



COMMUNITIES IN BUSINESS

# CiB newsletter

Issue 1

## The 50-mile Challenge.....

- Ethan and Elliott raised over **£3000** for CiB!
- On behalf of the lads, CiB would like to say a big thank you to all those who sponsored them on the trek
- The postbag for donations is now closed
- *It is not too late to send in your pledged donation, please send cash or cheque made payable to 'Communities in Business' to the address shown on page 4 of this newsletter*

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## 50 miles on foot and by sword

BY RUSSELL SMITH

With four sons, our garden often transforms into Sherwood Forest at weekends. Camps are set up. Battles are had. Enemies are captured. And by teatime, wisps of sweet-smelling wood smoke draw the weary warriors to the campfire where they take turns to caramelise, not burn, the sausages. But the best time of all happens after the sausages have been scooped.

Campfire conversations with children are enchanting, especially on mild autumn evenings. Just light enough to watch falling leaves float effortlessly on the rising smoke. But just dark enough to see the flickering embers of the fire reflected in excited young eyes. At times like that, magical conversations arrive from nowhere as welcome visitors to the camp.

It was during one of those conversations last year that plans were hatched for a "real" adven-



Ethan (left) and Elliott Smith

ture involving: (1) being away for a week, (2) wild-camping and, (3) not washing. This latter point was felt to be particularly important. Like many such plans, this one was filed in young minds to be returned to later (NB: campfire promises *have* to be kept and children never, ever forget them). We couldn't find any organisations that offered real adventures for the young. So we decided to plan our own.

First, the expedition team had to be selected. Eldest son Liam wasn't really in the running - at 21, the best thing for him in Sherwood Forest is Maid

Marion. It was suggested to youngest son Rohan (5) that he should run "base camp" from a mobile location - at the seaside with Mummy - close enough to rescue us if needed.

Rohan accepted the responsibility of staying at the seaside, thankfully unaware of what psychologists call "bribery". That left Ethan (11), Elliott (10) and myself (47¾) selected for the mission.

Elliott volunteered to be patrol medic and Ethan, patrol navigator. I emphasised the need for planning and that their safety came first.

Elliott agreed and said, "Since safety is the priority Dad, I'd better make a list of the weapons that we'll need."

Elliott's attention to detail was exemplary:

longbows (3), arrows (36), swords (3) and daggers (3).

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## International support for disabled entrepreneurs

Director of Communities in Business, Dr Tracey Carter, is currently managing a European funded project (Leonardo da Vinci programme) in association with Business Boffins to help disabled entrepreneurs and carers become self-employed in the countries of the UK, Italy and Latvia.

The 18-month project titled the 'Consortium for Enterprise Outreach (CEO) is a pilot scheme

that aims to increase the availability of accessible and accredited education to teach enterprise to the target group.

20 disabled individuals and/or carers from each country will access an enterprise education programme (for a year) through email delivery with support from disability-aware business mentors.

The programme is being

adapted from the Sustainability Support for Small Business (S<sup>3</sup>) programme originally developed by Business Boffins in association with the Business School at Oxford Brookes University. The S<sup>3</sup> programme comprises modules and fact-sheets explaining business concepts, with associated templates to build documents such as the business plan and

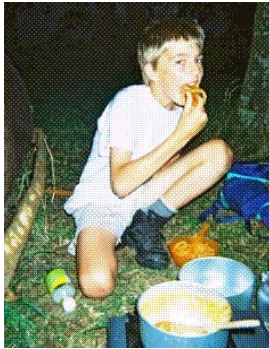
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# CiB newsletter

## “Blimey Dad.....we have to do it now”



**Elliott enjoying campfire stories**



**Ethan replenishing lost energy!**

*..before we departed, a letter arrived marked, “10, Downing Street” on the envelope, addressed to Ethan.*



**In October, the first transnational meeting was held, in Oxfordshire**

*Continued from front page*

A line had been drawn through the entry that read “campsite booby traps” and a question mark placed against “Grandpa’s rifle”.

I felt that this showed a mature approach to compromise regarding the weight that we had to carry. The small matter of breaking a number of laws could be discussed at a later date.

Sadly, the death of a young friend, Richard Hamilton, in late May changed everything. That this extraordinary young adventurer, who’d served with 21 SAS, should die in a canoeing accident on holiday suddenly made things different. With him in mind, we decided to do something important: a sponsored adventure for charity. And we’d do it right.

Weeks of planning and training ensued. Maps were pored over. Camp fires were lit in the rain. Dried foodstuffs were cooked and sampled. Survival books were studied and A&E medical friends consulted. It was, perhaps, the most planned exercise since the Normandy

landings.

Sponsorship forms were sent out, a press release was issued, T-shirts were printed and rucksacks were packed, and re-packed, with a limit of 25% of body weight for the boys and 40% for me.

Numerous parties were approached and the support was universal. English Heritage agreed that the boys could start their walk from the inner rings of Stonehenge and even gave permission for a team of Kodo drummers to send them off.

The Long Distance Walkers Association and the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) sent messages of goodwill. And both organisations are now reviewing their approach to primary school children as a result of this adventure – the RGS, for example, currently has no membership categories for people under 14.

At last the day arrived for us to leave for base camp, a holiday park in Weymouth. But before we departed, a letter arrived marked, “10, Downing Street” on the envelope, addressed to Ethan. As the boys read the

letter from the Prime Minister, wishing them good luck for their venture and offering advice to enjoy themselves, I sat mesmerised by the expression of delight on their faces. “Blimey Dad”, said Ethan, “We have to do it now. We can’t let the Prime Minister down.” You could be cynical here, but don’t be. You didn’t see their faces.

Early the next morning, my Bergen, weighing 40 kg, suddenly felt very heavy as I hauled it into the car. We were greeted at Stonehenge by a band of friends and family, and enjoyed a private tour before setting off. Once out of the main enclosure, the boys walked silently to the car and strapped on rucksacks, water bottles and swords. “This is it Dad”, said Elliott beaming widely, and off we strode.

Everyone, including the Kodo drummers, had assembled on the bridleway that stretches from Stonehenge towards Normanton Down Barrows and we enjoyed a tremendous send-off. Turning at the top of the hill, for one last wave, we headed off on our adventure.

*The tale of the adventure continues in Issue 2.*

## CEO builds partnerships in Latvia and Italy

cash flow forecast. The written material is being adapted to include country specific issues (e.g. the business environment is different in each country) and issues specific to the beneficiaries.

The coordinating International Consortium Partners in Latvia and Italy are Apeirons and Conform-Consortio Formazione Manageriale (Conform) respectively.

Apeirons is a national organisation working with disabled people and their carers to achieve greater integration for the disabled into society in Latvia.

Conform is a non-profit institution that aims to promote the development of an entrepreneurial and managerial culture in Italy.

Together with advisory groups, in each partner country, comprised of national bodies,

educators, supporters, charities and disabled people themselves, the partnership of CEO aims to raise awareness of the issues faced by the target group when setting up in business but also provide an enterprise education programme of support for mainstreaming after the life of the project.

*For more information on CEO, please contact Dr Tracey Carter at the address shown on page 4.*

## NEW — The Fresh Start Initiative

Do you have a New Years' resolution this year? At this time of year it is common to make a fresh start or improve our lives in some way. Some of us will give up smoking or drinking, others will decide to get fit for the New Year. Others will make a life-changing decision such as a career or educational change.

To mark this occasion, Communities in Business is launching a new initiative called Fresh Start—an enterprise education training programme for people in the local community with long-term illnesses, disabilities or caring responsibilities but would like to set up in business.

*CiB is aiming to raise £10,000 to help 20 people start new enterprises in the region in the first quarter of 2006.*

Fresh Start is for people in the community who may be mobility-restricted or for those where simply getting out of the house to engage with traditional education or employment is a challenge.

Starting a business can often offer a flexible alternative to the traditional 9-5 working day.

Learning enterprise may also offer a chance to break free from exclusion, building self confidence and a business on the way. CiB through the Fresh Start programme takes business support into the community.

In association with Oxford Brookes University and Business Boffins, CiB provides an innovative 12-month programme of *online* business education and mentoring support aimed at helping new businesses to start-up and become sustainable with:

Weekly learning material (modules, factsheets and templates)

Weekly expert mentoring from academics and Professional Advisers including lawyers, accountants and many others

Beneficiaries submit business plans, cash flow forecasts *etc* as assignments to the university and receive expert feedback

Beneficiaries can qualify for the university-accredited Certificate in Small Business Management (20 CAT pts)

No prior educational attainment

is required for entry, making it ideal for people without business experience.

The programme is delivered via the internet, providing the opportunity for beneficiaries to learn and work from home at times that suit them.

### How you can help

Just £495 will sponsor someone for all of this over one year. The sponsorship packages include:

Individual (1 member): £495

Bronze (2 members): £990

Silver (5 members): £2,475

Gold (10 members): £4,950

Platinum (20 members): £9,990

For each business sponsored, you will receive a summary of the individual's aspirations at the start of the year and then a follow-up report at the end of the year. Silver, Gold and Platinum sponsors will have access to a full package of PR support, including case studies, photographs and interviews (unless otherwise requested). *For more information please contact Dr Tracey Carter.*

## Fresh start



### Did you know?

There are an estimated **6.8 million** adult carers in Britain (*Carers 2000, National Statistics*)

**This figure increases if you consider those who care for their children at home**

Nearly **1 in 20** households contain a carer who spends 20 hours or more on caring tasks per week (*Carers 2000, National Statistics*)

Nearly **1 in 10** people spend 50 hours per week on their caring responsibilities (*Carers 2000, National Statistics*)

Women are more likely to be carers than men – **58%** of carers in Britain are women (*National Strategy for Carers*)

## CASE STUDY —The Merry twins

Judith and Laura Merry are 17 year old twins who have started studies for their A-levels at Lord Williams School in Thame, Oxfordshire.

Both girls have congenital muscular dystrophy, and are wheelchair users. Tired with fashionable clothes not fitting right and difficulties in undoing traditional fastenings, Judith was inspired to design clothes that would be suitable for both her able-bodied and disabled peers alike. The budding entrepreneurs incorporate non-traditional adaptations (magnetic fasteners, Velcro and draw-string closures) into their designs so that disabled teenagers (including those that

are wheelchair bound) can also wear the fashionable clothes comfortably. Judith and Laura have already produced some preliminary designs utilising and featuring the easy-to-use fastenings.

Judith had taken this original idea further by holding a fashion show with the help of the disabled childrens' charity Whizz-Kidz. The charity provides access to mobility equipment such as customised wheelchairs and tricycles for disabled children improving mobility and independence.

The charity provided a grant for Judith when she had applied to the Millennium Awards Commis-

sion (Lottery funded award) to take her fashion show 'Fashion on Wheelz' forward. Help was also obtained from a local fashion and design college who adapted some clothes for the show.

Laura is a member of the Whizz Kidz Board and was instrumental in raising awareness of the idea. Initial business mentoring had been funded by SEEDA as part of winning the regional (South East) aspect of Channel Four's Bedroom Britain programme.

*Generous sponsorship for the 50-mile Challenge from Oxford Brookes University, allows CiB to continue business support for the Merry twins in 2006.*



**Business planning with Judith and Laura**

*The twins' incorporate non-traditional fastenings into their designs so that disabled teenagers can wear the fashionable clothes comfortably.*



COMMUNITIES IN BUSINESS

The Gallery, Dairy Barn  
Belchers Farm, High Street  
Little Milton  
Oxfordshire, OX44 7PU  
Phone: 01844 278448  
Fax: 01844 278449  
Email: [tracey@communitiesinbusiness.org.uk](mailto:tracey@communitiesinbusiness.org.uk)



Tracey Carter



Sarah Steel



Jean Mulligan

## About Communities in Business

### Who we are

Communities in Business (CiB), was formed in 2005 by Tracey Carter and is run by a management board, the majority of whom work in a voluntary capacity. The not-for-profit organisation CiB was set up to provide business education and training for people who would otherwise not be able to access education and training through traditional methods. CiB encourages self-employment and business development through learning the process of enterprise.

### Who we help

CiB targets hard-to-reach groups who face multiple barriers to work; people on incapacity benefits, long-term unemployed, carers, ex-offenders, ethnic minorities and others for whom self-employment could offer a chance to break free from poverty and exclusion.

Self-employment provides an opportunity to help overcome many barriers whilst building self-esteem and confidence, contributing to independence and a route out of benefit-reliance and hardship.

### What we provide

CiB provides programmes of enterprise education as featured in the FreshStart initiative (page 3). Further, CiB is developing educational material such as lectures, courses, workshops, seminars, speaker events, conferences and other events to promote enterprise and self-employment. CiB partners and work with support organisations and service providers in order to provide some of these services thereby ensuring targeted support for the people CiB aims to help.

### The CiB team

#### *Dr Tracey Carter*

Following her PhD at OBU, Tracey joined Business Boffins in 2004 to assist with projects involved in technology transfer. Tracey has always had an interest in enterprise and has assisted a number of businesses in their preparation for raising finance. She qualified for the new Certificate in Small Business Mentoring from OBU in 2005.

#### *Sarah Steel*

Sarah founded the Old Station Nursery, a child day-care nursery, with her sister Claire in 2002 in Faringdon Oxfordshire. Sarah had previously been an officer of the Royal Logistics Corps but decided on a career change. The nursery has over 90 registered children. Following its success, Sarah has opened a second nursery at RAF Benson. An after-school club is now planned.

#### *Jean Mulligan*

Jean is Managing Director of Rubicon Communications Ltd, an event management company based in Oxford. She has many years experience in conference and exhibition direction and development, from project conception through co-ordination of all administrative activities to on-site event management. Previously Jean worked with the United Nations Development Programme in Geneva.

## News and forthcoming events

- ◆ CiB needs your support — we rely on resources raised through sponsorship or events
- ◆ If you would like to sponsor someone through the Fresh Start Initiative, please contact Tracey Carter on 01844 278448.
- ◆ If you would like to donate gifts in kind for auction or raffle events, please contact us at the above address.
- ◆ Look out for the next edition of the *Communities in Business* newsletter in March 2006

**STOP PRESS \*\*\*Ethan & Elliott Smith would like to undertake a 100-km challenge in aid of CiB next year!**