

CRAAGGERS

Adventure for the socially excluded in Brighton and Hove



Annual Report 2011

BMC
AFFILIATED CLUB

Supported by **the Tudortrust**

Registered Charity Number: 1117364

● Accounts April 1st 2011 – March 31st 2012

Outgoing funds	Figures for 2011-2012	Figures for 2010-2011
Activity and operational costs	4567.55	3458.77
Office and premises (including money to petty cash)	507.19	598.94
Equipment	807.20	941.04
Volunteer training	779.00	1810.09
Publicity	119.56	600.03
Insurance	146.45	101.19
Misc.	12.00	
Memberships	231.48	538.75
Venue Costs	1020.00	
Total	8190.43	8048.69

Incoming Funds	Figures for 2011-2012	Figures for 2010-2011
Grants	11010.00	4444.38
Membership fees	374.30	452.00
Interest	5.86	2.94
Fundraising	25.00	363.48
Wall fees		32.00
Activity fees	1069.50	834.33
Donations	40.00	
Total	12524.66	6129.13

Surplus: 4334.23
Restricted reserves: 2346.23
Unrestricted reserves: 1988.00

● Secretary's Report 2011

The welcome break

Bucking the trend of reporting doom and gloom, this is going to be an upbeat report. Because, although it is a fact that socially excluded people are feeling the pain of economic collapse disproportionately harder than everyone else, it is also true that a small organisation like ours can make a massive positive difference to their lives.

It is always satisfying at the end of our Adventure Camp to have people tell us what a great time they have had. This year was different. Almost everyone thanked us and said that the Camp was their only break this year and how important it had been for their family.

Making life better

We do not pretend to be able to tackle the causes of poverty, inequality and ill health by ourselves but we can help make life better by tackling the symptoms.

We are all aware of the downward spiral created by poverty. Losing your job and not being able to find another one is a blow to your confidence. Having less money often means making cheaper and worse choices when it comes to food. This, combined with having a more sedentary lifestyle, can lead to obesity which can lead to lower self esteem and depression – the cycle has begun.

Children brought up in this environment are bound to suffer. Poor diet, spending free time indoors plugged into something electronic, instead of playing outside, not having sporting opportunities or adventurous activities through school just reinforces the negative messages they are receiving from parents and the wider society.

Craggers tries to break the cycle by introducing positivity into their lives. If there is a single thing which defines Craggers it has to be the Adventure Camp. This is the week which we know has changed people's lives and helped break them out of the self destructive cycle they were in.

Craggers spends over a fifth of its annual income on the Adventure Camp because we believe that having that week with families, where they eat

healthily, socialise, are encouraged out of their comfort zone through adventurous activities and learn new skills, does make a difference. That week can show them that there is another way to live.

It does not surprise me that this year more people than usual have signed up to Craggers as a result of being at Camp.

Sharing

This year Craggers has made a real effort to reach other organisations in order to get people outdoors. We have done this by advertising our walks and Bushcraft sessions to Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project, Woodchips and various home education groups. These free sessions have been a great success.

Security

Craggers would not be able to function without funding. As everyone in the voluntary sector knows, trying to find funders has been even harder over the last few years. We have been incredibly fortunate to find the Tudor Trust which recognised what we do as being of positive benefit to socially excluded people. They have been incredibly helpful and supportive both during the grant seeking process and after the grant was awarded, by offering advice on how we can make our admin much more professional.

The Tudor Trust is aware that forward planning, particularly for a group like ours, which has to make bookings months in advance, is very important. They agreed to fund us for three years.

So a big thank you Tudor Trust for making the future of Craggers secure for the next couple of years.

Volunteers

We are run entirely by unpaid volunteers. There is no hierarchy and decisions are made at general meetings where every member has an equal say in what we do. The group is overseen by a trustees group. We have post holders elected at the AGM, these include, chair, treasurer, secretary and membership secretary.

We have volunteer instructors and ad hoc volunteers for specific tasks such as booking accommodation and transport, putting together the annual report, producing publicity, fundraising and the many jobs needed for organising the Adventure Camp. Volunteer numbers have increased this year. We would not be able to function without these people. Thanks for all the work you have done this year.

Remaining upbeat

It is impossible to ignore the almost daily reports telling us how much the people we work with are bearing the brunt of policies being enacted to protect the globalised system of greed which has brought about the economic collapse in the first place. There are families across the country that now rely on food banks to supplement their

diet while there is an epidemic of obesity. There are a million young people unemployed while older people are being forced to work longer, contribute more and receive less on retirement. These are not problems faced by bankers or politicians.

Remaining upbeat, Craggers as a group is becoming stronger, having three years funding means that we can better organise our resources, we have a growing volunteers group motivated to help other people and as societal problems become worse we are able to have an even greater positive effect on people's lives.

We can look forward to the next year in a positive way in the knowledge that we will bring fun and adventure to more people than ever before.

● Expedition and Training Reports

Family Climbing Wall Trip to Redhill, January 2011

On the 16th of January 2011, my 8 year old son Benji and I went on a Craggers organised trip to the High Sports climbing wall in Redhill.

We met at the Brighton Unemployed and Family centre and all travelled together by minibus. There was a good mix of children and adults and it was a very harmonious trip. It was great that for everyone that all the costs of the trip were covered by fundraising.

I haven't been to High Sports at Redhill for 6 or 7 years and it has changed quite a bit. There appears to be more climbs, some with overhangs. The bouldering area has a large crash mat that the kids enjoyed having a wrestling match on!

Everyone got to do a variety of top rope climbs and bouldering. Some people even tried "dry tooling", which simulates climbing with ice axes without the danger of poking yourself in the eye.

We were there for at least 3 hours with a break for lunch.

The journey home was trouble free and we even got a lift right back to our door.



A very successful and enjoyable trip for all. Thank you Craggers!

Benji says "I especially liked the bouldering".

– Nick

Association of Mountaineering Instructors Workshops

12/06/11 Environment and Navigation

As part of its commitment to maintaining high standards AMI requires its members to engage in Continuing Professional Development (CPD). These workshops provide CPD credits.

Wales can guarantee interesting weather and this Sunday did not disappoint. Torrential rain ensured that the day would be a challenging one. The rain never let up as we squelched through bogs for eight hours performing intricate navigation and discoursing on the environment (flora, fauna, history and geology). Navigating in such conditions gives you the confidence that you can find your way anywhere, whatever the

weather throws at you and the more you learn about the environment the richer the experience you get from walking through it.

I had almost dried out for...

15/06/11 Teaching multi-pitch climbing

The crags of Tremadog were the venue for this workshop which looked at teaching two clients to climb on multi pitch climbs. Traditional multi-pitch climbing (where protection is placed on the lead, on a route of two or more pitches) is the most serious and potentially dangerous type of climbing and should be taught properly in a safe manner. There is always something new to learn and sharing skills on these workshops is always valuable.

– Tony



Craggers member in winning team of The BMC Youth Climbing Series

The BMC Youth Climbing Series is a series of fun climbing competitions specifically for young people with the emphasis on enjoyment. It is perhaps the most popular competition for young people attracting hundreds of entrants across the country.

There are three regional rounds in each of the BMC Areas followed by a Grand Final when the top 3 in each category from each of the BMC Areas, BMC Cymru/Wales, the two Areas from Scotland and Ireland take part.

Craggers volunteer, Buster (far left, above), who learned to climb through the group, has been competing for three years. This year after doing well in all his rounds and coming overall third in the largest region (London and the South East) he found himself with a place in the final.

After three qualifying rounds, the most ever competitors took part in an amazing final at the Wolf Mountain Climbing Centre in Wolverhampton on 25th June.

As the grand finale of the whole series this is a truly awesome event.

This year, one hundred and eighty nine (yes, that's right... 189!) finalists qualified through the regional rounds held in England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland during spring time when over 600 young people, another record number, took part.

The turn out on the day was a massive record as well with virtually all competitors taking up their invitation to take part in the final. Additionally, most competitors were accompanied by 2 or 3 supporters - some even more - so you can imagine the vast space required to accommodate that number of people.

The whole event was absolutely fantastic with competitors and parents having a great day and those competing giving of their very best.

The standards of climbing in the series continues to rise each year and this year was no exception with some amazing individual performances and Busters team, London and South East Area taking the team prize.

Snowdonia Intensive Training 1st. – 7th. July

Always go prepared for everything. A good maxim anyway but for North Wales it is just common sense.

Andrew and I were there to brush up on single and multi-pitch leading, concentrating on anchors and methods of teaching. We also had a look at aspects of the SPA syllabus. While there we also did a bit of unplanned scrambling on Tryfan and spent a very wet day practicing the level of navigation that might be encountered on a Mountain Leader assessment.

A good week although due to the poor weather we didn't get to do as much multi-pitch as we would have liked.

– Tony



Adventure Camp 2011

Still fresh after all these years.

We have been running the Adventure Camps for a long time now but each one is unique. I have been thinking about this recently and wondering why this is.

It is the people, or more accurately the human dynamics. It is the way people who have been on previous camps can take the role of 'old hand' and guide new people through living as part of a large tented community.

It can be daunting living in a field for the first time if you are from the city but having friendly help and advice makes the transition fun. And we can all relive our first time through their eyes.

New tricks

There are other things which make the camp different and exciting each year. We listen to what people say and suggestions made in previous years can be incorporated into the way the camp functions or what activities are run.

So what was new this year?

Well, Bushcraft, which had been such a popular activity last year took a more prominent place this year, with more sessions and expanded

content. From making practical items such as cordage from nettles, tent pegs and pot holders to bracelets and necklaces. We learned knots and how to carve wood. Above all there was a great emphasis on safety with the first Bushcraft





session focussing on how to use knives saws and axes. These sessions work and we have never had a serious accident in all our years of running the camp.

Other activities which came under the Bushcraft banner were the four essentials of survival in the wilderness; shelter - we built several types of shelter from natural materials and five of the builders tested them out by spending what they insisted was a comfortable night in them. We also set up a hammock and tarp, although this was used more as a swing than an improvised shelter; fire - various fire lighting techniques were tried, including solar, electrical, spark and friction; water - we purified water by filtration and boiling; food – our wild food hunts have always been really popular and this year with the bumper mushroom crop we managed to gather lots of goodies.

An addition to our fun in the trees session (stirrumping, prussiking and climbing) was the caving ladder – good wobbly fun.

This year also saw Spanna running yoga and running sessions, Julia running a singing session and tales around the bonfire making an appearance.

Andrew and Farah's night walk (discovering the woods anew, in the dark and without the use of a torch) was incredibly popular, such that they had to split it into two parts with the smaller kids doing the first part and the older kids and adults doing the more adventurous second part.

Running throughout the week was training for the Atlatl competition. The atlatl is one version of the prehistoric throwing stick, variations of which exist on every continent. The winners were, in the junior section Esther, who won a night in the hammock and in the Adult section, Richard, who won one of the much coveted Craggers t shirts. Congratulations to both of you.

Bigger and better

Buster, our newest badged volunteer, first camped at Blackland Farm when he was two months old – and it snowed. He has been to every Adventure Camp and after helping out on several previous camps became an official volunteer this year. After working on activities all day and when the rest of us volunteers indulged in post dinner relaxation Buster would gather the kids together and take them for one of his very popular wide games.

Still the same

With all the new activities we somehow still managed to do the things without which the Adventure Camp would not be complete.

After the exciting weather we had last year it was a relief to have the sunshine for our regular thrills such as abseiling, zip wire, crate challenge, tunnels, archery, kayaking, swimming and the end of camp treasure hunt.

Let's not forget

Behind the scenes, a dedicated bunch of volunteers start preparing for every camp months in advance, by designing posters, getting publicity round to various agencies, sorting out the often complicated booking process, sending out confirmation letters, kit lists and other information, booking accommodation and activities, hiring transport, buying food and sorting out deliveries, planning menus etc. While at camp volunteers sort out all the less glamorous stuff such as organising rotas for cleaning cooking and washing up, handing out shower tokens, making sure that every one is where they need to be, at the right time and with

the right equipment. After the camp there is the clear up and all the bureaucratic stuff to do. Not glamorous but essential.

Thanks

To the attendees, volunteers, funders and, this year, the weather, thank you for making it such a great camp. Roll on next year.

Feedback on Adventure Camp

"I am a single parent of four children, two girls and two boys aged 12, 10, 9 and 7... there was no sense of hierarchy but a lovely calm community spirit.

I was very impressed with how brilliantly Buster interacted with the kids at camp. He organised lots of games for them to play. He was on hand to share his many skills and knowledge in a positive supportive manner.

Tony was great he ran some fascinating bushcraft/survival activities which he made accessible to a wide age range. He is so positively supportive and encouraging of everyone getting involved and learning new skills. Always so patient and caring. So many found him approachable for many issues.

The Blackland Farm camping trip with Craggers has been one of the highlights of our year. We have gained so much as a family; confidence, self esteem, eating healthily, lots of fresh air and exercise. So much fun and laughter. It has been a great family bonding experience."

– Kerry

"This was our first experience of Craggers. We joined because it was highly recommended by friends. The activities were organised with a positive and encouraging attitude, safety was taken seriously by all the instructors and instructions were explained clearly to everyone. My son and I gained a lot of confidence from the activities and from working as a team. I found it to be a valuable positive and thoroughly enjoyable experience."

– Esther

"I am a single parent to 2 boys aged 7 and 2. We have been members of Craggers for over a year. This was our first time at camp... my sons and I had a wonderful time, enjoying the fantastic opportunity to take part in so many different outdoor activities. We had a go at tree climbing with ropes, archery, zip wire, abseiling, rock climbing and kayaking.

There was wide range of ages of children at the camp and they were all encouraged to participate to an appropriate level.

I cannot recommend Craggers and all its organisers enough. Everyone had a wonderful and memorable holiday. My relationship with my son has improved as a result of it. Many, many thanks to all those involved."

– Becky

"Over the past 6 years my two daughters and I, now aged 9 1/2 and 11 1/2 have been away with Craggers in total 4 times to Blackland Farm and various other trips and family activity days.

We have always found the activities to be well organised, safe and enjoyable. My daughters and I have gained a lot of self confidence from taking part. The day to day running of the camps is based upon mutual co-operation within the group. We hope Craggers will be able to continue to offer this opportunity to us and other families that might not otherwise be able to have this experience, being a welcome break from society and time for personal growth."

– Paula

Bushcraft Workshop 09/09/11 – 11/09/11

Standing by a gate in rural Oxfordshire, waiting for one of the instructors to let me into the woodland site, I was already in bushcraft mode, checking out the shaggy ink cap mushrooms at my feet and noticing the subtle change in hue of the leaves above my head, as the trees ease themselves into their autumn colours.

I am a member of The Institute for Outdoor Learning and their Bushcraft and Survival special interest group which gives me the opportunity to attend workshops run through the IOL. The Institute for Outdoor Learning encourages outdoor learning by developing quality, safety and opportunity to experience outdoor activity provision and by supporting the good practice of outdoor professionals. By representing and lobbying on behalf of their members they help ensure the development and progression of outdoor learning. More and more organisations and individuals working outdoors are becoming members and it is well on the way to becoming the representative body.

I was the only student arriving on the Friday night as I was travelling by public transport. But that is how I like it, being able to tune into my environment before an event makes me feel more at ease and for me every night sleeping in the woods is just a great bonus. I got a warm welcome from all the instructors and soon joined in with shooting some of their hand crafted bows.

There was a great selection of workshops on offer including: String/Cordage - Making Good Strong Lengths of String to Do Specific Tasks - Flint Knapping – the organisers brought in Karl Lee, widely regarded as the greatest flint knapper in the country - Spoon and Utensil Carving - Simple Baskets - Throwing Sticks



and Bullroarers -Make Your Own Bow Drill Set - Feathersticks and Flowers – Making musical instruments in the wild – Identifying trees in the dark – Various cooking techniques - butchery and Wild Food. My only regret was that it was not possible to attend all the workshops which were being run by some of the finest exponents in the country. As well as being excellent in their own right they were a masterclass how to teach the subject.

All of us taking part work in the outdoors and the atmosphere definitely encouraged sharing knowledge rather than just being 'taught' by the instructors.

I also attended the special interest group AGM and took part in the archery and stick throwing competitions.

Thank you to Craggers for my train fare to Oxford and I have already been able to put some of the things I have learnt to use in the Bushcraft sessions I have been running for Craggers.

– Tony



Advanced ropework and problem solving workshop

There have always been good links between Brighton Explorers Club (BEC) and Craggers. In the past BEC has lent us winter kit, helped us build and then demolish, the first Craggers climbing wall and provided volunteers on various trips and at the wall.

I decided to give something back by putting on a workshop for ten of their members who were good climbers but wanted to know how to prevent problems on multi pitch climbs or to deal with problems once they had arisen.

The day started with getting information, over a cup of tea, on where they were at individually in their climbing and what they wanted out of the day. When I had this information it was easier to formulate a training plan for the day.

The basics

Then it was outside where first we talked about the massive importance of setting up bomb proof anchors on multi pitch climbs. We discussed, with lots of interactive demonstrations, vectors and how important getting the angles right was. We talked about appropriate uses for cordalettes; Anchor, Belay, Climber (ABC); equalised and independent anchors and the many ways of setting them up; anchors in and out of reach; tying back to the harness with a figure of eight knot rather than a clove hitch on an HMS in certain circumstances. Next we went on to stance management and how avoiding tangles makes everything quicker and safer.

Problem solving

In all situations where problems arise the first thing that needs to be done is to decide what needs to be done. That usually means first locking off the belay plate while thinking of a course of action. Probably the most likely situation where rope tricks need to be used is where the second needs to be helped past some difficult climbing or they have had a minor accident and need to be helped up to the belay. This is where we practiced the assisted hoist.

A far more physically demanding task is to perform an unassisted hoist. We practiced several different methods.

Lunch

The Explorers didn't come empty handed; they had arrived with a couple of delicious chilli dishes, meat and vegan – very thoughtful. So as we tucked into the feast we were able to recap what we had done so far.

Nightmares

After lunch the next and most extensive session was on 'worst case scenarios'. Building on what had been learned in the morning we moved from locking off the belay plate to escaping the system and the many ways to do that. As always a moment of thought to decide what to do and formulate a plan; whether to go for help or perform what could be a major rescue by yourself. If the second has been injured the most important first step is to get to them, assess their injuries perform any first aid and make them secure.

We did various rescue combinations with the idea being that when you have a few techniques wired it is possible to use them to get you out of all sorts of trouble.

Conclusion

It is better to spend time making sure, as much as possible, that you have taken all the precautions to avoid accidents in the first place.

Climb safe.

Bushcraft Day 02/10/11

Good grief, as Snoopy might say. What was envisioned as quite a small scale activity ended up with 25 people signed up.

We put some people on a waiting list, some people didn't come (early start, very nice weather?) but then people we didn't know were coming, turned up, so an attendance of about 20 people during the course of the day.

We had advertised the totally free session to Craggers, Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project and Woodchips and the venue was the Unemployed Centre's three allotment plots.

Honey bees and Red Admiral butterflies were making the most of unseasonably warm October weather to gather nectar from the ivy flowers. We were in the centre of Brighton and yet felt surrounded by the natural world and were treated to views of the South Downs to the north and the sea to the south.

After a brief introduction to the subject of Bushcraft, it was time for a bit of a walk about, pointing out the uses of the plants we passed.

The adults' and older kids' mission was to collect mature nettles for making cordage and thistle-down to use as tinder.

We all clustered around a table and it was pointed out that the nettles next to us had been cut back throughout the summer to keep them in check and therefore continued to produce fresh growth. By assertively grasping the tip of the nettle and scrunching it up between finger and thumb one can then eat it raw – it doesn't sting, tastes sweet and provides lots of nutrients.



We decided to take advantage of the sunny day by using a parabolic mirror to direct focused sun light onto a piece of King Alfred's cake fungus it started to smoke instantly and in a couple of seconds was glowing. We placed it onto the thistle-down we had collected which was nestled into a bed of dried grass cuttings and we soon had a blaze to get the Kelly kettle started.

We set to with the nettles and soon had the outer fibres drying for later use before making cordage with fibres which had been processed the day before.

It was explained that cordage of various strengths and thicknesses could be made with a variety of natural materials. Clematis bark was demonstrated.

Meanwhile the younger kids were making dream catchers out of hazel and maple and jewellery and whistles out of elder.

Back with the adults, things were getting serious with a safety briefing and demonstrations before using knives and bow saws to make craft items.

This was a great way to use various techniques including sawing, battening to split wood and various ways to use a knife whether to remove large amounts of wood or to do fine work. We decided to carve leaf necklaces using actual leaves as a template.

We also discussed how to make spoons and cups and the session was over.

A great day out in the sun working sustainably with natural materials. We gained new recruits for Craggers and the feeling that everyone wants to carry on doing Bushcraft projects.



This is to certify that,
Unemployed climbers Club (Craggers)

Membership No. 910487

is affiliated to the British
Mountaineering Council for the year
2011

The British Mountaineering Council is the representative body that exists to protect the freedoms and promote the interests of climbers, hillwalkers and mountaineers, including ski-mountaineers.

By continuing membership to the BMC Unemployed climbers Club (Craggers) is supporting:

- ♦ The BMC's vital Access and Conservation work throughout England and Wales
- ♦ Supporting the BMC's work in representing climbers and hill walkers interests to the government
- ♦ Helping to ensure that the BMC can continue developing its safety, training and technical work and services

Dave Turnbull

Dave Turnbull
Chief Executive Officer