

# The Grenville House Experience

## Introduction

Our society is tending to become increasingly virtual, with much of day to day existence being sedentary. This appears to be supporting a passive consumption of other people's wild adventure experiences. The focus on sport, extreme and mainstream, is growing, possibly at the expense of other outdoor activities. Consequently this is leading to exclusion from the great outdoors and the practical challenges it provides.

The Grenville House Experience opens windows into adventure using activities in the outdoor environment, and the consequent personal and social development this can bring. We enable it to be seen, perceived and experienced as real risk and real adventure by those taking part while offering a discreet safety net and umbrella. The safety net is our scrupulous application of health and safety policies and the umbrella is the professionalism and empathy of our staff.



## The Process

The foundation of the Centre's philosophy is teamwork, the platform on which all activities are based whether assisting each other with a suitcase up to the bedrooms, setting the dining room table for breakfast or canoeing around Brixham harbour. Throughout a visit a wide range of experiences provide opportunities to highlight the importance of working and living together, sharing, and building relationships with each other and the staff.

These experiences can be very powerful and sometimes life-changing especially in conjunction with the vehicle of an Outdoor Adventurous Activity. Consequently the Centre attempts to provide opportunities to take individuals outside of and to extend their comfort zone. Through this process individuals are able to extend their personal limits as far as they want to we call it 'challenge by choice'.

Each outdoor education activity focuses on a combination of three main elements:-

## Outdoor Activities

Outdoor activities with perceived risk but safe practice provide opportunities for success and personal achievement for all who take part. Programmes are designed to offer opportunities for all with physical prowess and prior experience by no means pre-requisites, although in a select number of activities specific skills are needed to achieve special results.



## Environmental Education

The situations in which activities and experiences take place complement the quality of them. For young people an appreciation of the environment can develop through being actively involved in it. This coupled with responsive and committed leadership can provide memorable, even lifelong experiences.

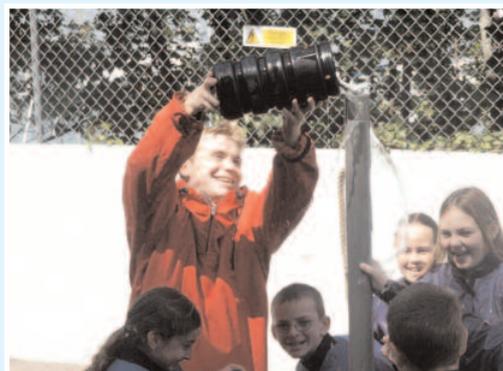


In reality these interlinked aspects of the outdoor experience are not equal or constant but depend on factors like the chosen activity, the venue, the weather, the instructors and the aims of the session. Some are teamwork based, e.g. building and floating a raft whilst



## Personal and Social Education

We offer exceptional activities in a uniquely involving environment – but often what most excites our users is living together in an unfamiliar situation. We are set up so that the tasks which support daily living are shared between people who may have very little practice and responsibility for this in their home lives. In living together like this socially acceptable behaviour and interaction is encouraged and developed. The magic is that this is juxtaposed with the opportunities for self-reliance and increased self-esteem inherent in the activities. This can be a lot to take on but our staff provide support and gentle persuasion to encourage everyone to discover where their boundaries are and then see how far they are able to stretch those boundaries. Empathy is paramount to the success of this process which requires the Instructors to be sensitive to the responses of each individual to the challenges being experienced whilst also ensuring that the experience is a positive one.



*Everyone is extremely professional instils confidence in the staff and children alike.- Eden Park Primary School*

*Some great ideas and gets the kids motivated within minutes. By the end of the sessions all have pushed themselves above and beyond their expectations. – Bishopsteignton Primary.*

*Good mixture of encouragement for less confident children, challenge for the more able and a lot of fun for everyone. – Meavy Primary School.*

*All the young people enjoyed the activities and pushed themselves further than they could imagine. – Banbury Youth Service.*

*Very supportive, very safe, very skilled. A great team. – Wiltshire College*

*Your staff are always friendly and accommodating, the facilities are exceptional and activities exactly what we need. – Devon Guides.*

ACTIVITIES

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EDUCATION

## Reflection

We recognise that even with the umbrella and safety net the Grenville House Experience could be overwhelming or at least a lot to take in. To allow for individual learning styles and interpretation of the experience an emphasis is placed on reflection.

At Grenville House the implementation of Reflective Practice forms the most important part of the whole process, without which much of what can be learnt could be missed completely.

At various times throughout the visit feedback is considered in a variety of ways. All Outdoor Activity sessions are punctuated with reviews and end with a plenary led by the Instructional staff which aims to highlight the positive achievements of all involved. The lead staff often complements this using techniques such as 'Circle Time' etc, the use of diaries, as well as simply sending a postcard home.

The aim is to assess what took place, highlight the positive aspects, discuss how improvements could be achieved and apply them to the next experience.

At the end of every visit it is hoped that the following key areas will have been acknowledged:

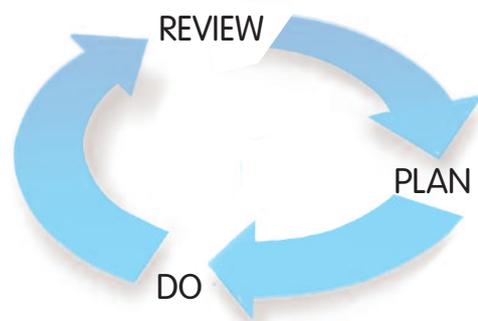
### New experiences

Greater appreciation of and respect for others

An increase in self-esteem

Better environmental awareness

Achievement beyond personal expectations



## Summary

Grenville House offers a high quality experience providing opportunities for individuals to operate as part of a team. The focus is placed upon celebration of the extension of and venturing beyond comfort zones plus an appreciation of personal responses as well as those of others when facing up to a range of challenges. All achievements are the product of the choices made during these activities whilst being supported by fellow team members and the staff.

Consequently this results in an increase in confidence, trust in others and improved self-esteem.

## The Journey Continues

The Grenville House Experience may prove to be the catalyst for a life of further outdoor adventures whether it is through joining a local Canoe or Sailing Club, the Cubs/Beavers/Scouts/Guides or simply as an individual.

However whatever happens through the transference of these experiences and newly acquired skills everybody can continue on this journey of personal development wherever their future lies applying this process to their life's experiences...

