



# It's all **greek** 2 me

Written and edited by young Greeks born abroad, mainly in Glasgow

Summer 2005

Issue 7

## Glasgow Hellenic Pursues the Active Outdoors! *Anna Symeonides reports on two June trips for young & old*

The youth of St. Luke's Church, in association with Outward Bound, have been very active around Scotland this summer. The older kids spent the weekend of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> June exploring the Union Canal between Edinburgh and Falkirk. The more junior members spent four days from the 24<sup>th</sup> June at the Outward Bound Centre, situated at Loch Eil.

The Union Canal was opened in 1822 as a 50km water-link between Edinburgh and Falkirk. After meeting our instructors, we all piled into the Outward Bound van and made the short journey to the Union Canal, trailing our canoes behind us. We packed our belongings into large barrels, tied them inside the canoes and made a shaky launch into the canal. With two people per canoe, we set out on our first few metres of the canal. Some of us demonstrated natural nautical ability, while some of us struggled with the basic paddle stroke and the subtle requirements of steering. I was certainly in the latter of these two categories! However, we made good progress and were enjoying the unusually warm and humid weather as we reached the Union Canal Centre of Linlithgow.

This is a point from which tourists can take boat tours of the area or pause for a good old cup of tea. We tied up our canoes and stopped here briefly for rehydration and shade from the concentrated rays of the sun, as some of us were turning an unhealthy shade of pink! Onwards on our journey and we came across the Almond Aqueduct, which stands an impressive 75ft over the River Almond. This was certainly a Kodak moment as we floated so high above the ground, taking in the stunning scenery lying below. A few hours paddling later and we reached our campsite. The team split up to complete the tasks of putting up the tents and dinner preparation. I'm sure it's only coincidence that the males headed to the tent-poles and the females to the kitchen...hehe.



As the sun went down we played a murder mystery game, which was designed to encourage and develop our communication skills. Then we headed for our sleeping bags to get some rest,

which proved quite challenging, despite the energy expended by our tired limbs. This was due to the loud, incessant chatter of the nocturnal cows in the neighbouring field. After cursing the noisy bovines we eventually snored our way through the night and woke up early and enthusiastic for another day's paddling. We rolled up the tents, re-packed the barrels and we were off in the canoes again, on our second and last day on the canal.

Sunday was a duller day, but the humidity and occasional rain meant there was a jungle-like atmosphere to the canal. The highlight of this day, and probably the entire trip, was paddling through the only canal tunnel in Scotland. This tunnel is just on the outskirts of Falkirk, is 631m long and 3.6m high. It was carved and constructed through solid rock to appease a local landowner at the time who was not best pleased at the prospect of seeing a canal from the windows of his home, Callendar House. We entered the gloomy tunnel and took in the amazing sight of the rocky walls, the stalactites hanging from the ceiling and the shadows of our own boats in front of us. Exiting the tunnel, there was a constant gush of water from above which some of us successfully managed to avoid, and some others 'accidentally' had the misfortune to paddle through. So soaked and a little worse for wear, we paddled a little further down the canal to our end-point, where we dragged the canoes out of the water and piled into the van to drive up to the impressive Falkirk Wheel and back down south to Glasgow. **[cont. over page]**



Our dance group has been invited to take part in an EU-funded programme in Cyprus this August along with young Greeks from Greece, Cyprus and Calabria, Italy. The programme involves cultural activities, team building activities, research into common concerns about the issues of Art, Culture and Cultural Heritage, visits to ecclesiastic monuments and museums, and activities which will foster understanding of various aspects of folk culture (e.g., architecture, professions). The group will be based at the Saint Ioannis Camp at Kalopanayiotis in Troodos. **A full report to come in our Autumn issue!**

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presents

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## We need your news!

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## SCOTTISH HELLENIC SOCIETY GLASGOW

The aim of the Society is to bring together the cultures of SCOTLAND and GREECE. For info on membership and the 2005-2006 programme go to [www.scottishhellenic.org](http://www.scottishhellenic.org)

## Greek School

The Greek School of Glasgow operates within the premises of St. Luke's Cathedral and includes pupils from 6 to 16 years old. In addition to Greek language, pupils are also taught religious history and about the history and geography of Greece & Cyprus. Pupils are presented for the GCSE examinations in Modern Greek and the GCE in Modern Greek or Scottish Standard Grade in Classical Greek.  
**Info Nondas Pitticas 0141 848 3471**

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[cont. from front page]

**The weekend after this the younger kids of the church headed up north to Loch Eil, near Fort William, to the Outward Bound Centre.** This is an awesome building with extensive, beautiful (but midge-infested) grounds and was previously a shooting lodge owned by Cameron clan chief, before its focus as a centre for outdoor sporting activities and team-building exercises. The children spent the first night familiarizing themselves with the building and settling in to their ac-



commodation.

Early the next morning, they were up and raring to go. Fueled up with a full breakfast, and lunch under their arms, they set out into the grounds of the centre, where they were involved in numerous team-reliant activities, such as using just 3 crates to cross a 'lava-stream,' and games requiring

them to communicate without speaking. The kids were successful in all their tasks and this was a good introduction to the challenges ahead of them. In the afternoon, they faced a huge task: to build a raft using just 4 barrels, 6 poles and some rope. They were split into two teams to design a structure for the raft and presented their ideas to the other team. They joined together to decide upon the best design and went down to the shore of Loch Eil to build the structure. After much discussion and alterations, the only thing left to do was to put the raft to the test. So out they went, paddling around the loch and I'm pleased to announce the raft remained intact until it was time to take it apart and head back to the centre for dinner.

There was no opportunity for the children to rest in the evening. Their instructor took them straight outside again for another task: a blind trail. The kids were required to hold on to and follow each other in one long line from the centre, through the nearby trees and around a pre-prepared assault course. 'Easy!' you say? Now consider the fact that they had to do this blindfolded. The children rose to the challenge and

after a few incidents of letting go and losing the route, they triumphed and headed back to the centre and to a good night's sleep.

It was now Sunday morning and so time to pack up and prepare for the return to city-life. Before the drive back to Glasgow, they stopped for a spot of rock-climbing and abseiling at the foot of Ben Nevis. Everyone made a brave attempt at rock-climbing and was introduced to the responsibilities of supporting and b-laying the ropes for another climber. The abseiling proved much more challenging and everyone did well to inch their way down the slope or cheer on from the bottom.

As the children descended from Ben Nevis, so their Outward Bound journey came to an end and they returned to St. Luke's to meet their parents.

So we've had two very successful outdoor adventures this summer for the Hellenic youth of Glasgow. We are very grateful to the Stavros Niarchos Foundation for the experience and the opportunity to partake in these activities, which we would not usually have the chance to do, and thank our Outward Bound instructors for looking after us.

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