



HAPPY NEW YEAR

Happy New Year to you all. I hope you have all had a well earned rest and are refreshed and ready to take on everything that 2020 will bring. We only have 9 weeks to go before we take the Bell Baxter team to the Arctic. They have been training incredibly well and are almost ready for one of the biggest challenges they may ever face. They have two more endurance days still to conquer before we leave, but I have every confidence that they will smash them with the same determination they have been showing during their weekly training sessions. The tyre hauling is always a firm favourite with everyone.

Due to the incredible and continued support from all our Patrons and Sponsors, we will be working with both Bo'ness Academy and Stranraer Academy this year so I expect it to be our busiest and most challenging year yet.

Craig



There is no use starting off slowly so we kicked off this year with the first tyre haul for the Bell Baxter team in the idyllic setting of Strathyre, near Callander. The kids hauled tyres for 6 hours in the pouring rain and howling winds and we did not hear one complaint. This is the indomitable spirit we are coming to recognise from these incredible youngsters.

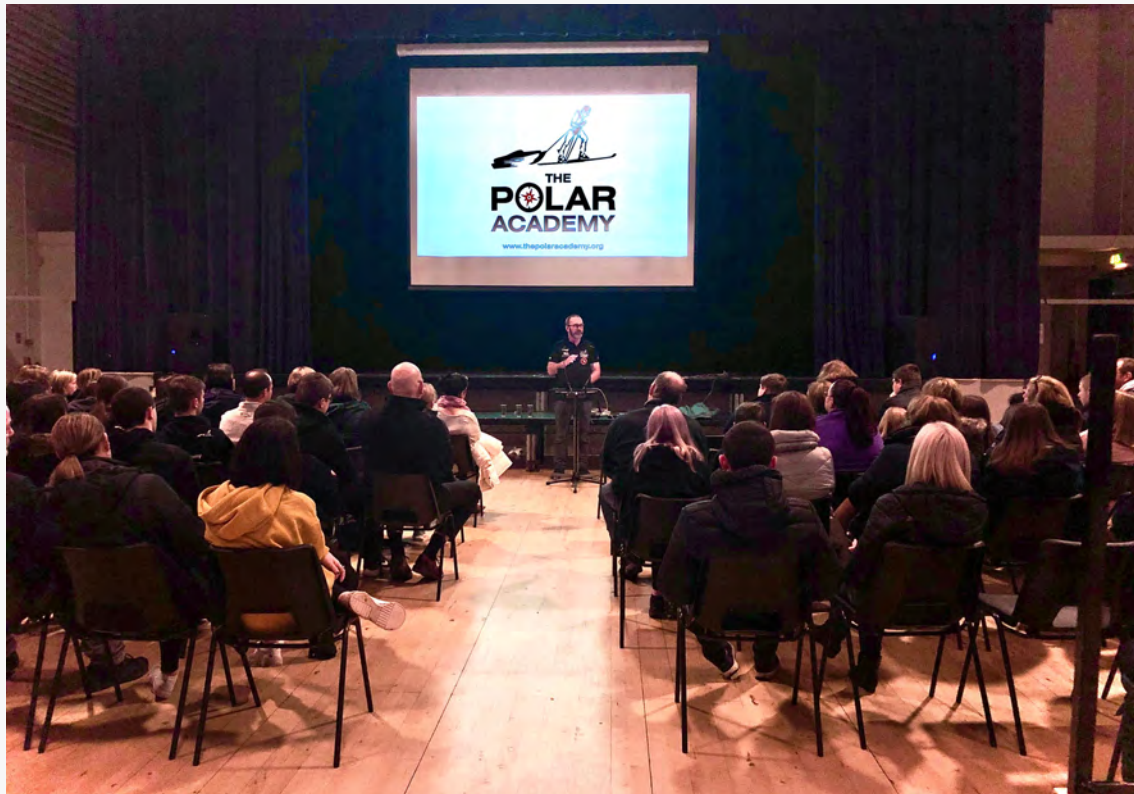
The team were joined by our very own Mike, who is not just a Patron, he also sits on the Polar Academy Committee. Mike was the first of our Patrons to take up the tyre hauling challenge this year, and since he came without a team of his own, he had to drag the tyre the full 20 kilometers himself! Mike proved more than capable of the challenge and we were impressed he managed to keep up with the kids!

Their next tyre haul will be Saturday 15th February, meeting at 10am at the Invertrossachs car park, FK17 8HQ. I know a few more of our patrons and sponsors will be attending with teams for this one and I'm looking forward to putting you through your paces. Remember to pack for rain/cold weather and bring a packed lunch, snacks, water and blister kit. Let me know if you can make it and bring a team!



BO'NESS ACADEMY

Although we will not start training the next round of youngsters until after the summer holidays, there is still a lot of preparation work that needs to go into finding this team in the first place. I was pleased to announce last year, that one of the lucky schools we will be working with is Bo'ness Academy. I attended a parents information evening at the academy this week to introduce everyone to our work. There was definitely a lot of excitement, nerves and anticipation in the room! At the moment, the teachers have identified over 50 kids who would benefit from our programme.



I will be meeting with the teachers from Bo'ness Academy again soon to discuss the candidates and find the 20 who will absolutely benefit the most and invite them to start the selection process at Glenmore Lodge.

A few of the parents left Bo'ness with copies of our BBC documentary in order to swot up on all things Polar Academy. I'm sure there will be a few excited kids in Bo'ness very shortly. I'm looking forward to meeting with our final team and keeping you up to date with their progress over the year.



We have now registered with Amazon Smile! Support us while doing your shopping. A small percent of whatever you spend will be donated at no additional cost to you. Visit www.smile.amazon.co.uk and choose The Polar Academy as your charity!



MERRELL CHRISTMAS



Team Bell Baxter were delighted to receive their Merrell Trainers and walking boots before Christmas. Having such high quality walking boot allows us to push the kids for the 20 and 30 kilometer tyre hauls knowing that they are well equipped. The weather threw everything at us on the first tyre haul and the puddles were numerous, but the boots withstood all and remained watertight.



SPONSORS GENEROSITY

As we grow, we remain very grateful for the incredible generosity of all those who help to fund us or kit the kids out with the very best equipment available. Åsnes have again agreed to ensure both of our children's teams have the best equipment out there and will be gifting us double the number of skis, skins and poles. No Skis would be complete without Rottefella and again Team Rottefella are generously donating their bindings. Alfa are offering an incredible 50% off their expedition ski boots which will slot perfectly into the Rottefella bindings on the Åsnes skis. Nordic Outdoor donated a further two tent Tipi's which becomes the communal hub and heart of all expeditions. Glenmore Lodge continue to support us with a significant discount for booking all 4 selection weekends and 2 training weeks where we will be spending time training our young explorers. Glenmore are happy that the lodge is being used to promote youth and outdoors which was its founding purpose. We could not express our gratitude enough to each and every one of you for supporting us. Further updates on additional sponsors next month.



Both St James's Place Wealth Management and Wood will be undertaking their own Polar Challenges over the next year while fundraising for the Polar Academy. I am looking forward to telling you more about it in the next issue...

