

## Outdoor Education & Pursuits

2021-22 at a glance

We started this year as we intended, to continue with a fantastic Gold DofE practice expedition to the Lake District. Taking over 50 enthusiastic Birkdale students across the northern ranges of the Lakes. This was a real triumph for staff and students, as this was the third time lucky trying to get this expedition off the ground, a real testament to Birkdalian tenacity.

This was followed up, in short succession, with the S3 Camp at the end of the first half term. A two day adventure to bond the year group into Middle School and allow them the chance to explore their subjects through a new lens. Here the students are pictured enjoying Mrs Magenty's silent disco, in the woods under Stanage Edge. Navigating around Stanage edge, the pupils would later find Mr Cook and Dr Jukes testing water pressure at an old mill pond, Mrs Birtles showing the students how to stay calm during the stormy weather and Mr Clark, freezing through his geology lesson, to name but a few.

Throughout the year we have been developing our climbers during their games session and this year was no different. With mild conditions during the winter we spent a large amount of our time outdoors, however we do like a few sessions indoors Sam makes it look easy at the climbing works, but it isn't!





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When it's sunny we try to get outside as much as possible, here is a good example of our S4 climbing teams pushing their skills at Stanage Edge. The climb is called Eliminator, a fantastic HVS 5b, for those that like climbing grades. Definitely not a pushover!

During the winter months one of the best places to be is underground, it's dark outside and usually poor weather, so the constant temperatures and wet conditions underground are perfect for our S2 cave explorers. Going caving as an optional extra to their normal Games sessions provided a fantastic way to explore the Peak District National Park. Amazing that we can do this sort of thing after lunch.

At Birkdale we thrive on taking the opportunities to learn outside the classroom and the recent winners of the action photography competition did just that. The five winners spent a morning out with Matt Grayson, a freelance photographer with an eye for adventure. With a range of cameras, a mountain bike, some boulder pads and a good amount of enthusiasm the students experimented with action photography in the Burbage Valley.





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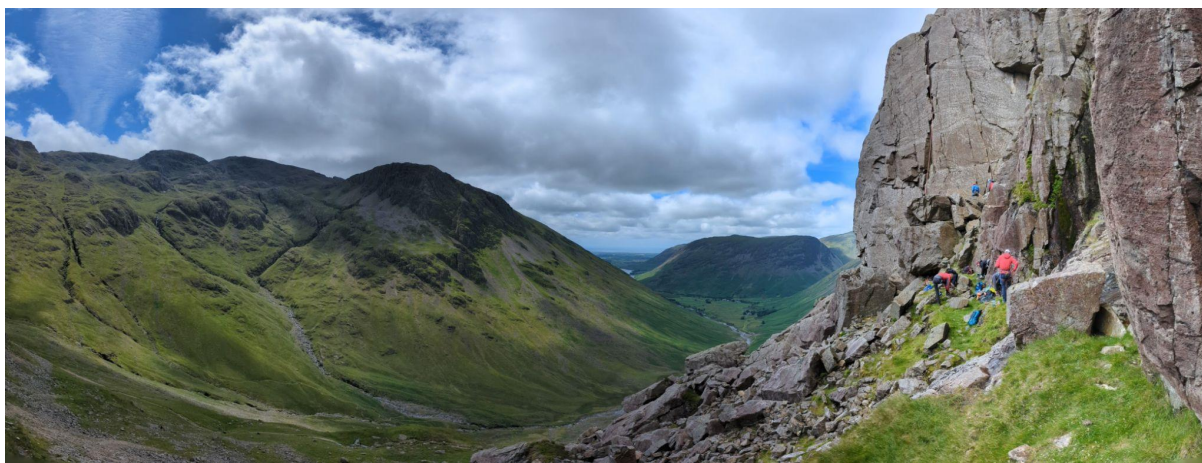
Matt directed the pupils on positioning and angles for shots but his speciality is showing a journey and telling a story through pictures. This was something the pupils really became absorbed in, wanting to show more than just a brilliant photo.



Finishing the year, it's always good to do something special and the Advanced Climbing Trip was nothing short of spectacular. A dedicated 6th form trip for those that really want to sharpen their skills on some big rock, this trip is a parting shot for those that may then venture off to university climbing clubs and need a good all round knowledge of how to climb.



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Our second day of this four day epic trip took us up to Kern Knots, on the side of Great Gable, with stunning views down towards Wastwater. A high up crag in a remote setting, tested our students' grit, leaving the minibus at 08:30 and not returning until 19:45, this was not a day for the faint hearted. I think even Mr Cook was tired!

Here you can see Lucy and Jonathon, on pitch 2 of Original Route at Raven Crag in Langdale, shortly before it poured down with rain.

This was the third day, so we were all quite tired by this point but they handled the exposure magnificently and learnt a huge deal from their instructor. Thank you to Pure Outdoors for working with us on this one.



# **Birkdale** Outdoor Education

Below you can see Mr Cook having an easier final morning going over some rope skills in the sunshine. A nice way to finish.

We still have nearly 200 students to take out on Silver and Gold DofE and I am sure the expeditions will go well. It looks like good weather, possibly even too hot. Look out for the Nepal trip for next year!

