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Stories from The Ruitor Challenge.

Thank you from Kenya | What was it? | Why bother? | It nearly did not happen | The Police Raid Incident | The Snow Hole Incident | Tifu the Brave! | Unrest in the Refuge Basement! | The Henry Stewart Advanced Ski Touring Technique! | What of the Ruitor Yeti?

----Building an Educated Future for Kenyan Children----

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Dear Supporters of our Kenyan school,

Nicholas Walker has just told me that the total raised from the Ruitor Glacier Challenge is £58,593 and that some money is still coming in. This enormous amount of money exceeds his and my wildest dreams and I rush to send you all my most sincere thanks. My thanks alone are as nothing but they come from literally tens of thousands of young Kenyans and their families, all of whom will benefit from your remarkable generosity immediately and for decades to come.

The Woodard Langalanga Secondary School is on the edge of an ever-expanding shanty town on the floor of Kenya's Great Rift Valley. The land is designated 'semi arid' and has an average annual rainfall of 20 inches. Most people exist on the proceeds of food grown on ¼ and ½ acre plots. The average number of children from child-bearing mothers is about six. Medical advances over the years have helped to reduce the death rate. Many of the inhabitants have been re-settled following violent tribal clashes. Poverty is endemic.

We believe that the best way out of poverty is through education, so my charity has built a number of primary schools in the area. Five of these schools are within walking distance of 'Plot 68' where we started to build our secondary school in 2010. We now have 230 young Kenyans between 14 and 16 years old who are learning in the facilities so far constructed. By January 2015 there will be 480 children with us. All of them are now assured of being taught in one of the most remarkable government schools in the Republic thanks, in large part, to your selflessness and generosity.

As we all know, the main 'mover and shaker' has been Nicholas Walker. Without him my dreams of completing the buildings in time for the arrival of the 2014 intake of pupils were in grave danger of failure. So..... 'Thank You, Nick', for all you have done to mobilise your friends and supporters and 'Thank You' to all readers of this letter for your timely and unbelievable kindness to young Kenyans, many of whom are not yet born.

Please keep an eye on our website www.kariandusi.co.uk over the years to see how we are getting on. Better still, do please come and see for yourself. You will be amazed – and made very welcome.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Harry Vialou Clark' with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Harry Vialou Clark

Trustees: Colonel Harry Vialou Clark MBE (Chairman), Ms Sue Phelps, Mr Graham Turner, Mrs Alison Vialou Clark.
Hon Auditor: Mrs Amanda Cavanagh ACA, Hon Treasurer: Mrs Rosemary Pryce



The Ruitor Challenge.



What was it?

The Ruitor Challenge was a unique charity fund raising event which took place on the mountains and glaciers around Sainte Foy on 2nd and 3rd of April and 13th and 14th of April 2013. 52 people of 8 different nationalities came together to accept the Challenge, donating significant sums of their own money to participate.

People came from as far away as Chicago and Oslo for the event. Watching and applauding via the website, the photographs and the emails were another 600 or so philanthropically minded people who sponsored the Challengers with individual donations ranging in size from £2 to £6500. The community of Sainte Foy Tarentaise embraced the project warmly and contributed great prizes for The Ruitor Challenge Raffle. Local businesses also provided for free very costly, logistical support - free helicopter drops, free ski hire, free accommodation and free food for the venture.

As nice things often happen to nice people, the forces of nature took note of our endeavor and opened up two windows of perfect late season touring conditions (and promptly closed them as soon as we finished!). Twenty centimetres of fresh powder fell a couple of days before each event giving 48 hours for it to settle and create a snow pack where the top layer remained stable on slopes of up to 48%. The sun shone for most of day one of the First Event and, on the second day, like gods on Mount Olympus, we looked down in beautiful sunshine onto a sea of thick grey clouds covering the "ordinary" world below. For the Second Event, the sun shone uninterruptedly, one of the few occasions where that happened in the 2013 season.

Why bother?

The Ruitor Challenge was less about SKIING than about BUILDING.... building schools (in Kenya), building bridges (between communities) and building awareness (kids; avalanches are BAD, schools are GOOD!).

Now it's well and truly over, it remains for me to thank you all for your wonderful support of Harry and Alison and the School, for signing up for this and for giving so much money. **100% of every donation has gone to the school's building programme.**

I will leave you with just three thoughts:

- i) With another half million Ruitor Challengers and Sponsors like you, we would sort out Kenya and the rest of the third world in less than a decade
- ii) The worst and most irresponsible way to utterly waste your money is to leave it all in the bank!
- ii) We have massively overachieved against our target of €60,000. We have so far raised €68,847 (£58,593) – and still donations coming in!

I hope you enjoy my selection of stories...

Until the next time, **thank you all so very much.**

Nick Walker

President

Pain and Fine Dining Enterprises

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Stories from The Ruitor Challenge.

One – It nearly did not happen!

When I floated the idea of a ski touring challenge in late January amongst my friends and other sources of good counsel, I was advised not to do it almost universally. Some thought it was unwise, others thought there was not enough time, and others said no-one would sign up. So, I thought I would just do it anyway!

Early adopters of the idea were Richard Hamshire whose fabulous advertising agency Joe Public Limited produced, at no cost to me what so ever, all of the ASTOUNDINGLY GOOD website, marketing and promotional material throughout the event (congrats to Ian Hogg who did most of the creative work). Also Marcia Nash, ski-tourer extraordinaire, who raised all the money before anyone else, and Hamish Stewart and Michelle Duncan who taught me how to ski tour and helped me scope out the routes.

A major early obstacle was finding guides who would take on the responsibility for the touring side and a huge debt of gratitude is due to Sev, Eric, Pascal, Neil, Stevo, Dimitri, Patrick and Jean for believing in this whilst others shied away. In this connection, the Office de Tourisme played a key role under Anne Marmottan's daily leadership. She emailed every guide in the Haut Tarantaise and slowly but surely, one by one, we got not only enough guides, but we got the BEST GUIDES! By end of February, the snow ball was rolling down the hill getting bigger and bigger, and almost by magic, three orderly teams started to form for each of the two events and funds started to come in, both from my own wonderful traditional Challenge supporters and from all of the participants and THEIR sponsors too. And the rest, as they say, is history!



Two –The Police Raid Incident!

As most of the world knows, the First Event was greatly improved from the “event recollection” point of view by a 2 am “police raid” on our cozy high altitude refuge. When I heard about this the following morning (I was deep in my snow hole some distance away at the time), I naturally thought that they were after Jenny Watson’s Filipino smoking gourde but no, it was a “Habeas Corpus” thing, the Corpus belonging to 15 year old local skiing legend Tom Drummond.

Tom had very much taken to heart our appeal “Foglietta Challenge – Be Part of It” and decided that this instruction overruled his mum’s direct instruction NOT to be part of it. So, after school, Tom bravely made his own way down Col Granier, through the Monseti woods to search out and join his pals in Team Granier, with no thought for his own safety. Tom then slips in amongst the band of happy kids and, with the adults busily diving in to 10 litres of Super U’s finest “Bordeaux in a Box”, Tom goes unnoticed until he had to be dragged up from the basement of the refuge at 2 AM to be shown to two police officers who had snow shoe-ed up for hours from La Masure.

Tom’s punishment for this egregious subordination was to be dragged down to the police station the following day for a dressing down from the two police officers concerned. Sadly for Tom’s poor long suffering mum, the Ruitor Challenge had become a major regional event by then and so Tom was warmly congratulated and just told to be more careful in the future!



Three – The Snow Hole Incident!

Let me say that snow holes are nasty. They should be called ICE TOMBS, not snow holes and I never want to be in one ever again!

We had the good fortune to have with us on the first event International Mountain Leader and foremost authority on snow hole construction, Stevo MacDonald. It is a testimony to how nasty snow holes are that Stevo in all his illustrious career has only slept in a snow hole once. (In fact I heard that he did not sleep in it at all, he just had a cup of tea in one!). So, massive congratulations go to Oxford University Student Charlie Dummeresque and “Event Mule” Ed Bates who were the only other two feeble minded enough to subject themselves to this horrid ordeal! In the best case scenario, the temperature in your snow hole will be colder than a domestic fridge. You will sleep on a narrow shelf of thick cold ice with a ceiling of what you hope is thick cold ice, which is JUST 5 centimeters above your nose. If you are a good boy scout and have smoothed off your snow hole ceiling well, it will not drip condensation from your breathing on you all night. Otherwise it will!

It took me, Charlie, four adults (Simon Tregoning, Nick Hill, Stevo and Annabel) and about six big kids (Olly, Rosie, Tasha and Markie, Tom D and Tom H) about two hours to dig out a rectangular hole, a metre and a half deep, a metre and a half wide and two metres long, and then put the 3 tonnes or so of snow back on the roof (made out of skis and back packs), compact the said snow and then create the two sleeping platforms and the ditch in between where the cold air is supposed to collect. Believe me, that is just sort of invigorating exercise you crave after 8 hours of ski-touring as the sun drops like a stone and everyone else is having tea!

Now I am not generally one to complain, (unless of course it's all my fault!), but the snow hole experience, nasty in itself, was marred by terrible mis-adventure. First, Stevo was called out to

Three – The Snow Hole Incident!

put Charlie and me to bed at about 11 PM. As you cannot stand up in most snow holes, you ideally need someone to block your entry hole with snow and a rucksack. Unfortunately, we encountered a problem that my sleeping platform sloped very slightly into the ditch and hence I had a tendency slip off my shelf on my slippery blowup mattress into the ditch where the cold air was supposed to collect.

Ever an innovator, Stevo tried to anchor my mattress on the platform by driving his avalanche shovel through the ice. Well, whether it was the fault of the darkness, the 10 litres of Bordeaux in a Box or the daddy sized hip flask of Bill McGynties Finest which Stevo always keeps about his person is a matter of historical irrelevance. The fact is Stevo's avalanche shovel pierced my blow up mattress causing a minor explosion, making it completely deflate and obliging me to sleep in direct contact with the ice shelf for the next 7 hours! If that was not cruel enough, the rucksack which Stevo had jammed into the snow hole's front door fell out at about 2 am which turned our fridge into a deep freeze. From 2 AM, I listened jealously to Charlie's even, regular breathing, as I imagined being buried alive in a Mausoleum and waited for the sun's rays to signal it was time to re-enter the refuge and prepare for the five hour 1.5 kms vertical ski uphill to the Noeuds de Vedettes. At least, when in due course, I am cast down to the depths of Dante's inferno, the only thing new will be the smell of sulphur!





Four – Tifu the Brave!

I don't know who Tifu was but she was gorgeous and I am not sure she will see her thirtieth Birthday!

11.00 AM: Top for the Foglietta Mountain at almost 3000 metres. The second Foglietta Challenge group had just completed the first 300 vertical on the touring skis and we were looking down over one of the largest cornices I have seen in 25 years of off piste skiing.... a 50 degree slope with 20 or maybe 30 centimetres of fresh snow stretching a couple of kilometers in the direct of Monseti. Team Extreme and Team Foggie approached the edge and I swear that at least one of us pooped our pants.

Who was going to be first over to see if it slipped? As they say.... Cometh the Hour, Cometh the Woman! Up steps a gorgeous 25 year old called "Tifu" from a group of 6 French Boarder and Skiers who had joined us on the ridge. "Allez, Tifu! Fais le nettoyage!" said one of her group. So we rope Tifu up, our high mountain guide, Sev, acts as belay and over Tifu goes to see if the 50 degree slope would, or would not, avalanche. Happily for Tifu and Tifu's mum, the slope does not avalanche and Tifu deservedly claims the first impeccable tracks down the north fact of the Foglietta on one of the best ever skiing days I can remember in Sainte Foy. Thank you Tifu!



Five – Unrest in the Refuge Basement!

Now if you know the Ruitor high altitude Refuge, you will know that there is the nice warm first floor dormitory with one big communal bunk bed which sleeps 12 and then there is the not quite so nice colder basement dormitory which sleeps 28 with two communal bunk beds on two levels. Always remember when you are in the mountains, hot air rises, cold air descends!

Well, when it came time to retire, and like some elderly stallion, I gather up the mares and the foals (the women and children), and a few weaker none threatening males (Hamish and Greg), and took my little herd upstairs to the first floor dormitory leaving the more threatening younger males to fight over the higher bunks in the lower dormitory. (By the way, this was the second event and I could see nothing in the contract with my sponsors that said I had to sleep outside again!) Things went well until one of the older males in the lower dormitory started to snore. Now I don't want to name names, but one of the old males down there snores for England. In fact, he has been World Champion, 10 years running, of the All Comers Iron Man Category for Snoring. I don't want to identify him so let's just call him J.

Now I will tell the rest of this story from the point of view of our high mountain guide, Sev, who had to get 6 of us to the top of the Ruitor Glacier starting at 5 AM in a few hours and was desperate to get a bit of sleep.

"Sacré Bleu! There is a conard who is snoring like a Peeg! I will wake him up and tell heem to shut up! "Monsieur J. Monsieur J, wake up YOU ARE SNORING". J wakes up and shouts "WHAT? ITS SNOWING?" Everyone cracks up and goes back to sleep. But that is not the end. Sev takes up the

story.... 'Merde alors, some other conard is snoring again! Not sure who it eez, I think it is the one from Team Extreme. I will employ old Savoie mountain guide trick. Sev sits up and shouts loudly: "Allez, time to get up Team Extreme - It is 5 AM. Get up and get ready!" Sev gets up himself, goes to the stairs, pretends to go up in the darkness, but actually returns to his bunk and goes back to sleep.

Other members of Team Extreme get up, go upstairs and start to prepare their kits and rummage about for some breakfast. After about 20 minutes, someone points out it is 1.15am and what the hell was going on! Nice one, Sev. That's why someone poured Genepy on your porridge!



Six – The Henry Stewart Advanced Ski Touring Technique!

The true heroes of the Ruitor Challenge were not the few who went to the very top, or the ones who pooh-ed their pants but still went over the top of the Foglietta ridge. It was the teenagers who undertook the Challenge, many of whom skied significantly better than their very proficient parents.

A three hour ski tour is a big ask of a bunch of kids who have not done it before and without exception they completed the Challenge without a winge or a recrimination and built some awesome igloos and snow holes in the process. I have to mention Jordan Salmon (aged 17), who reached the top of the Ruitor glacier and Tom Hamshire who reached the top of Monseti (aged 16). I must also mention the youngest member of the expedition, Henry Stewart, aged 12 and a few days, who showed us how

to get full use of the guides by getting himself roped up and dragged along by Patrick when his poor little legs could not move him any higher. I have taken note of this technique Henry, and I shall use it widely in the future whenever I ski with Patrick. Thank you!



Seven – What of the Ruitor Yeti?

What of the Ruitor Yeti? We could not find him and but I know he was out there. He was the one who pushed Dimitri into the path of the small avalanche which knocked him off his feet and caused him to somersault down the north face of the Foglietta for 50 metres. He was behind the ice boulders which fired down over our heads on the side of the Glacier du Invernes as we made our way gingerly down from La Tete Du Ruitor. And he was the one who started the massive wet snow avalanche which came roaring down behind us on a southerly facing path as we made our way down to Le Crot.

Remember, kids, the Yeti is always out there. **So, always wear your helmet and your transceiver. Always go with a guide. Always let Tifu go first. And never, never sleep in a snow hole!!**



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The Ruitor Challenge. Roll of honour!

The 52 Ruitor Challengers in alphabetical order:

Alistair Watson, Anders Nordby, Angus Stewart, Annabel Walker, Borja Higuero, Charlie Dumeresque, Charlotte Smith, Claudia Mauri, Dimitri Mauz, Ed Bates, Eric Charamel, Freya MacKay, George Watson, Gilly MacFarlane, Gracie Hamshire, Greg Smith, Hamish Stewart, Henry Stewart, Ian Wylie, Ignacio Escalante, Jean "Long John" Nerva, Jean Marc Metzger, Jenny Watson, John Tilson, Jonathan Salmon, Jordan Salmon, Jorge Blasco, Katrina MacKay, Marcia Nash, Marcus Walker, Malcolm Betts, Neil McNair, Nick Cannon, Nick Hill, Nick Walker, Olly Hill, Paddy O'Conner, Pascal Juppet, Per Erik Sandersen, Richard Hamshire, Rocio Higuero, Rosie Tregoning, Sam Smith, Sev Marchand, Simon Tregoning, Steph Samuels, Stevo MacDonald, Tasha Walker, Tisha Salmon, Tom Drummond and Tom Hamshire (sadly three of us could not make it at the last moment due to injury, bereavement or other personal matters).

Major Donors (whose gifts exceeded €5000)

Global M&A Partners

Major Donors (whose gifts exceeded €999)

Pablo Rion

EJ (Solveigh Corporate Finance)

Per Eric Sandersen



Simon and Shelly Tregoning
Graham Turner
Walker Morris Solicitors
Sainte Foy Tarentaise Loisirs Developpements (lift operator)
Mikel Bilbao
Bruno Entrecanales
Ivan Alver (Saga Corporate Finance)
Jaime Carvajal

Major Donors (whose gifts exceeded €499 – Excludes Entry Fees)

JM Metzger
Isabel Serra (Cygnus Asset Management)
Christopher and Pauline Smith
Jojo Bates
Javier Ferrán
Ben Hollins
Carlos Lavilla
Carlos Mallo
Office de Tourisme De Sainte Foy

Major Event Sponsors in alphabetical order:

Blujeon Helicoptères: Food drop First Event
L'A Coeur: Catering for Second Event and 5 Barrels of Beer
Joe Public Limited : All event marketing, promotion and communication
Office de Tourisme de Sainte Foy: Logistical, administrative, financial and secretarial support
Maison A Colonnes : Catering for the Second Event
Mike Bennet Helicopters: Food drop Second Event
SkiSet: Touring Equipment Providers
SnoCool: Provider of Guides for Second Event
Super U: Provider of Food for First Event
Up and Running: Energy Drinks and accessories
ZigZag: Touring Equipment Providers

Providers of Tombola/Raffle Prizes

Blujeon Helicoptères, Borja and Rocio Higuero, Chez Mérie, Ecole de Ski Francaise, Fergus Hampton, Iceberg Bar, Intersport ,La Grange, Maison a Colonnes, McNair Sports, Nick and

Annabel Walker, Office de Tourisme de Sainte Foy, Premiere Neige, Résidence CGH Les Fermes De Sainte Foy, Résidence Eco Le Ruitor, Restaurant La Marquise (opening 2013), Restaurant Le Monal, Rohan Outdoor Clothing, Santa Fé, Seckford Wines, Ski Republic, Superette U, The White Room, Up and Running, Watson Family, Weldon, Zigzags.



Major Fund Raisers

Nick Walker´s Just Giving Page	GillyMacfarlane	Sainte Foy Owners
Nick Walker´s Challenge Sponsors	Woodard Schools	Richard Hamshire
Gift Aid	Nick and Olly Hill	Steph Samuels
Alistair Watson + Family	Tasha Walker	Gregory Smith
Raffle/T shirts/helmet etc	Charlie Dumeresque	Malcom Betts
Stewart Family	Marky Walker	SamJaiSmith
Per Eric Sandersen	Jorge Blasco	Anders Nordby
Borja/Ignacio/Rocio	Freya and Katrina	Grace Hamshire
Simon + Rosie Tregoning	Salmon Family	Tom Hamshire
Claudia Mauri	Ruitor Challenge Auction	Charlotte Smith
Annabel Walker	JohnTilson	
Marcia Nash	Paddy O Conner	

“Most Valuable Contribution” Prize Winners (One Framed Ruitor Yeti Drawing Each)

First Prize: Joe Public Limited (for excellence in marketing, promotion and event communication)

Second Prize: The Office De Tourisme (for problem solving)

Third Prize: Mrs Annabel Walker (for putting up with all of my sh*t!)

