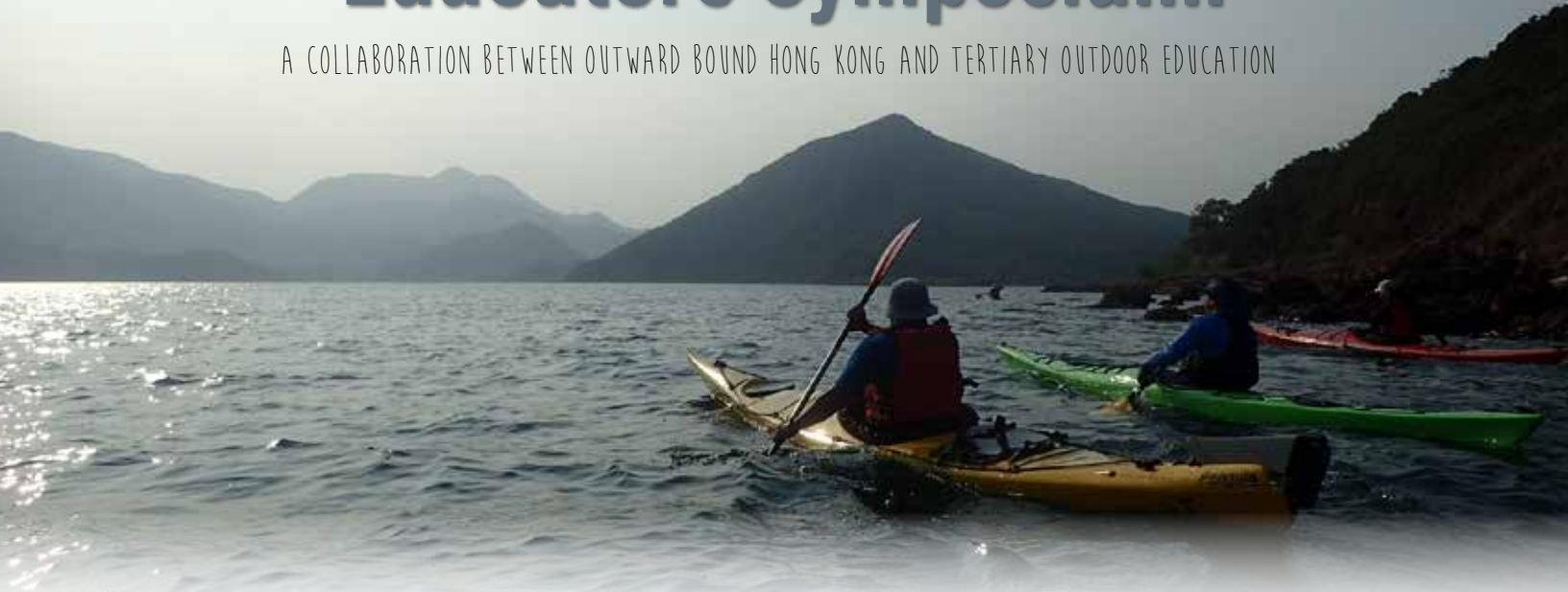
Howard's final reflection reads, "Never in my life before had I ever felt so cold, so tired, so wet, so seasick or sweated so much than during those eventful days on the course, but if I were asked whether I would have gone on the course had I known beforehand that it would be such, I could only say: 'YES'"

Let's hope that he has set the tone for future generations who will reflect as positively on their experiences in 45 years' time!

There is obviously a place for analytical analysis of course impact, but we can't forget that the human impact, such as the stories and energy of the OBAA, speak even more about the power of Outward Bound. 🏞️

The International Sea Kayaking Educators Symposium:

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN OUTWARD BOUND HONG KONG AND TERTIARY OUTDOOR EDUCATION



By Aaron Funnell and Jake Taylor

From November 30 to December 4, 2015, Outward Bound Hong Kong's remote island base of Wong Wan Chau hosted the first International Sea Kayaking Educators Symposium (ISKES). This innovative event was created through a collaboration between Outward Bound Hong Kong and Australia's Monash University with the purpose of convening outdoor adventure educators from around the world who value both the sea and sea kayaking for its unique and powerful learning potential.

A healthy mix of scholars, authors, lecturers, adventurers, students, practitioners, and adventure education administrators from within and outside the global Outward Bound community came together at the island base camp, which provided an excellent forum for discussion and sharing of topics and issues. Three engaging keynote speakers spearheaded the symposium, from Scotland, Canada, and New Zealand, with further presenters coming from North America, the United Kingdom, and Australia, as well as from various locations within Asia. A blend of shore-based and sea-based sessions created an excellent platform for learning and sharing.

While kayak symposiums are fairly common around the world, this symposium was unique since it moved beyond skills acquisition to focus on the educational processes and knowledge that form the foundation of excellent outdoor programming. The Monash University Faculty of Education is highly regarded, and the partnership forged with Outward Bound Hong Kong has ensured robust reflection and awareness of pedagogy, research, and educational processes. However this symposium was not just

a sharing of academic theory. It was hands-on and experiential while identifying and exploring the theoretical foundations that underpin programming. Over half of the five-day symposium was sea-based, including an overnight camping expedition, a separate night-paddle, sea kayak orienteering that was interpretative of local areas, plus an optional dawn round-the-island paddle each morning.

Keynote speakers included Mark Jones, from Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand who inspired delegates to connect people to place-based experiences; Peter Varley, from the University of Highlands and Islands, Scotland, with an evening fireside presentation about journeying without modern luxuries; and Fiona Hough, a former Outward Bound Canada program director, who spoke of instructor intentionality and the use of metaphor and facilitation in water-based programs. To conclude the symposium over half the delegates departed on two separate sea kayak journeys rather than taking a ferry back to the mainland—emblematic of the action-based and experiential nature of this first International Sea Kayaking Educators Symposium.

Throughout the symposium, delegates were presented with problems relevant to their experience as sea kayak educators, which made for engaging and interactive sessions. This was supported by lively evenings on beaches and around a campfire, building relationships and connections with world-class sea kayak adventurers, scholars, and like-minded educators. Partnering with Monash University inspired OBHK to honour the underlying action-based foundations of experiential learning rather than hosting a five-day conference of PowerPoint presentations.

For many of the Outward Bound staff who participated, this formed a highlight of their professional careers and has served as an inspirational way to get fired up and passionate about sea kayak programming. Homegrown presentations were well-received by this eclectic group of educators, including topics such as the deliberate use of learning outcomes, student-centered approaches to paddling, searching for peaks at sea-level, sea kayaking props for facilitation, and the symbolic origins of sea kayak communities. The attendees also had the opportunity to learn about the sea kayak as a tool for transfer, incident and near-miss patterns while sea kayaking, and an evaluation of the positive impact of sea kayak courses on participants. The Outward Bound staff spent quality time with outdoor educators and lecturers from around the globe, and developed strong connections with them. OBHK as an organization also gained a huge amount of institutional knowledge and ideas specific to improving sea kayak programming including:



- Facilitation and debriefing ideas specific to sea kayaking
- Rich practical perspectives on curriculum development that are grounded in theory
- Awareness of how the “sense of place” can be included into courses
- Enhanced perspectives on research from leading scholars
- Environmental interpretation
- Course ideas such as “active ageing” and “adaptive programming” to serve the changing needs of communities
- Service ideas while sea kayaking
- Sea kayak-specific safety and training materials, including accident and near-miss profiling, which now forms an important part of OBHK sea kayak training
- Awareness of the environmental damage that is occurring to the oceans and strategies for Outward Bound courses to begin to help fix some of these, such as how to pummel the ocean’s plastic waste problem.

This symposium has certainly helped to add to the body of knowledge about sea kayaking while it also enriched OBHK’s abilities to provide world-class sea kayak journeys, and it has done so by intentionally strengthening our course curriculum and associated practices. At the same time an engaged community of practice is emerging from these delegates who attended.

Based on the success of this symposium, ISKES-2 has been scheduled for March 2018 in Wilsons Promontory, Victoria, Australia and will be hosted by Monash University. Several other scholars and program administrators from around the world have already shown further interest in hosting subsequent ISKES events and there is a projected rotation of venues between the northern and southern hemispheres every two years. ISKES-2 will again feature a healthy balance of on-water and off-water sessions and will include emphasis on sustainable hunting, fishing, and foraging practices possible from the cockpit of a sea kayak, as well as continuing the focus on theoretical and educational foundations of sea kayak programming.





EXCERPTS FROM A SYMPOSIUM BLOG: PADDLING UP TO WONG WAN CHAU

BY JAKE TAYLOR

Stroke after stroke, my blade slices the water as I slowly but surely make progress along a steep, rocky coastline. As I continue to paddle against constant force five winds, I know that once I pass the next rocky headland things will be bigger, much bigger. It isn't very often that I have the time or reason to paddle along this section of Hong Kong coastline. By far, it is the most beautiful and rugged section. Steep cliffs of rhyolitic columns, a very rare rock formation, allow the swell to double up in size as the energy is reflected off the walls. In certain areas, the pounding of the surf has carved out sea caves and arches. The sound of the waves booming from the walls and the round stones cascading over one another echo in my mind.

The rhythm of my blade dipping in and out of the water begins to align with my boat's up and down movements with the swell.

I feel as if my breathing and heart rate find their harmony, so that all of my movements and being are in sync. From my periphery I catch a glimpse of a white-bellied sea eagle soaring above the seas searching for fish. At this moment I truly feel alive and living in the present. My mind is not scouring over endless to-do lists, things forgotten from yesterday, or planning for future events. Every muscle, cell, and nerve within my body feels awakened and ready.

My journey continues northward along the coast towards Wong Wan Chau, and I begin to come across fishing vessels, boats filled with tourists, and garbage in the water. Having lived in Hong Kong for one year, I have become somewhat desensitized to this, but it still brings on anger and sadness. Tom Hanks would have never left his castaway island had he the items that wash up on the islands and sea caves of Hong Kong.

Upon entering Mirs Bay, the conditions begin to wane as the farther headlands of mainland China shield the local waters near Wong Wan Chau. The fetch of wind across the water reduces, and I have the time to absorb this natural beauty where the volcanic rock becomes a deep red of sedimentary origins. With each forward stroke, my mind turns more towards the symposium and my session on the first day. I wonder who some of the delegates flying in from Europe, North America, and Australasia will be. As I arrive at dusk the evening before the symposium, I roll out my mat and sleeping bag overlooking the lush green hillsides that extend all of the way to the water.

BEGINNINGS

The International Sea Kayakers Education Symposium, ISKES for short, has an exceptional maritime ring to it. The idea sprang forth from a partnership between Monash University and Outward Bound Hong Kong, with the question of, "How can we use sea kayaking as a means to achieve greater educational benefits?"

RUNNING THE SESSION

It's always difficult trying to take a thought, an idea, a concept from your mind and make it relevant and useful for someone else. You don't want to directly transplant it from your mind to theirs, since its purpose will just be lost in due time. It's even harder when you are doing this for a group of peers, who in some cases may be more knowledgeable and experienced in the field than yourself. Confidence and humility are two traits that need to be balanced to achieve success when undertaking such an endeavor.

Now, presenting at an innovative symposium that looks to broaden the realm of sea kayaking beyond the standard skills and drills, I asked myself why did I choose to conduct a practical skills session? Can the act of teaching technical skills be relevant to the deeper notions of education? However these doubts soon



faded and I recalled the words of Tim Galloway: "...remember that it is the experience that teaches you, not the instruction." Teaching sea kayaking, using a core concept approach, can allow you to transfer these skills and attributes on top of the intended purpose of learning to paddle.

For my actual session, brief introductions were conducted along with some background evidence for my claims. I immediately went to work establishing rapport and setting a fun and focused tone. It doesn't matter how great you are if the people you have

in a class, course, or trip are unable to form any sense of bond with you. From there, getting on the water as quickly and safely as possible is always a priority. Once there, I set out to provide activities and sessions that would highlight the core concepts in action. In some cases, an outlandish method! I always find that the more odd and silly the approach, the more likely it will be remembered and practiced. Directing people paddling with blindfolds by using their body rotation. Working on top hand position and balance with someone sitting just behind you on the deck of your kayak. The laughter was contagious. Eventually, as the sun settled behind the hillsides, the time came to depart the water.

The session I ran can be utilized from the beginner to the advanced paddler and looks to create an understanding of how to be an efficient paddler using your body, your boat, and your blade. Most of those at my session have utilized a similar approach through years of instruction. From the questions and borrowing of my visuals, I felt I was able to provide an understanding that there is potential for deeper educational benefits even through skills training.

POTENTIAL

At the closure of the symposium, a meeting was tabled to discuss the personal findings and developments from the several days spent at Wong Wan Chau and Double Haven Bay. There was an excited, yet somber tone over the group as the topics re-arose, from slow adventures, creating a sense of place, and unique ways to reduce our impact on the ocean. A prospectus was tentatively discussed for the next symposium in the southern hemisphere to be held at the coastal barrier islands of Wilsons Promontory, Australia. 📄



How Good is My Outward Bound School?

By Iain Peter

In my three years as Executive Director of Outward Bound International, the question that I am most often asked when I visit our Schools around the world is, 'Where do we rank amongst the Schools? Are we the best? In the top five?' I always try to find a diplomatic way to answer this question and usually respond along the lines of, 'it depends what you mean by best....'

However, this is a good question and one that is worthy of more thought. With my three years of experience, I'm going to try to define what I think makes a "good School".

Good Governance

Schools that can be classed as "good" all have good governance arrangements.

Good governance is the key foundation for the success of any organization in any sector—whether commercial, not-for-profit, or educational. Governance is not the management of the day-to-day operations of the organization; rather it is the framework of strategy, risk management, controls, and processes that sit above the day-to-day operations. Governance relates to the organization's leadership in terms of culture, values, and integrity. In a well-governed organization, these elements underpin everything the organization does and how it does it.

In our Outward Bound world, governance is almost always the responsibility of the Board—and Schools with transparent,

independent, committed Boards focussed on strategy, leaving operation to the staff and operating to agreed terms of reference and with good records and documentation, are nearly always "good Schools".

Expert Staff

As I travel from School to School around the world, I am unendingly impressed by the quality and the enthusiasm of the Outward Bound staff that I meet. They are always skilled, articulate, friendly, and deeply committed to the educational goals of Outward Bound.

When we speak about staff it is common to assume that we mean program staff. But I mean all staff—executive directors, drivers, administrators, program staff, support staff, and catering staff. They are the Schools' biggest assets and they are a critical component of a "good School".

However, the world of Outward Bound can be a demanding place to work. I consider that good Schools are those who constructively manage their staff and who think about staff retention, staff training, and systems of on-going improvement (both of the staff and the programs). People like responsibility and love to be challenged but they also need to be supported by strategic and consistent management. "Good Schools" have open and transparent employment policies and a clear view as to career pathways and staff retention.

Staff safety is, for me, crucial. We often focus our efforts on participant safety but Schools must also ensure that staff are safe whilst at work. This is best achieved through training, monitoring, and direct management of the elusive work-life balance. Tired instructors aren't good instructors and overworked administrators don't make the best customer relations managers!

Sustainability

There are two kinds of sustainability: will the School be around in five years time? And are we protecting and considering the environment in which we operate?

Almost every School reports that financial operating conditions are difficult. It is increasingly hard to deliver a balanced budget as clients cut back on the amount they are prepared to spend and it costs more and more to operate Schools.

The best Schools have good business models that reduce their exposure to risk (i.e., a diverse customer base with limited exposure to risk should a client choose to terminate the relationship). Ideally, they will also have built up some reserves that at least give some thinking time in the event of a financial crisis.

In reality there are only four sources of income available to Schools:

1. Income from program fees (the money that your participants are prepared to spend to attend your programs)
2. Funds from government or charitable sources in the form of grants or subsidies
3. Fundraising income (donations that support core OB work)
4. Income from other (non-Outward Bound activities) activities that generate a surplus that can be used to support core Outward Bound work.

The best Schools have a spread of all of these income sources.

I should say a word about what I have observed on my travels regarding the various income sources and the advantages and disadvantages they bring.

Type 1 income is often considered to be best. You control it and you set the fee level in discussion with your customers.



The challenge, of course, is that high quality programs are expensive to deliver, and often customers cannot meet the full cost of programs. This means you need some type 2, 3, or 4 income to balance your budget.

Type 2 income can be very good but it is also potentially high risk. It is very easy to become overly dependant on grant income or government funding, leading to complacency and lack of innovation and flexibility. Governments change priorities and grants are often time-limited. “Good Schools” use type 2 income to support the budget and to build capacity — so that they are stronger and more diverse when the funding dries up.

Schools that become over-dependent on type 2 funding, without fallback plans for when the funding comes to an end (and it always does) can find themselves in real crisis — usually with staffing levels and program models that are impossible to sustain.

Many Schools in the OB network believe that type 3 income is impossible for them to access—that there is no culture of charitable donation where they operate. I think this is an oversimplification of the position. Fundraising is difficult for everyone; without commitment, investment and a good strategic plan it is indeed difficult. However, it need not be unattainable. Donors rarely approach Schools and offer support. Hard work, committed staff, diligent research, and a good offering are what produce donations. Don’t overlook this very valuable income and don’t write it off. Speak with our member Schools who are effective in this area; replicate their models and take their advice.

Money from fundraising can make a real difference to your School’s operation.

Be careful of type 4 income! It is very easy to be seduced into believing that services you deliver that are a long way from your “core Outward Bound mission” are worthwhile because they are profitable. Experiences shows that it is easy for the whole operation to become overly focussed on the profitable (non-OB) work, resulting in neglect of the core OB mission.

We all know of examples of facilities being used (at a profit) for hospitality in the quiet times. What then happens when young people with dirty boots spoil the ambience.... All too easily, the subsidiary purpose can become the core and can drive the business model away from the core mission.

It is equally important that our operations are environmentally sustainable — sensitive to nature, low impact, and energy efficient. “Good Schools” include these principles in their programs and include them in their practical experiences.

Program content

Of course, the thing that really identifies the “good Schools” are their programs. The best Schools deliver programs tailored to the needs of their clients, that result in real individual learning for participants.

Outward Bound is committed to an educational process based on instruction, action, and reflection. Experiences on good Outward Bound courses are intentionally designed, presented, and reviewed to instill Outward Bound’s core values and operating principles in a manner that ensures that the learning is transferable to other situations.

Outward Bound is recognised as a leader in providing experiential education in the outdoors where activities require special effort and where remarkable experiences involve uncertain outcomes within acceptable risk. “Good Schools” display all of this in their program delivery.

Good Outward Bound courses are delivered with high standards of quality and risk management. Instructors are trained and experienced in facilitating learning through adventure. They have highly developed outdoor leadership skills, and through creative talent they design and deliver learning-focused programs. Good programs nearly always involve outdoor, multi-day journeys in nature.

Conclusion

I hope that by now you have an idea of what I think makes a School good and that you have an idea as to where your School fits within the continuum. There are no “perfect Schools” and the Schools that are “best” in a particular area of performance are often weak in another area.

The challenge for us all is to be honest about these weaknesses and to work to address them. We must not settle for “good enough”. Around our Outward Bound community we have great experience and a multitude of models. Many of these models include areas of real excellence—imagine how good our Schools could be if we worked together to identify these areas of excellence and then, having identified them, we altered our own operating model to include them.

That is our challenge as we move forward. OBI is committed to making member Schools more effective and more resilient. We can only do this with your support and collaboration. ▶

ANNUAL REPORT

2015



Chairman's Letter

It is my privilege to report on behalf of the Board of Outward Bound International (OBI) on activities worldwide in 2015. OBI was created to oversee: licensing of new Outward Bound Schools; risk management and quality standards for all Outward Bound Schools; brand management; and the promotion of communications and networking amongst OBI members.

OBI exists:

To promote and protect the good name of Outward Bound throughout the world, and to assist in the establishment, development, and support of Outward Bound Centers able to provide safe, high-quality programs that fulfill the Mission of Outward Bound.

2015 highlights include:

- Implementation of the 2014 World Conference initiatives
- Successful implementation of new model for Program Review of Schools
- Introduction of renewed funding model for OBI
- Successful additional fund-raising through a collaborative effort with OBT (UK)
- April meetings in Australia and November meetings in Taiwan

Priorities of 2015

2015 priorities included:

1. Acting on next steps to meet the goals of the 2014 World Conference and a timeline for accomplishing these goals.
2. Securing the successful introduction of the new system of 'program reviews' for Outward Bound Schools.
3. Maintaining modest costs for OBI operations while exploring core funding with additional fund-raising for discretionary spending.
4. Maintaining support for schools with provisional and exploratory licences.

1. 2014 OBI World Conference follow-up

Outward Bound International, with help and support from Outward Bound Germany, hosted a very successful World Conference in November 2014. Leaders and staff from 32 Outward Bound Schools around the world attended.

The Schools sent us a clear message that they wanted a more integrated and linked Outward Bound network supported and facilitated by Outward Bound International. Delegates told us that OBI should take the initiative to lead, guide, and support the developing network. At our OBI Board meeting in Sydney, Australia, we got down to business.

The 2014 World Conference asked us to focus on:

- Creating an improved website including a central portal for the exchange of substantive information
- Building a stronger, consistent, and recognizable world-wide Outward Bound brand
- Facilitating thought-leadership on the impact of OB programs
- Supporting staff on a network-wide basis including a network skills audit, staff mentoring and shadowing, exchanges, staff training, and the creation of an expert fund
- Providing information and support of governance models to local boards.

In Sydney, steps were undertaken to assign tasks and responsibilities for meeting the tasks set for us and, in particular, for OBI's Executive Director and for the members of our Operations Committee. Our aspiration has been to report back on these items by the time the OB network meets again in North Carolina, USA in November 2016. Projects were drawn up and implemented, as below:

Initial planning led to investigation of a third-party-hosted and -developed website, intended to showcase Outward Bound Schools through a central OBI portal. It will provide a hub based on 'Sharepoint', which will allow for collaborative hosting and sharing across the OB network of precedents, delivery models, and learning.





Efforts have resulted in renewed branding for the Outward Bound network. The goal is to provide a consistent look and feel to the way in which Outward Bound Schools present themselves in the marketplace while still allowing for individual variances that are reflective of local culture. Timelines have been agreed on for implementation of these proposed models.

Many of the larger Outward Bound Schools have produced 'impact reports.' These confirm what we always knew — Outward Bound changes lives positively! Impact reports are now being shared across the network. While the descriptions of courses may change from school to school, the teachings of Kurt Hahn do not.

We continue to work on systems for sharing knowledge, ideas, and training among staff; indeed, for sharing staff. Plans for greater staff integration will be developed over the next two years. Our staff live globally. They want to be a part of a broad OBI network that allows them to contribute to Outward Bound Schools around the world.

We continue to develop core documents that describe and define governance models. By providing such guidance, we hope to promote governance discussions across all Outward Bound Schools.

2. Introduction of a Uniform Risk Management System

From January 2015 onwards, all Program Reviews undertaken by OBI use a new system, which features a 14-point review schedule and provides significant opportunities for discussion and support to individual Schools. Initial feedback is that the new format has been well received. This new system was fully implemented by the end of 2015, meeting an important responsibility and goal of OBI.

3. Maintaining Modest Operational Costs and Exploring New Funding Initiatives

The current funding model was introduced in 2009 to establish a dues-based formula by which Outward Bound Schools support the work done by OBI on their behalf. While the costs of OBI have been maintained at a low level, we are now challenged

to meet core activities on the current dues schedule and we are hampered in advancing any aims of OBI beyond core activities. In late 2015, our Treasurer led an initiative to stabilize funding for OBI. The model proposed, still under discussion at year's end, contemplates a formula that will increase proportionately the funding received from larger schools over that from smaller schools. Notably, the proposed fee increase will cover the costs of OBI's program reviews, a cost that is particularly difficult for smaller schools.

While these discussions will address core activities for OBI, any additional spending by OBI requires separate fundraising. We were therefore delighted to support our Executive Director, Iain Peter, as he oversaw all practical elements of the City Three Peak Challenge in London in September 2015. This was a joint fundraiser for the Outward Bound Trust (UK) and the Royal Marines Charity. For his well-spent efforts, OBI received a significant donation from OBT, which has been applied to the aims of OBI.

4. Attending to Licensing Matters

A central part of OBI's core activities (along with brand management and risk management) is the provision of oversight for licensing activities across the network. The Board of OBI, on the recommendation of its Operations Committee and ED, continued to support Provisional Licences for OB Germany and for OB Croatia as they integrated recommendations for the continued development of their organizations. We remain hopeful that these two Schools will join the network of fully licensed Outward Bound Schools. We were also pleased to receive the recommendation of the Operations Committee to grant Exploratory Status to Vietnam and Holland. We will provide support as they consider next steps toward provisional licences.

OBI has continued along a strong path in 2015. The Board of OBI honours the role that it plays in the advancement of the Outward Bound worldwide. We recognize in particular and with thanks the endless work undertaken around the world on behalf of Outward Bound by our Executive Director, Iain Peter, and Associate Executive Director, Rob Chatfield, as well as the countless hours of additional contributions from the members of our Operations Committee. As always, the collaborative and enthusiastic spirit guides best. 🏔️

Mary M. Thomson
Chair, Outward Bound International



Mary Thomson
OBI Board Chair

Mission & Scope of Outward Bound

Mission statement of Outward Bound International:

"To help people discover and develop their potential to care for themselves, others and the world around them through challenging experiences in unfamiliar settings."

Outward Bound International is on a global mission to help improve the effectiveness and fitness of its network of schools through a variety of ongoing and special initiatives. The following five priorities guide the organization's efforts in supporting Outward Bound worldwide.

1. Protecting and promoting the Outward Bound brand.

Outward Bound International ensures registration of the trademark in any country with current or potential Outward Bound activity, and manages the organization's reputation by monitoring infringements on names, marks, logos, and designs related to Outward Bound. In recent years domain name protection has received increased focus. To strengthen brand visibility, a website is maintained that serves as a global portal for those seeking information about Outward Bound.

2. Maintaining a focus on quality and innovation.

In the last decade, Outward Bound International has developed Risk Management and Quality Review systems. Every two years a detailed risk management assessment is made in each country in which Outward Bound operates, by teams of experienced Outward Bound staff trained by Outward Bound International. While this system is unparalleled in the adventure program field, Outward Bound International has developed a complementary process that systematically examines ways to improve the quality of service development and delivery processes.

3. Strengthening risk management standards.


Outward Bound International produces an annual Global Risk management Report on operations. Through its Program Review system, it also works with its member schools to continuously upgrade standards across the world.

4. Strengthening financial health.

Outward Bound International is continually trying to expand the number of sources from which charitable contributions are made to the organization. These efforts include offers of Guest Expeditions to interesting regions of the world for supporters who are willing to make a tax deductible contribution to Outward Bound, beyond the trip cost; and the establishment of an endowment campaign to ensure the future of Outward Bound worldwide.

5. Fostering free and open communication and collaboration.

In partnership with the schools, Outward Bound International hosts events such as world conferences and staff symposia. Additionally, an annual journal is offered electronically and in print, and an expanding internal website, which offers many resources and ways for sharing them, is available to Board members and the network of schools.

Every year numerous requests are made to Outward Bound International from individuals and organizations interested in bringing Outward Bound to their country. This is a clear tribute to Kurt Hahn and those who have pressed on in service of his bandwagon. 

Board of Directors



Tim Medhurst
Australia



Krassimir Yanev
Bulgaria



Eduardo Balarezo
Ecuador



Georgina Marten
Ecuador



David Kong
Hong Kong



Nikhil Mundle
India



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Emeritus



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Chairman
Emeritus



Bill Phillips
Chairman
Emeritus

Serving Outward Bound



Serving on a nonprofit board has its rewards: Helping extend an organization's mission effectiveness, reaching out to underserved populations. The benefits, too, can be a powerful attraction: serving with a diversity of people toward a common goal, broadening your network of professional and social connections within your community. But what if your community is global? What if mission effectiveness means starting a school in another culture or on another continent? What if reaching out means crossing the international dateline? What if the underserved are school girls from the Sultanate of Oman, or street children from Johannesburg, or a group of corporate executives from Sri Lanka? What if your network includes people from every continent, except Antarctica? You'd be a board member at Outward Bound International, that's what.

Outward Bound International's 15-member board is responsible for ensuring OBI's mission and providing governance to its staff and volunteers. The mission of Outward Bound International is to help improve, promote, protect, and extend the good name of Outward Bound, worldwide.

OBI Boards Worldwide

Each country in which Outward Bound operates has a slightly different board structure depending on the cultural norms and government

structure for charitable organizations. The essential element is that each Outward Bound school serves a diversity of young people with a governing board comprised of volunteer, non-paid community members that oversee its mission and operations.

Governing Board

The Governing Board of Directors is given the legal corporate authority and responsibility for an organization's formation and operation, for its stability, and for providing links to other organizations and parts of the community. The board can mean the difference between public understanding and support of programs and public apathy or even antipathy. Boards that understand their role and fulfill their responsibility are essential to the well being of not-for-profit organizations such as Outward Bound.

Advisory Board


An advisory board is designed to assist the Executive Director and Board in making informed decisions for the organization and generally promoting the organization to a larger constituency. Some of its duties include: promoting better understanding of the purposes of Outward Bound and the objective of its programs; maintaining standards consistent with accepted ones for similar agencies; and making useful recommendations on future direction to maintain the relevance of the organization.

Board Activities: Guest Expeditions

It has been reported that famed Antarctic explorer Ernest Shackleton placed the following ad in the London Times as part of a bid to recruit members for his 1914 expedition to transect Antarctica, via the South Pole: "Men wanted for hazardous journey. Low wages, bitter cold, long hours of complete darkness. Safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in event of success."

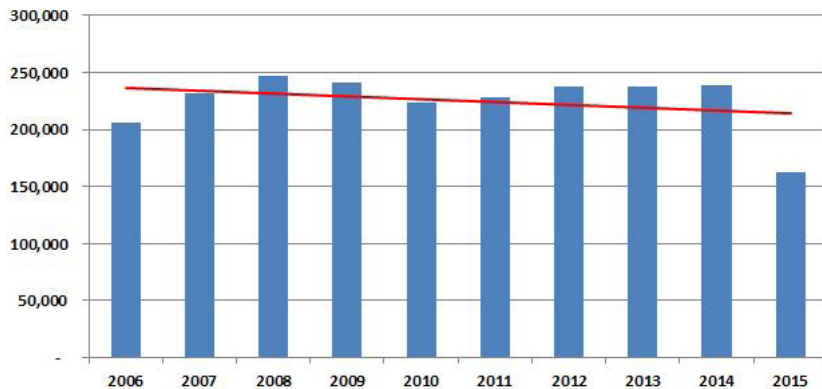
Shackleton found his men alright, but his ad proved an optimistic assessment of the challenges his 28-member expedition would confront during their 22-month epic journey at the bottom of the world.

Fortunately, serving on Outward Bound International's board is a little less dramatic, but we do offer our board members an opportunity to engage in a little expeditioning now and then, to keep them attuned to the adventuresome nature and character of our organization. Guest Expeditions, as we call them, offer adventure and renewal with congenial companions while supporting the worldwide Outward Bound mission. These trips are conducted by one of the licensed Outward Bound schools or a carefully selected outfitter.

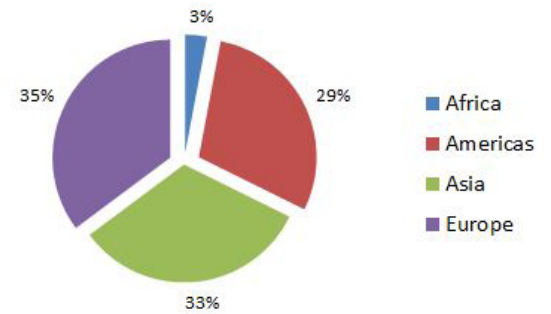
Unlike Shackleton's adventure, ours are shorter (usually less than one week), and almost always more comfortable. They are usually hosted by an OBI Board member, but may include individuals who aren't connected to Outward Bound. Most are journeys to exotic locales with a special purpose: to promote the understanding of the mission and programs of Outward Bound, to build support for the work of OBI, and to provide a "taste" of our programs in a unique and meaningful way. With Outward Bound schools on six continents, we are able to offer a wide variety of adventures. 

Participation

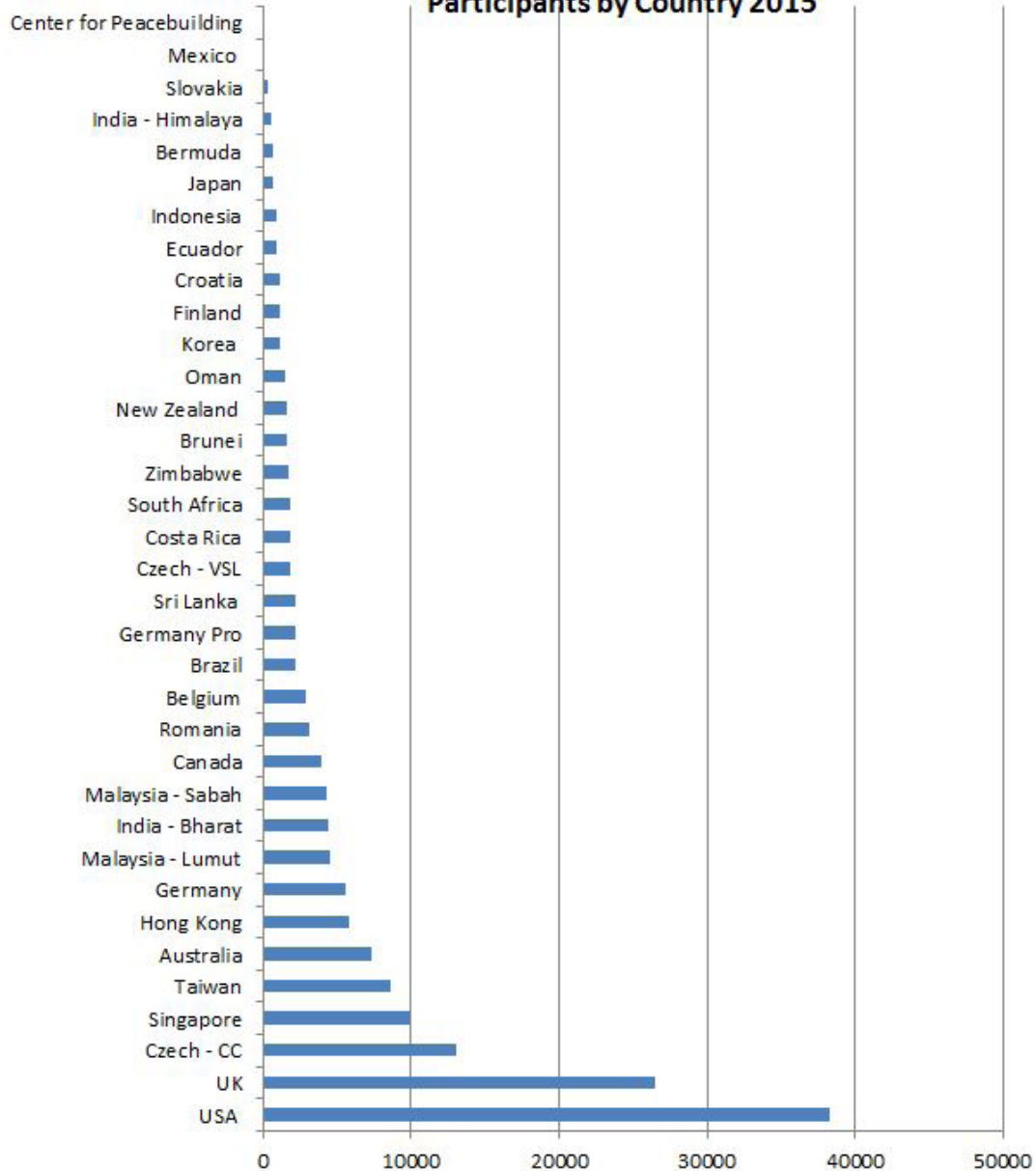
Outward Bound Participants Worldwide 2006 - 2015



Participants by Region 2015



Participants by Country 2015



Participant figures for 2015 are reduced by 70,000 due to the withdrawal of Expeditionary Learning from OB USA



Treasurer's Report



The Outward Bound global network continues to grow and develop despite challenging conditions in many countries. The revenues across the 36 countries where we operate exceeded \$100m for the financial year ending 2015. Each licensed Outward Bound center is financially independent and each accounts for, and has responsibility for, its own financial operations.

This report covers the operations of Outward Bound international Inc (OBI) the co-ordinating organisation of which each school is a member and which awards licenses to schools on behalf of Outward Bound Global—the ultimate trademark owner.


OBI has seen improvement of its funding in 2015 compared with 2014. Whilst fee income from schools were \$223,245 almost unchanged from 2014 (\$210,235), overall revenue was up from \$256,916 (2014) to \$399,603 boosted by income from support for one of our school's charitable fundraising initiatives in the UK. Expenses remain tightly controlled with a modest increase in operating expenses from \$271,067 to \$285,365. This has resulted in a growth of net assets from \$654,281 to \$809,985.

A significant movement this year has been the change to the accounting treatment of an "endowment" set up by various donors to support the work of OBI. After taking advice and with the support of the original donors, we have been able to move this fund from being permanently restricted into the general fund where the money is available for use in furthering the charitable work of OBI as the donors originally intended. Whilst the money sits in the general fund it is set aside for particular projects and is accounted for separately within the management accounts.

Whilst the organisation has sufficient unrestricted assets to allow it to cover operating costs for a considerable period these cash balances include monies already set aside for future projects. Unrestricted net assets now stand at \$809,985.

We have taken further steps during the year to make the income of OBI sustainable on a long-term basis and therefore ensure OBI is able to perform its obligations in connection with the award and maintenance of licenses effectively.

Colin Maund
Treasurer

The Statement of Financial Position as of December 31st 2015 was prepared by Clark & Clark, PC in Salt Lake City 



Financial Report

Outward Bound International Inc.
Comparative Statement of Financial Position
As of December 31st, 2015
(Expressed in US\$)

	2015	2014
Assets		
Current Assets:		
Cash	826,670	294,877
Funds held for Outward Bound Cent	14,800	49,566
Receivables & Prepaid Expenses	39,356	21,766
Pledges receivable	-	-
Accrued interest receivable	-	-
Total Current Assets	880,826	366,209
Non-Current Assets:		
Permanently Restricted Cash	-	358,990
Total Noncurrent assets	0	358,990
TOTAL ASSETS	880,826	725,199
Liabilities & Net Assets		
Current Liabilities:		
Accounts Payable	56,041	21,352
Funds held for Others	14,800	49,566
Total Current Liabilities	70,841	70,918
Net Assets:		
Unrestricted	809,985	295,291
Permanently Restricted	-	358,990
Total Net Assets	809,985	654,281
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	880,826	725,199

Outward Bound International Inc.
Comparative Statement of Activities
For the Year Ended December 31st, 2015
(Expressed in US\$)

	2015	2014
Revenue & Support:		
Fees from Centers	\$223,245	210,235
Charitable Donations	26,223	46,681
Other Income	31,478	14,568
Unrealized Gain/(Loss) on Inv	9,988	21,795
Special Events	150,135	-
Total Revenue & Support	441,069	293,279
Expenses:		
Fundraising	-	67
Legal & Miscellaneous	46,183	31,798
Office	1,991	7,167
Publications	6,639	13,687
Personnel	171,391	194,509
Symposium	-	-
Meetings & Travel	35,649	23,839
Telephone & Internet	1,512	-
Rent	7,000	-
Bad debts	15,000	-
Total Operating Expense	285,365	271,067
Net Surplus for the Year	\$514,694	(14,151)
Net assets, beginning of period	654,281	632,069
Increase in net assets	155,704	22,212
Net assets, end of period	\$809,985	654,281

Outward Bound Schools Worldwide

Australia

www.outwardbound.com.au

Belgium

www.outwardbound.be

Bermuda

www.outwardboundbermuda.org

Brazil

www.obb.org.br

Brunei Darussalam

obbd@brunei.bn

Canada

www.outwardbound.ca

Costa Rica

www.crrobs.org

Croatia

www.outwardbound.hr

Czech Republic

www.outwardbound.cz

Ecuador

www.outwardbound.ec

Finland

www.outwardbound.fi

Germany (Provisional)

www.outwardbound.de

Germany Professional

www.outwardbound-professional.de

Holland (Exploratory Status)

Hong Kong

www.outwardbound.org.hk

India-Bharat

www.outwardbound.org.in

India-Himalayan

www.outwardboundindia.org

Indonesia

www.outwardboundindo.org

Japan

www.obs-japan.org

Korea

www.outwardbound.co.kr

Malaysia

www.outwardbound.my

Mexico

www.obmexico.org

New Zealand

www.outwardbound.co.nz

Oman

www.outwardboundoman.com

Romania

www.outwardbound.ro

Sabah

www.outwardbound.com.my

Singapore

www.obs.nyc.gov.sg

Slovak Republic

www.outwardbound.sk

South Africa

www.outwardbound.co.za

Sri Lanka

www.obsl-lk.org

Taiwan

www.obtaiwan.org

UK

www.outwardbound.org.uk

USA

www.outwardbound.org

Vietnam (Exploratory Status)

Zimbabwe

www.outwardbound.org.zw

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Celebrating 10 Years of OBI Journal!





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