



FIFE'S YOUNG ARCTIC EXPLORERS RECOGNISED WITH PRESTIGIOUS POLAR ACADEMY MEDAL

Lochgelly High School pupils rewarded for their achievements after life-changing Greenland expedition

Last night (26 April) 10 young Arctic explorers from Lochgelly High School in Fife received a prestigious Polar Academy Medal at a special awards ceremony hosted by Lord Bruce at Broomhall House near Dunfermline, Fife.

The medals were presented to the expedition team of seven girls and three boys in recognition of their courage and achievements after they completed a life-changing 14-day and 100km expedition in Eastern Greenland with the charity, [The Polar Academy](#).

The event took place in the home of Lord Bruce, with the medals presented by the parent or guardian of each youth and in front of more than 100 special guests.

Throughout their expedition, the youths aged between 14-17 years old and their head teacher Carol Ann Penrose, braved snow-storms and temperatures as low as -25C. The team camped on sea ice and visited Inuit villages and throughout the journey, each pupil was required to haul his or her own 45kg sled.

The Polar Academy was founded in 2013 by Craig Mathieson, Scotland's greatest living Polar explorer, to inspire youths struggling with lack of confidence and low self esteem to transform their lives through exploration.

Bo'ness-based Mathieson, who in 2014 was named the first Explorer in Residence of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society in 129 years, was the expedition leader.

Paying tribute to the magnitude of the pupils' achievements, Mathieson said: "These pupils have achieved the extraordinary by pushing themselves physically and mentally to the limit. Their rekindled sense of self-confidence is evident to all. They are more than ready to inspire others struggling with self-confidence and esteem to take that first vital step to change their lives for the better. Each is deserving of a rare and coveted Polar Academy Medal."

Lord Bruce said: “The Bruce Family is delighted to be involved with a truly worthwhile cause such as The Polar Academy. It is a great pleasure to welcome the Lochgelly team on their safe return to Scotland and to host the awards ceremony at Broomhall House. Several members of my family have gone to the ends of the Earth in a similar spirit of adventure: James Bruce of Kinnaird discovered the source of the Blue Nile in 1770; William Speirs Bruce led the Scottish Antarctic Expedition (1902-04); and John Geoffrey Bruce set a mountaineering record in 1922, climbing Mount Everest to reach 27,300 feet without oxygen.

“In the Year of Young People 2018, we are delighted to support this adventurous group of Fife students, who are learning valuable leadership and life skills. I am sure they have benefited enormously from their experiences with the Academy and we are very happy to work with such an inspiring organisation.”

Like the participants of three previous Polar Academy expeditions, each of the pupils will now share their personal account of being part of The Polar Academy with their peer groups in Fife and throughout Scotland. In just four years, more than 60,000 school-aged children have been engaged by the charity.

Last night also saw two members of The Polar Academy Leadership Team receive a Polar Academy Medal to recognise their commitment to undertake rigorous physical training and personal sacrifices during the eight-month period between selection and the departure to Greenland of the expedition team.

Mathieson’s fellow guides, Nigel Williams (Glenmore Lodge by Aviemore) and George MacHardy and expedition doctor Naomi Dodds also received a special Polar Academy Medal.

Future Polar Academy Expeditions

Mathieson highlighted that annually, The Polar Academy must fundraise over £170,000 to operate. Tiso, the outdoor adventure retail specialist, Bergans of Norway and Cornhill Building Services are among the organisations, individual donors and supporters who generously contribute to the work of the charity. During the nine months prior to the expedition, the pupils, supported by their school, family and the wider Lochgelly community also undertook considerable fundraising to support their expedition and charity.

The fifth expedition team will comprise pupils from Bathgate High School in West Lothian. Potential team members have yet to be selected for that expedition which will depart for Arctic Greenland in April 2019.

www.thepolaracademy.org

Notes to the editor

The Polar Academy 2018 Expedition Team:

Morgan Adam - 14
Kieran Burns - 14
Daisy George - 14
Megan Hargrave - 16
Conner Harper - 16
Carla Masterton - 14
Carol Ann Penrose - Head Teacher
Daniel Pratt - 17
Hannah Reid - 15
Lauren Scott - 14
Carrie Wotherspoon - 14

The Polar Academy 2018 Leadership Team

Lewis Fotheringham – 14; Louise McLeary – 14; Cameron Duff – 14; Louise McArthur – 15; Isla Stewart – 16; Keigan Thomson – 16; Ryan Harley – 16; Erin Cuthbert - 14

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