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Date: Monday, 05 July 2004

Scouts off on a bear hunt

This summer, 17 young people from the Explorer Scout and Scout Network sections of West Lancashire Scout County will embark on an epic 'journey of a lifetime' to the Icy Mountains of Milne Land in East Greenland.

The group, accompanied by 12 fully qualified Mountain Leaders, will depart from Glasgow on Sunday 18th July, bound for Iceland. They will proceed to Constablepynt from where they will continue their journey in a ski-equipped Twin Otter aircraft, eventually landing on the glacial systems in the centre of Milne Land, in the innermost reaches of Scoresbysund. From a base camp near their landing site they will make many 'first ascents' of the attractive peaks and spires in the area, as well as undertaking a comprehensive scientific programme encompassing studies in Ecology, Glaciology and Human Physiology.

Scouts Organising Commissioner, Dick Griffiths, is himself an experienced and highly qualified mountaineer and will be acting as Expedition Leader –

"This is a fantastic opportunity for these young people to develop their skills and realise their potential through exploring the Arctic Wilderness, climbing remote mountains (some of which are previously unclimbed) and undertaking scientific research and exploration. Most of all I hope that the expedition can promote Scouting and show how show we can be at the forefront of providing high levels of adventure and challenge and in developing personal and leadership potential..."

The Expedition is costing in the order of £100,000 and the team have worked hard to fundraise and secure patronage and other forms of support. Even so each team member will still have to find around £2,000 to take part in the adventure of a lifetime.

The team will have the technology to transmit photographs and images via satellite phone and to keep the Expedition website at www.landactivities.co.uk/greenland updated throughout their adventure.

But Greenland is not the only International experience that Scouts will enjoy this summer;

During the expedition, the Greenland Expedition will help celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Waddcecar, one of the Scout County's outdoor activity Centres of Excellence by linking up with over 1000 friends and colleagues who will be taking part in an International Jamboree at Waddcar, County Explorer Belt Expeditions in Slovenia, and the World Scout Moot in Taiwan.

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Editor's Notes:

- Scouting is the largest co-educational youth movement in the UK with a total of 476,992 members (March 2002 figures)
- Worldwide, there are well over 28 million members in over 216 Countries. Two thirds of the membership lives in developing Countries.
- The Aim of the Association is "To promote the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potential as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities.
- Scouting in West Lancashire has a membership of just under 10,000 members in the following 8 Districts: Chorley, Blackpool, Preston, Ormskirk, South Ribble, Fylde, Wyre and Lonsdale.
- The West Lancs Scouts Mountaineering Group was established in 1998 to develop the sport of mountaineering (including rock climbing) to a higher level not ordinarily accessible by the young person and typical leader.

Recent activity includes

Mountaineering expeditions in
the Dauphiné Alps of France (1999)
the Ötztal Alps of Austria (2002)
the Jotunheimen Mountains of Norway (2003)

- Establishment of an annual winter mountaineering programme in the Cairngorms introducing youngsters and novice Leaders into Ice Climbing, Snow Holing, Skiing, etc.
- Operated a Mountain Leader Training Programme to encourage Leaders to get formal national governing body qualifications
- Run National mountaineering conferences for the Scout Association.
- Developed a Ski programme in Scotland and an annual week in the Alps
- Run Spring and Autumn meets in Wales and the Peak
- Membership of the expedition includes:
 - Four members of the Explorer Scout Section (Aged 15<17)
 - Thirteen members of the Scout Network (Aged 18<24)
 - Twelve Mountain Leaders (Over 25)
- Web Site www.landactivities.co.uk/greenland
- The East Greenland expedition 2004 is approved by the Young Explorers Trust

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