

Newsletter



Autumn Update!



Welcome to Outfit's third newsletter—the last few months have flown by with the summer months finding us as busy as we've ever been. We have been working with a number of new groups, and have moved office from Elgin to Lossiemouth. There are exciting times ahead for Outfit with a number of staff changes, and a busy programme of activities ahead of us. If you have any questions or comments on this newsletter, please just let us know.



Highlights of the Last Quarter



- We have started working with a number of primary schools on our EnerG and Activ8 strands which is new for us, and which has been very successful.
- Our mobile bike skills course built by Steve has been extremely popular and successful, and we have run over 15 sessions with it already
- We have run days during 3 local secondary school's activity weeks, involving 250 young people, and over 10 different activities.
- We have run a number of staff and volunteer training courses, including a voyager expedition on Loch Shiel and a mountain bike trip to Achnessellach.
- We have said goodbye to three members of staff, and hello to two new full time instructors.
- We have moved office and store to Lossiemouth, where we have much more room and security.



All Change at Outfit!



The Spring and Summer seasons have seen a number of big staff changes at Outfit. Ibrahim Park, our Project Manager, who has been with Outfit Moray since the start, has moved to become Outdoor Education Coordinator at Gordonstoun School, and Mike Smith, our part time Outdoor Project Leader, has taken up a full time position at the Steiner School in Forres. Lack of funding unfortunately meant that we were unable to continue providing a permanent position for

Rosie, our environmental education instructor who left at the end of March. The decision has been made to incorporate the Cre8 strand into our other core strands, as environmental education should be an integral part of all the programmes that we provide, and we are continuing to use Rosie's skills on a part time basis. We would like to say thank you for everything that Ibrahim, Rosie and Mike have done for Outfit during their time with us, and we wish them every happiness in their new jobs.

As a result of the changes, Outfit has recruited two new full time instructors, Gemma Callow and Dan Hogg, who started in October. We would like to welcome them into the Outfit team and look forward to working with them.



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Outfit Vision:
We engage young people through outdoor learning to support them to reach their potential

Activity Update



This summer has been as busy as ever, with Outfit working with a wide variety of groups and individuals, including intensive one-to-one work, youth agency work with primary school-age young people, and a number of school activity days, requiring detailed logistics and the use of large numbers of freelance staff and volunteers. We have run a wide variety of activities, including water sports such as gorge walking, coasteering, kayaking and canoeing in order to make the most of the warmer weather. We have also made full use of our portable bike skills course which has proved very popular with both young people and adults, and which enables us to take our activities to a variety of locations including schools playgrounds and parks.



EnerG (Groups with additional support needs)



Over the summer and autumn, we have run two one-to-one programmes with young people with additional support needs, a six week programme with two nine year olds, two active steps schools groups, and organised a number of one-off activities. We have continued to include the use of two-day expeditions as an integral part of our longer-term programmes, and this seems to have a significant beneficial effect on the behaviour of the young people we work with. To date we have worked with 169 different young people, and run 117 sessions.

Activ8 (Groups after school and during holidays)

Over the last few months we have run a number of sessions for school and youth groups, including bike skills courses, activity sessions and several full days of activities for school and college groups, requiring the use of volunteers and freelancers. To date, we have worked with 602 different young people over 89 sessions and with 30 different organisations.



Innov8 (Training and developing adult volunteers)

Our volunteer programme is going from strength to strength, and we now have ten volunteers who either assist or run groups on a regular basis. Since its launch in January 2007, 16 volunteers have given up their time to work with young people, and to date, volunteers have helped to run 145 sessions with Outfit, working with over 200 different young people.

Volunteers have taken part in 41 in-house training days. This has developed their skills, enabling them to either lead or assist certain activities including weaselling, gorge walking, coasteering, bush craft and archery.



We have also fully subsidised 72 National Governing Body (NGB) award training or assessment days, and our volunteers have gained 6 NGB assessments. This means that they are now qualified to lead activities including climbing, abseiling, mountain biking and expeditions, therefore significantly increasing instructor capacity.

Offscreen Expedition—July 2008

In July 2008, Outfit facilitated part of an expedition consisting of eight young artists from Lebanon, UAE, Oman and Bahrain as they travelled across the UK, in search of a unique portrait of British life. Having won a regional art competition coordinated by HSBC, Local Ministries, and the British Council, the students were invited to take part and develop their 'creative potential' as artists, film makers, photographers and writers.

From the bustle of East London to the remote Highlands of Scotland, the eight students and four accompanying teachers travelled to a series of specially chosen locations in England, Scotland and Wales from 6 – 20 July 2008.

"The aim of the project is to give students from the UK and Middle East the chance to communicate and learn from each other in a positive and creative way," said Offscreen director Stephen Stapleton.

Outfit travelled with the young people through Glen Affric, and had a fantastic week, even managing to avoid the rain and the dreaded Scottish Midge! <http://www.offscreened.com/expedition/2008>



Focus on our Volunteers—Donald Peace

I have been volunteering with Outfit Moray for about a year now. When I started volunteering with Outfit, I was working as a gardener and was looking to do something new. I had heard about the volunteer project and thought it would be an excellent opportunity to try something different.

Outfit has been a life changing encounter for me. I now run my own surf school, and this is thanks to the experience, training and support I have received from the whole Outfit team. Everyone has been a great help, giving me advice and knowledge on tap.

During my time volunteering with Outfit I have been involved with most of the activities they have on offer. I have received training in these activities which has been really fun and useful when out with groups.

I enjoy working with Outfit and hope to continue for some time.

All in all I think Outfit is a fantastically superb charity and I am glad to be a part of it!

If you are interested in Donald's surf school, his website is www.newwavesurf.com, and his phone number is 07818 238781



Steve's Monster Challenge!



On Sunday 27th July, Steve Bate, one of our outdoor instructors, completed Tranter's Round with Iain MacDonald, a friend and close colleague of Outfit Moray. The Tranter's Round takes in the peaks of the Mamores, Grey Corries, Aonachs, Carn Mor Dearg and Ben Nevis and can be thought of as the original 24 hour Scottish mountain challenge. The Round involves 6750 metres of ascent, 64 km in distance and a total of 18 munros, and Steve and Iain completed it in an impressive 20 hours.



Raising Funds —John O'Groats to Lands End!



We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Paul Hart who raised the princely sum of £1120 for us when he cycled from John O'Groats to Lands End earlier this year.

Paul, formerly a director of the Elgin Youth Café has moved to pastures new in Glasgow but is still an avid supporter of young people's projects as well as been a keen outdoor sports enthusiast. The trip which lasted from 23rd April – 7th May 2008 was a wonderful achievement by



Funding Update

The current financial year started in April with some wonderful news. We had secured major funding from The Christina Mary Hendrie Trust and The Laidlaw Youth Trust. This backing from our major sponsors and also donations from Moray Youth Justice, Agnes H Hunters Trust, Dr Guthrie's Association, The Silverhill Trust, The W M Mann Foundation with ongoing funding from The Robertson Trust and The Gannochy Trust meant that we had reached our target to fully deliver on our programmes during 2008-09.

The project now needs in excess of £200,000 to deliver during a year. Although less funding is available from local authorities and with trust funding more competitive, the quality of work that Outfit-Moray does with young people enables us to put our case forward with a fair degree of success!

The Outfit Hub: Moving to the Coast!

Since the last newsletter, Outfit has moved bases from Elgin to Lossiemouth, which has given us much more space and far better security for our minibus and bike trailer. Our new building was formerly Fleetwood's engineering workshop on Shore Street, and the 280 square metres of space means that we now have our office, equipment store, drying room, meeting room and van storage all under one roof.



The store before The store after!

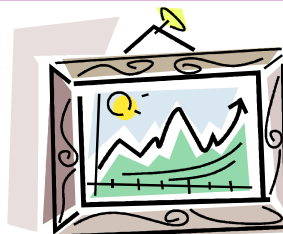
A lot of work has gone into making our new base exactly what we want it to be, and special thanks must go to Steve, our instructor-and-talented-joiner-in-a-previous-life, and our Chairman, Iain for all the extra hours of work and energy they have put in.



The office

Evaluation Update

Over the last few months we have been working closely with Evaluation Support Scotland and trialling a number of different techniques to try to measure the effects of the work that we do. We have refined our forms to tie in more closely with our outcomes, and we are focussing on a number of groups this year that we hope will be able to give us valuable in depth feedback on our work. These groups are longer term programmes that run over a number of sessions with the same young people, and we are using techniques including self esteem wheels, video feedback and regular reviews after each session. We feel that we are gradually moving closer to finding the most appropriate evaluation techniques for our project, and we will continue to work hard to do so.



Team Annual Review

The team annual review took place on 26th August in Findhorn Village Centre, and gave us the opportunity to reflect on the events of the year that has passed, and to look forward to the future. It was a useful and enjoyable day, with everyone taking part and agreeing on actions to take the project forward over the next year.

Highlights of the day included presentations by two young people for whom Outfit has made a positive difference.

Next Newsletter: March 2009

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