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Iceland adventure

(continued from page 1)
It was in February 1966 that the initial meeting took place with the head of the geography department at Shirebrook School Ted Grey, who, supported by a vibrant and charismatic staff from different departments, wanted to put the new comprehensive school on the map with something unheard of in comprehensive schools in those days.

Mr Grey had already been to Iceland and therefore had first-hand experience, but nevertheless a great deal of planning had to be done.

In May 1966, an area was assigned to the group by the Natural History Museum of Iceland.

June saw the approach to patrons Dr Alice Garnett, of the Department of Geography, at Sheffield University and Mr Jack Longland, Derbyshire Director of Education.

The criteria for pupils to be selected for this trip was that they must be fourth, fifth or sixth form pupils of the school, have parental approval and could prove themselves on various training expeditions.

Pupils of mixed abilities, studying various subjects, were eventually chosen.

Next came the funding of the expedition, a total of £2,200 had to be raised, with each member of the party contributing £50.

This does not seem much these days, but when comparing it to today's prices, the figures are quite astronomical.

The holiday's total cost of £2,200 would today be worth almost £29,000. Appeals were made to firms for equipment and food.

Fundraising included the sale of

Christmas cards, a dance and a jumble sale in school, equipment sales and sale of surplus food on return.

Grants were received from the Royal Geographical Society, Derbyshire School Journeys' Association and Derbyshire Education Committee.

With finance sorted and three tons of stores and equipment already in place in Iceland, the party left Shirebrook on 26th July 1967, bound for Reykjavik, and they were going by air (a first for many).

They established their base camp at Langjokull two days later and carried out a reconnaissance of the area.

Each member then began studies on their own specific interest, geomorphology, botany, meteorology, ornithology, art, geology, surveying and English.

One group of six completed the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme Silver Medal Expedition Test, taking three days.

Another group made a survey map of a glacier, one girl went into a cave to write up her experiences and two artists produced painted landscapes of the area.

The botanists took specimens to bring back to school, giving them their Latin botanical names.

Each member of the party compiled a log book, some with very interesting entries.

One of the party had a fall, necessitating four stitches. The cost — one pound, or as the injured wrote, five bob a stitch.

Some of the food was very interesting — rissoles in batter using pilchards, corned beef, dried potato, margarine and army biscuits, and the batter made from

army biscuits, dried milk, dried egg and water. At times they found the Icelanders very hospitable, providing fresh meat, bread and butter — what a relief!

All good things come to an end and after 30 enjoyable, hardworking and at times recreational days (when the pupils played the staff at rounders), the group returned to Shirebrook.

But this was not the end of the story. An initial report was prepared and sent to the Royal Geographical Society, an analysis of fieldwork was made, and an exhibition and lectures in the school theatre were given.

Mr Grey has been happy to report that he knows the whereabouts now of some of the party who accompanied him then . . . Neal Potter is now one of the top exhibition designers in the country; Brian Atkin is vice-chancellor of Kuala Lumpur University; Richard Bottom is a vet in Cumbria; Steven Bidwell is a member of the Environmental Health Department at Bolsover District Council; Peter Martin is a geologist in Singapore, and John Hardwick is a scientist working on protecting aircraft from lightning.

Mr Grey has lost contact with others and also with some of the members of the other five expeditions he led, but he would be happy to reminisce with any who would like to contact him on Mansfield 861027. He has been retired from teaching since 1991, but in 1992 paid another visit to Iceland.

As a past chairman and now secretary of the Young Explorers' Trust, he is still encouraging youngsters to go on challenges in a safe environment.

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MINISTER'S CORNER . . .

The Rev Barbara Greenwood writes for the Shirebrook Newsletter . . .



AS I sit in my study with sunlight streaming through the window, I can hear birdsong.

I have the privilege from time to time of visiting couples to discuss the potential baptism of their new baby.

Like the birds busy building nests and fetching food, new parents are keen to do everything in their power to make their child's life as good and safe and as wonderful as it possibly can be.

And in the joy of that celebration, we sometimes forget that new life comes through pain and struggle.

I also visit families to discuss the funerals of their loved one and sometimes sit with people who are still grieving many years after someone they love has died.

And in the darkness and sorrow, we sometimes forget that the promise of God is to be with us in our suffering — as Jesus was with us on the cross — and afterwards, to bring new life.

There is no new life without pain — and there is no pain without the promise of God's presence and the potential for healing.

As spring follows winter, so joy can come again after tears. If you are caught up in sorrow, for whatever reason, take time to listen to the birdsong and be willing to allow God to heal your heart.

*Rev Barbara Greenwood
Shirebrook Methodist Church*