

BRIAN WARE –

Obituary prepared by Tony Land and Maurice Dybeck

Exploration, in its widest sense, was the driving force behind the life of Brian Ware,

As a geographer, he was driven to explore the physical world of lakes, mountains and glaciers. As a teacher, he explored human relationships, bringing together young people from diverse backgrounds. To reach his ends, he explored relentlessly amongst a wide circle of influential friends to achieve success in what we now term the fields of outdoor education and personal development.

In 1946, after war service in the navy, he was in at the foundation of the Brathay Hall Centre as Deputy to Dick Faithfull-Davies. He had already been involved, in 1940, in youth work, running the Murray Boys' Club in the decaying slums of Whitehaven, where he had come in contact with his future patron and mentor Francis Scott, Chairman of the Provincial Insurance Company and Founder of Brathay. (The 60 year history of Brathay can be found in Dybeck *"A Broad River"* 2005)

At Cambridge his Tutor, Vaughan Lewis, had an interest in glacier movement and the resultant shapes of mountain cwms or corries which, in the Lake District, were now often occupied by tarns. The shape and depths of these tarns could tell much about former glacier movement. Brian, with his youth work links, was able to respond in a very practical way and organise young people to camp at Brathay and then go out to map and sound these often-inaccessible tarns bringing back information of real scientific value. Thus, in 1947, was born the Brathay Exploration Group. (See Ware : *"Brathay Exploring"* 1998. The recent publication *"Tarns of the Central Lake District"* fixes this particular achievement for posterity.)

Brian's main work was in teaching, first at Hertford Grammar School and then as Adult Tutor at Impington Village College. Typically, he was soon diverting the Girls at the nearby Chivers Jam factory from their Day Release studies into residential weeks at Brathay Hall – probably some of Britain's first outdoor education experiences for young workers.

In 1953 he moved to Uppingham to become head of Geography and, later, a Housemaster. From here he would service, voluntarily, a rapidly growing network of colleagues and young explorers to do science-based expeditions in the B.E.G. Brian had little time for committees, relying instead on phone calls, handwritten notes and delegation to leaders and office holders. Significantly, the membership of the Exploration Group was from two sources: schools (whose interest was carefully cultivated) and the best of the young industrial apprentices attending what were now flourishing four-week courses at the Brathay Hall Centre. This "social engineering", very much in tune with the vision of those days, led to benefits on all sides. The

“academics”, from Public and Grammar schools, could be partnered with the equally valuable “practical chaps” from the factory floor. The other essential for the group’s success was Brian’s skill at enlisting scientists with problems that needed solving involving logistical challenges that were within the competence of a well-led group of youngsters. Recognition by and links with Her Majesty’s Schools Inspectorate and the Nature Conservancy were things he greatly valued. In return, Brathay could find itself quoted approvingly in government reports long before most other organisations had entered this field.

Typical of Brian’s wide concerns and skill at blending together a diversity of needs was his reaction to the news, in 1955, that the remote island of Foula might have to be evacuated as it was no longer a viable community. An agreement to make it an expedition venue (for fieldwork coupled with discreet help to the islanders) led to over 90 expeditions taking place over the next half century. These not only boosted island morale: the field studies led to the production of a valuable body of Reports.

In 1966 Brian moved north to become Principal of Brathay and its new third arm: the Field Study Centre. At that time there was no field centre in the Lake District and this, with its distinctive Brathay “personal development” approach, fulfilled a real need for schools and university students over the next 20 years.

While at Brathay, Brian pioneered something equally significant: the foundation of the Eagle Crag base as a centre for the Intermediate Treatment of young offenders and young people at risk. This was later to become a centre for youth courses of all kinds using the outdoors and the sharply-focussed intervention techniques at which Brathay staff excelled.

Brian was also responsible for introducing revolutionary ideas into Brathay’s work with people of all ages from industry and commerce. It was his initiative that brought Professor John Adair into the Brathay fold. This connection, and the valuable links to the Industrial (Welfare) Society opened the way to Brathay becoming a brand leader in this whole new field of Outdoor Management Development.

Meanwhile the Exploration Group went from strength to strength with 15 – 20 expeditions a year and around 300 participants. Brian’s insistence on high standards and good reporting meant that most of their work, apart from its excitement and challenge, was of scientific value: points recognised in 1997 when the Royal Geographical Society awarded the Group its Special Medal “*for 50 years of service to youth exploration and adventurous activities*”.

Brian always felt that the skills acquired and the benefits enjoyed by the Exploration Group should be made more widely available. Their “*Handbook for Expeditions*” (1971) was a first step to helping others and the following year, with the support of the Royal Geographical Society, Brian masterminded, with (Sir) Martin Holdgate, the

launch of the Young Explorers' Trust. In 1980, Brian pressed for a further development when YET and the RGS founded the Expedition Advisory Centre to take on similar work for universities and adult groups.

Brian retired from Brathay in 1983 with a well-deserved OBE, only to expand into new fields and to cultivate usefully his many connections among the Great and the Good. In Young Explorers' Trust work he concentrated on MOBEX – an offshoot designed to help youngsters in deprived areas experience in small ways the challenge of expeditions. Then, in 1986, he was Secretary to the gathering at St George's House, Windsor which produced, under Lord Hunt: *"In Search of Adventure"*. Over the next 20 years he was a key player in what became the Foundation for Outdoor Adventure encouraging wider opportunities for all to take part in challenging activities.

Brian always had a strong belief in the need to encourage young people from less privileged areas of society and this led to his close association with boys' clubs in Whitehaven and Corby, the development of MOBEX and work with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and young offenders. With the Award Scheme, his handbook *"Exploration Resource Pack"* did much to steer young people into geographical exploration during their expeditions

Some might have perceived Brian as a modest retiring man not given to public show. Underneath was a clear vision that often went beyond that of those around him. With his many contacts and quiet determination he would beaver away so that success rarely eluded him. He could be exasperating, and those who worked with him did not always share his vision. But few people have achieved as much as Brian in this growing field of Exploration, in its widest sense.

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MWD 9/3/07 (+ AEL 2/4/07) Minor tidyups 13/4/07 7/5/08 28/9/09