

# ANNINGTON *Challenge*

In the summer of 2012, the Annington Trust joined forces with The Outward Bound Trust® to launch the Annington Challenge. Designed specifically for Service youngsters living on the Married Quarters Estate, the Annington Challenge aimed to provide these youngsters with the opportunity to experience their very own outward bound adventure and gain valuable life-skills in the process.

For many in that inaugural group, participating in the Annington Challenge proved to be a turning point. They were taken out of their comfort zone and tested physically and mentally. Drawing on reserves of self-belief that they didn't know they had, they found the strength - and in some cases the courage - to tackle a range of activities designed to challenge.

We caught up with some of that inaugural group to find out where they are now and what the experience meant to them...

## *Emily Meachin (nee Hassall)*

**CENTRE:** Aberdovey | **DATE:** 18th August 2012

**THEN:** Emily was 17 when she applied to the Annington Challenge. She told the Trust about her plans to study History at University and then perhaps go on to study for a PGCE. At that point she was considering a career in the Navy as a Logistics Officer.



**NOW:** "Over the last five years I have completed an undergraduate degree in History at the University of Exeter. During that time I continued to enjoy outdoor activities, and completed a marathon in 2015. Following graduation I was accepted onto Teach First, an educational charity aimed at supporting disadvantaged pupils and schools."



**LEGACY:** "I feel that the Annington Challenge contributed to my self-belief and willingness to take on challenges when they present themselves. I feel that I was up to the challenge of Teach First because of my opportunity to complete the Annington Challenge. The Challenge encouraged me to push myself, seek support from others and value teamwork; skills vital in my role as a secondary English teacher."

## *Sam Parvin*

**CENTRE:** Aberdovey | **DATE:** 4th August 2012

**THEN:** Seventeen year-old Sam told the Annington Trust he was considering applying to University or for an engineering apprenticeship.



**NOW:** Sam returned to Bournemouth and Poole College to undertake a HND in Applied Biology. He then joined the final year of three-year Bachelor's course in Biological Sciences and graduated with a 2:1. After a year working, Sam returned to Bournemouth to study for his Master's in Forensic Anthropology.

**LEGACY:** "You never know until you try. The key to success is perseverance despite hardship, trust in the people who are there to support you and don't be afraid of failure, as it is one of the greatest teachers in life. What I took away from the Challenge, I believe, were skills in team building, perseverance and a sense of leadership, which I have slowly integrated into my everyday life. I remember doing pier diving, kayaking, trekking, and camping and it was a pleasure to have the chance to hang out with such good and friendly people as those on the Outward Bound course."

## *Molly Hawthorne*

**CENTRE:** Ullswater | **DATE:** 11th August 2012

**THEN:** Fifteen year-old Molly was considering a career as a PE teacher in a secondary school.



**NOW:** "I have gone down a very different path than originally planned and now keep sport as a hobby rather than a career! I am currently in my fourth year at the University of York studying for an Integrated Masters degree (MPsych) in Psychology. I will be starting training to become a primary school teacher with the educational charity Teach First in June and beyond this would love to complete a doctorate degree to become an educational psychologist once I have completed the required two year's experience."



**LEGACY:** "I have very fond memories of the Annington Challenge! I had never really done anything like it before and got to try so many new things and meet people from very different backgrounds to mine (most of my friends were of course from a military background). I remember the experience really pushed me out of my comfort zone and, although very nervous when I first arrived, I settled in quickly and grew massively in confidence during my stay. I believe the experience really kick started my love of leading and teaching and I am very grateful for it!"



## Emily Gusterson

**CENTRE:** Aberdovey | **DATE:** 28th July 2012

**THEN:** When 15 year-old Emily applied, she was hoping to go to University with a view to finding a career that was both 'fulfilling and enjoyable' – after taking a gap year. Unsure as to the right direction, Molly told us she was hopeful that she would eventually 'discover her path'.

**NOW:** "I have pursued my interests and aspirations and am currently in my 3rd year of a four year integrated MSci course in Geology at Imperial College London. I know that my experience provided by the Annington Trust 100% helped me achieve this and I am forever grateful for the opportunity given to me."

**LEGACY:** "I thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the Annington Challenge in 2012 and definitely feel that the experience helped me become more confident as well as realise that embracing challenges and going out of your comfort zone is important. It solidified my enjoyment of the outdoors, which when paired with what I learnt about challenging myself, naturally led me to pick up an academic path in Geology, a very field based science."

## Jamie Thurley

**CENTRE:** Aberdovey | **DATE:** 28th July 2012

**THEN:** When Jamie applied to us back in 2012, he had set his sights on a career in architecture. "I wanted to be an architect as it indulged my mind with all the endless possibilities to which I could create something that would allow people to live, work, or simply make use of the inside structure."



**LEGACY:** Jamie's Annington Challenge really helped him come to terms with who he was and what he wanted to do with his life. "All the team building exercises, activities, mountain hikes and nights in the Welsh mountains really helped open up my social side, letting out insecurities and replacing them with different emotions and opportunities with my friends around me. I learnt that being productive in what I did, and putting my body in stressful and tiring situations was more enjoyable to me than sitting down and designing structures. In 2015 I joined BTEC Course called Production Arts which did a mixture of both physical and mental labour as I would have to design, build and finalise sets for school shows over a two year period. I'd say that without the Annington Challenge course back in 2012 I would've been stuck in a loop of not knowing what to do."

 ANNINGTON TRUST

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