

Over 200 young people with and without disabilities participated in this year's projects and as ever, had an amazing time. The projects offer specialist tuition in a wide range of outdoor pursuits and activities, with the emphasis on self-reliance, building confidence, supporting others and working as a team. The children and young people undertake activities such as climbing, abseiling, caving, canoeing, swimming, sailing, riding, hiking, archery, zip-wire, assault course and arts and crafts. They also greatly enjoy the "fun" activities - shopping, visiting a theme park, picnics, discos, talent shows and karaoke. As with other years all the children have a fabulous week, and benefit enormously.

This is what one of the parents said
 "He came home looking so well and full of beans as well as being more confident and expressive in his day to day life."
 Harry's Mum

Our sincere thanks go to all our volunteers, all the wonderful people who run Marathons for us, and to our major donors: BBC Children in Need, The May Trust, the Grand Charity, the Leathersellers' Company Charitable Fund, the Souter Charitable Trust, the Lynn Foundation, Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust, Nigel Bruce Charitable Trust, Miss W.E. Lawrence Charitable Settlement, Coutts Charitable Trust and The Rank Foundation.

Bendrigg Lodge - Inclusive Living Experience

7th - 14th August - Kendal, Lake District

Mel Lloyd - Project Leader

Saturday



Recipe for an amazing week: mix 41 young people and volunteers with a large pot of giggles

some big pinches of bravery and a bucketful of fun. So many things to find out, which group am I in, who am I sharing my room with, what will I be doing tomorrow and, most importantly, what's for dinner? After sorting all that, we went out for a walk some of us emptied the cupboards in the Sports Hall and thoroughly tested all the equipment.



Sunday

To get ourselves acclimatised we started our day in the indoor caving system searching for gold bars - no truth to the rumour that volunteers would have had more success if they were hunting chocolate bars! Then it was off to the real thing and a visit to the lair of the very last giant in the country - Yordass. I think we must have been making too much noise and scared him away as we only saw his shadow, but he didn't seem to mind that we sat in his chair used his shower and even explored his plumbing system. We certainly came home with a whole lot of his mud. In the evening the girls

thrashed the boys at archery, not that this was mentioned much!



Monday

It is hard to describe how spectacular the Bendrigg indoor climbing centre is, with an array of ascents to suit all abilities and various ways to abseil down again.

We spent the day making the most of this amazing facility and finished off with zip wiring. Points were awarded for best launch, best scream and artistic flair. In the evening we wrapped ourselves in blankets and threw ourselves into the dark opening of the tube slide. We all came safely out the dragons' mouth at the bottom, laughing so hard we had a struggle to get up.



Tuesday

A highlight of the week for most of the young people is the trip out to Camelot theme park. We had our picnic lunch, cheering on the knights at the jousting and the day passed in a whirl of roundabouts, roller coasters, magic shows and go carts. Some of us were even lucky enough to get in a round of crazy golf. We rounded off a memorable day by proving we were hardy souls sitting outside on the front at Morecombe, eating delicious fish and chips and trying not to shiver!



Wednesday

I am not sure if Windermere will ever be ready for the mass arrival of Phab canoers. We were certainly quite a site zooming across the lake armed with water pistols. After a packed lunch and a pitched battle we all walked the pirates plank. In the evening we had a campfire including hot chocolate, toasted marshmallows and a sing along. It is just not true that we had to provide earplugs to the sheep in the neighbouring field!



Thursday

We set off to spend the morning at Brockhole. Choices included trying out the adventure park, joining in an energetic game of rounders or Frisbee, exploring the countryside on a walk or visiting the Lake District Visitor Centre. After lunch we went to Ambleside where we spent the afternoon indulging in ice cream, sweets and retail therapy. In the evening some of the team tried the ropes course while others just kicked back and enjoyed a DVD in the Sensory Room.

Friday

This was our options day. In the morning we split into three groups, either kayaking, abseiling down a quarry or visiting a local farm. This year I went with the group to the farm - what hard work feeding lambs, calves, goats and chickens. Despite being told that the pool was outdoor, filled directly from a river AND it was raining, most chose a swim and had a brilliant time. The rest got a second go at all their favourite onsite activities. In the evening it got tropical with our Hawaiian themed party and disco and we partied long and hard.



Saturday

All good things must come to an end and amid many tears we said our goodbyes for another year. Thank you Phab, Bendrigg, fantastic volunteers and, most of all, inspirational young people, for a truly amazing week.



Avon Tyrrell, New Forest

16th - 20th August Bransgore, Hampshire

Janine Williams Project Leader

PhabKids: Salman, Stephen, Matthew, Charley, Amir, Nicole, Perry, Freddie, Ellie, Kimberley, Connor, Tyler

Volunteers: Jackie, Jo, Amy, Kerry, Sam, Bethany, Beth, Kaz, Tim, Ben and Numann.

Monday 16th August

We arrived at Avon Tyrrell which is set in the most beautiful part of the Countryside to our wonderful accessible lodges, Black Firs Lodge and Avon Lodge. The lodges were well equipped and nothing was too much trouble for the staff, anything that we wanted they arranged for us. The PhabKids started arriving at 3.00 and there was much excitement as beds were made, friends were made and everyone began to settle down.



As we were self catering much excitement was felt when the Asda lorry turned up with absolutely everything that we needed, for the week. Once that was put away, and yes it took ages it was time to think about the evening meal.

After dinner two Avon Tyrrell staff members came into our lodges to do some team building exercises - what fun! As I had already split the groups into activities it seemed a good idea to get to know our groups and by the end of the session everyone knew each other very well!. The first activity was a game of human bingo, and we were given a sheet with different questions on and we had to ask questions to other people in the room, for example, find someone who has been on the television, or been to Wembley etc. This was followed by making towers out of



newspaper. One group (that will remain nameless) cheated and taped theirs to rafters to ensure that it would not fall down.



Tuesday 17th August

Breakfast as with all meals was like a military exercise and a team effort, but once out of the way we split into groups. Group A went to low and high ropes and once kitted up in safety gear, it was lovely to see 'King Tyler' giving instructions from his wheelchair as to who he would like to go through the ropes next. Group B went problem solving which was held in front of the very impressive house at Avon Tyrrell, and after they went and tried some archery. Everyone got involved. Group C went to climbing and abseiling which was with a great instructor called Matt. It was then back to the lodges for lunch. It was nice that Avon Lodge had enough room for us all to eat together



In the afternoon, Group A went canoeing and it was wonderful that the hoist was right by the lake and everyone was able to take part. I went out and seemed to get absolutely soaked and to everyone's enjoyment could not get out of my life jacket - which was quite pathetic really. The other groups enjoyed archery and low and high ropes, again it was



wonderful to see everyone achieve so much.

The evening was spent playing games, dancing to music or relaxing with new friends.



Wednesday 18th August

After breakfast it was off to a busy packed morning of activities, including climbing and abseiling, canoeing, low and high ropes, and zip wire. One of my hi-lights of the week is Salman coming down the zip wire and the look of pure enjoyment as he came down over the lake is one of the best Phab experiences I ever had, in fact it moved me to tears, it was wonderful!



Salman on the Zip wire

Following on from lunch it was a chance for our participants to visit the shop to spend their pocket money, before an afternoon packed with activities.

Wednesday evening was a real treat. We went on a night walk with Avon Tyrrell staff and picked a special kind of pine needle that we put into a flask. Later on we sat by the lake drinking pine needle tea, and told ghost stories and a chat about the history of Avon Tyrrell. The staff were very interested to hear that Phab started in 1957 as a result of a National Youth Council Holiday to Avon Tyrrell when a young disabled man asked for opportunity not pity.



Picking pine needles on our night walk

Thursday 19th August

During breakfast we were fortunate to be joined by Phab's Chief Officer Martin Holdsworth, who despite the awful weather joined in with the activities. He took part in the low ropes and I was amazed that he climbed a huge tree and zip wired over the lake. We all enjoyed having him there and it was great that he joined a Phab project in action. After lunch it was an afternoon where everyone got wet, whether doing canoeing or raft building. I thought the idea was to stay on the raft not be the first one off! This was followed by swimming in the outdoor pool, it was absolutely freezing!



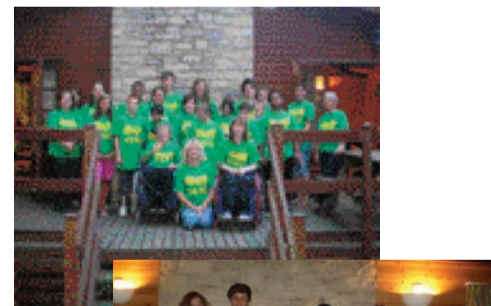
Phab's Chief Officer pays us a visit

After dinner we had a games and music evening and presented certificates to all of our wonderful participants and volunteers.

Friday 20th August

All good things come to an end, but it came all too soon for us, breakfast was over and we were saying our goodbyes.

This has been one of the best experiences I have had with Phab, and I would personally like to thank all of the PhabKids and the wonderful team of Phab Volunteers.



My wonderful volunteer team

I can't wait till next year.

Dukes Barn

9th July - 13th August - Beeley, Derbyshire

Rebecca Hargreaves - National Development Manager

Monday 9th August

Thirty-two children and thirteen Phab staff and volunteers arrived at the beautifully situated Dukes Barn in Derbyshire.



The atmosphere was exciting and everyone was wondering what they would be taking part in during the week. We were shown to our dormitories where we had to make our beds and meet the people we would be sharing our week with.



The staff at Dukes Barn welcomed us and informed us about some rules which we all had to adhere to and told us about some of the amazing activities we would be getting involved in. Because there were so many of us, we were split into four activity groups so that we would all get to sample every activity. Some of the children had never been away from home before, but very quickly started making friends and by the evening the centre was full of noise and chatter. Later we spent time playing football, table tennis and exploring the underground tunnel in the grounds.



Tuesday 10th August

We set off in our groups to do a variety of activities. Our group went abseiling off an old railway bridge. It was quite scary climbing over the side, but Aiden, our instructor gave us lots of encouragement and reassured everyone that they would be safe.



Most of our group had a go and once they had tried it kept coming back for more! After a picnic lunch back at the centre, we headed off for stream scrambling. We dressed in our waterproofs and wellies and walked upwards through waterfalls and pools. Everyone had a great time and even though we were wet through we didn't mind a bit! In the evening the group had the choice between swimming and bowling and we set off to Chesterfield in the minibuses.



Wednesday 11th August

We spent the morning on the fantastic ropes course at Dukes Barn. We were able to swing, walk, slide or balance round the course and many of our group went round again and again! We also challenged ourselves to balance the enormous see-saw and although we only managed to get it balanced for about 1 second it was great fun trying.



In the afternoon we visited a show cave where our guide told us all about the amazing features of this 2 million year old cave. It was a very peaceful visit – there is

something very calming about being in a cave – and everyone appeared very relaxed. After our dinner that evening, the group again had the choice of swimming or bowling. When we returned there were a lot of tired people and bedtime was a little earlier than previous nights!

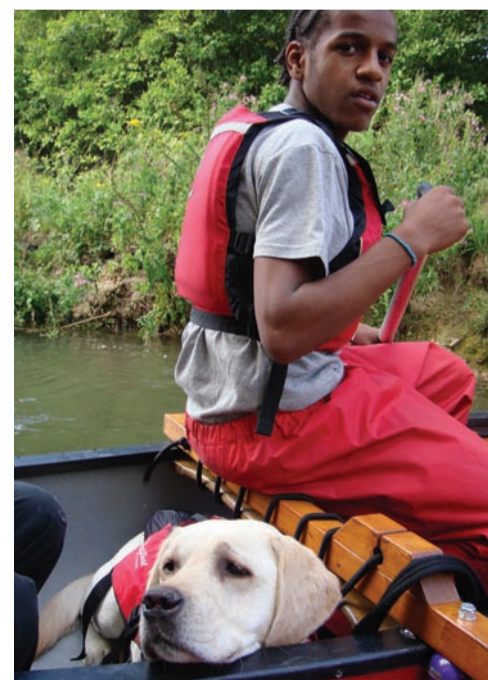


Thursday 12th August

We spent the whole day canoeing on Chesterfield canal. We headed down towards the locks where we had the experience of operating the locks to enable us to carry on further down the canal.



This was very exciting and a new experience for all of us. We stopped at lunchtime for our picnic and played a few games, then it was time to paddle back to the minibus.



That evening we were joined by Glamba a theatrical percussion group. They have a unique blend of Brazilian, African and Western beats played on everything from drum kits to dustbins. The whole group had the opportunity to try

the instruments and soon we were playing fantastic music.



There was dancing, singing and a lot of noise but there was something for everyone and it was a great finale to our week. During the performance everyone was presented with a certificate of achievement to take home to show what they had done.



Friday 13th August

The final morning was spent around the centre and everyone chose what activities they would like to try. There was climbing, ropes course, archery and a village walk. After lunch it was time to leave. There were some very tearful good byes and promises to keep in touch and requests to return next year. It had been a great week and everyone had enjoyed it – I can't believe we will have to wait a whole year until next time!

I would like to say a big THANK YOU to all the Phab volunteers and Dukes Barn staff for their support and energy during the week.

The May Trust Project

Rebecca Hargreaves - Project Manager

On Friday 12th March 2010, ten people arrived at Bendrigg Lodge in the Lake District for a weekend of outdoor activities.

On the Saturday morning we woke to beautiful sunshine. This made for a perfect day canoeing on Killington Lake. Despite the sunshine we hit a few patches of ice, which was very exciting, and



the noise it made as we paddled was fantastic.

That afternoon we tried the tube slide – a long dark tunnel, which is faster than you think! Then on to archery and from there we went to the sports hall and had the opportunity to try out the “big swing”. This was the only activity that none of the adults tried but all the young people loved it and there were plenty of giggles and shouts of “faster, faster!” Just watching them made me feel dizzy!

After another great meal, we spent the evening dancing or relaxing in the sensory room. Everyone had been looking forward to Sunday because this

was the day we were using the climbing wall. The whole group put in so much effort that we reached the top.

Now we had been to the top, we had to come down! We all had a go at the freefall abseil and although it was quite daunting everyone achieved it.



The zip wire was next and everyone was soon whizzing down with a variety of screams and yells!

After lunch everyone received a certificate of achievement and talked about what we had enjoyed over the weekend. The feedback was very positive and the only negative was that it had come to an end too quickly!

Thank you to the May Trust for enabling this project to take place – From Pippa, Alix, Susanne, Richard, Paul and their families.

Dukes Barn Skills for Independence

23rd - 27th August

Lorna Stephens - Project Leader

The Skills for Independence Project is one of Phab's most popular weeks. This project is for 18 – 25 year olds to build self confidence and help with the transition from youth to adulthood.

Forty people from around the country arrived at Dukes Barn in Derbyshire to spend the week



living together, socialising, learning new life skills and gaining independence.

This year, as well as team building activities, canoeing, abseiling and climbing, the participants were given the fantastic opportunity to gain work experience. One participant, Rosie, chose to help out in the kitchen and undertook general housekeeping jobs. Dukes Barn staff said she did a great job and she gained invaluable skills had a great deal of fun and made a lot of new friends.

Some of the group also helped out with general maintenance around the centre and assisted in some construction activities.



Everyone who volunteered to take part said it made them feel part of the Phab/Dukes Barn team.

Many of the group did not know each other when they arrived. Friendships were made very quickly and easily because

everyone was living, socialising and eating in the same building. The staff were as usual energetic and encouraging and ensured that no-one was feeling left out or homesick. Before long there was a genuine bond throughout the group. This came from the support and encouragement they gave each other which is needed to undertake the challenges given to participants throughout the week.

When it was time to leave there were a lot of tears and swapping of email addresses and phone numbers so hopefully the new friendships that were made will last for a long time to come.

Jubilee Sailing Trust

23rd - 29th August

Kay Millward, Voyage Crew Member

With thanks to Phab and the Jubilee Sailing Trust I have just spent the most fantastic week sailing on a Tall Ship across the English Channel.



We set sail from Southampton and reached the French coast where we anchored in a bay, then in the morning we proceeded onto Cherbourg, arriving there early

evening. Unless you have been sailing on such a ship you just cannot grasp the intensity of the work that each team had to do. Everyone was a team member, working together, people with and without impairments.



We sailed along majestically, sails billowing, the crew heaving and bracing, flaking and expiring -

but such a fantastic journey.

We ate in the mess below, and in the heavy seas three of us on a small bench at the table, actually lost our seat as it drifted loose from the stabilizers and gracefully slid across the floor. Somehow we didn't land on the deck, but it caused loads of amusement.

I made some lovely friends, and hope that in the future I will have the to opportunity of meeting up with them again. It was a fantastic Voyage and one that I will never forget.

