

World Challenge Expedition: Borneo

Week 1:

The first week was probably the hardest week of the expedition. We spent a day in Niah Caves, of which we spent both out in the jungle and in the caves. It was a long day's walk out in the hot Borneo sun. We saw various lizards and insects along the way. Once in the caves we were swallowed by the darkness and surrounded by the sound of the bats and swallows that lived there. In the evening we camped in very small tents, of which led to some of us having to sleep outside on the jetty. We also spent a day in Lambir Hills, of which consisted of two days walking in the jungle up and down hills..



Week 2:

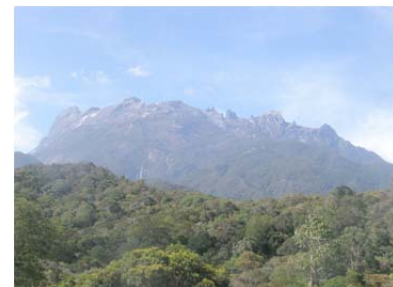


In week 2 we started our project phase in Sepilok. This consisted of building steps for the wardens in order to allow them to patrol the sun bears enclosure. We spent 3 days working on our steps, building 22 in total, whereas the other team only managed to build 21 steps in a week with more team members. We were very proud of our achievement. We then took a visit to the Orang-utan sanctuary, where we saw them being fed. Sadly I had my camera stolen on this day and lost all my pictures of the previous events. We then headed back to Kota Kinabalu, where we spent the following day volunteering our time at a local orphanage; Bukit Harapan. We played with both mental and physically disabled orphans. I made a friend with Angelina, of who had water on the brain and a deficiency in her legs.

Spending time at the orphanage gave me a new look on life; you can do anything you set your mind on, just as long that you believe that you can do it. Seeing Angelina up and walking, even though it must have hurt her to do so, and seeing her smile and enjoy life was just a true pleasure to see.

Week 3:

Week 3 was incredibly difficult; it was the week of climbing Mt Kinabalu. It was the most difficult, but most rewarding things that I have ever done. After getting half way up the mountain, my knees were wrecked (they tend to pop out of the socket when I walk), but I was determined to reach the hut of which we would spend the night before the early rise to walk to the summit. When we reached the hut, it was the most amazing feeling! I really thought I wouldn't be able to make it, as my knees would be a problem. Unfortunately, I was unable to reach the summit, but I was just proud that I had gotten that far! The view from the hut was beautiful, and even though I didn't get to the top, I and another girl (of who got altitude sickness) watched the sunrise. It was beautiful. The walk down was much harder, and incredibly steep. I didn't realise how steep the mountain was until the walk down. The following day, we were all incredibly achy and tired and we were all thankful for a day of rest. However that didn't seem enough. We were off to Crocker Range for our main trek the following day. My knees were swollen and bruised but I knew that I needed to get through the next three days, and then I could relax. I found the trek incredibly hard due to my knee problem, however the team were aware of this issue, and were very supportive. Every step I took I didn't want to take another one, however before I knew it we were at camp and putting up our hammocks. The following day my knees were even more painful, however I was determined not to let them stop me from completing the trek. We completed many river crossings on this day, and I happened to lose my balance on a very slippery rock and fell in! Luckily it was only a shallow river; however I did end up sitting in it. From then on it was a rather soggy walk to camp, of which I set up



my hammock and tried to dry off before helping to make dinner. The following day we only had a short walk to the adventure centre, so I put myself back in my determination mode and we set off. We soon reached our destination and I was thankful that I had time to rest my knees.

Week 4:



Once we were back at the adventure centre, we had a quick review of where our leader would say, “touch someone who’s made you smile”, so then we had to go and touch that person. She went through various things, it wasn’t until she said, “touch someone who your proud of”, and “someone’s whose determined”, where I felt that everybody’s hands were on me. It made me feel so proud of myself, and made me realise how much pain I can put up with. It also made me realise how determined this experience had made me become. The following day was the beginning of our well deserved R&R phase. It started with white water rafting. It was amazing fun; people fell out of the boat when we went over the rapids. I was pushed in at the end as I hadn’t fallen in. There then became the trouble of getting back in the boat. I was soon pushed in and got stuck lying at the bottom of the boat with my legs over my head! This made everyone laugh! Our second day of R&R consisted of going to the Sunday market. After being to the night market in previous weeks, it was nice

to experience their culture in the day, and seeing all the beautiful hand crafted things. We experienced haggling for things, when buying souvenirs.

Overall I have thoroughly enjoyed this experience, as it was truly a once in a life time opportunity. I am extremely grateful to everyone who helped to support me in my fundraising, including my two sponsors, Martek and Jack Petchey. Thank you for allowing me to have this amazing opportunity.

Megan Freeman