



**SCIENTIFIC  
EXPLORATION  
SOCIETY**

# **SCIENTIFIC EXPLORER**

## **Annual Review 2024**

Sir Ranulph Fiennes Bt OBE, winner of our 2024  
Lifetime Achievement award (photo by Graham Trott).

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is a  
British  
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charity  
supporting  
the  
next  
generation  
of  
scientific  
explorers.*

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# Dates for your 2025 Diary

DATE/TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
Tuesday 28 January (6.30pm for 7pm start)	<b>Explorer Series</b> William de Laszlo – <i>GB Row Challenge</i>	Hollywood Arms (Chelsea)
Wednesday 29 January (6.30pm)	<b>Advisory Board Drinks Reception</b>	London
Monday 24 February (6pm)	<b>American Friends of SES Drinks Reception</b> – hosted by Peter and June Felix	Miami Beach (USA)
Tuesday 25 February (6.30pm for 7pm start)	<b>Explorer Series</b> Isaac Kenyan – <i>A World-First Eco-Adventure: Uncovering Climate Solutions</i>	Hollywood Arms (Chelsea)
Wednesday 26 March (6pm AGM, 6.30pm for 7pm start)	<b>Annual General Meeting and Explorer Series</b> Ollie Phillips – <i>The 7 Pillars of Optimism: Foundations for Leadership and Success</i>	The Park Tower Hotel (Knightsbridge)
Sunday 27 April	<b>London Marathon</b> Team SES	London
Tuesday 29 April (6.30pm for 7pm start)	<b>Explorer Series</b> Tom Allen – <i>The Transcaucasian Trail</i>	Hollywood Arms (Chelsea)
Tuesday 27 May (6.30pm for 7pm start)	<b>Explorer Series</b> Rosa Vásquez Espinoza – <i>The Hidden World of Amazonian Stingless Bees</i>	Hollywood Arms (Chelsea)
Tuesday 24 June (6.30pm for 7pm start)	<b>Explorer Series</b> Sue Sandford – <i>Disaster Recovery</i>	Hollywood Arms (Chelsea)
Tuesday 30 September (6.30pm for 7pm start)	<b>Explorer Series</b> Daniel Grace – <i>Livingstone Revisited</i>	Hollywood Arms (Chelsea)
Wednesday 15 October (6.45pm for 7.30pm start)	<b>Oscars of Exploration Presentation Evening</b> – proudly sponsored by <b>RSK</b>	Royal College of Surgeons (London)
Tuesday 28 October (6.30pm for 7pm start)	<b>Explorer Series</b> Mark Agnew – <i>There Will Be Headwinds</i>	Hollywood Arms (Chelsea)
Tuesday 25 November (6.45pm online for 7pm start)	<b>Explorer Series</b> Emi Koch – <i>The Quest for Lordfish</i>	Virtual Talk delivered via ZOOM WEBINAR

**\*Avoid missing out by FOLLOWING us on EVENTBRITE and get notified about all our events as and when they are launched!**

## **SES EXPLORER SERIES**

*proudly powered by*



We are hugely grateful to Optimist Performance for proudly powering our Explorer Series. Optimist Performance was founded in 2014 by Ollie Phillips, who is a member of our Advisory Board.

Optimist Performance is dedicated to helping individuals, teams and organisations achieve their full potential. Their team of high-performance coaches, leaders and experts, known as the 'Eternal Optimists', drive lasting behavioural change through tailored approaches that include Leadership Development, Executive Coaching, Data-Driven Diagnostics, Extraordinary Experiences and Optimistic Talks and Events.

You can connect with them by visiting:

***[optimistperformance.com](https://www.optimistperformance.com)***

*Please  
visit us on  
**EVENTBRITE\***  
for full details  
and tickets  
to **ALL** our  
events.*



# Message from the Chair

Dear Members,

It is a great pleasure to report on another, even more successful, year for the Society.

To crown it all we are delighted to welcome HRH Prince Edward, Duke of Edinburgh, as our first Royal Patron. Over many years and expeditions, we have been fortunate to have had support from His Majesty King Charles, who, as Prince of Wales, inspired Operations Drake and Raleigh, Prince Philip, who supported the Darien Gap and Zaire River expeditions, HRH the Duke of Gloucester and the current Prince and Princess of Wales who all participated in Operation Raleigh. Until now the Society has never had a Royal Patron. It is therefore most encouraging to know that HRH Prince Edward will take an active interest and participation in our affairs and help support our work in exploration, conservation and protection of the environment, issues that are close to his heart. We are very pleased to

welcome him, and indeed HRH the Duchess of Edinburgh, to the Society.

Our programmes are becoming more and more popular as we reach a wider audience through our mailings, newsletter and social media. Our inspiring and fun Explorer Series, now held at the Hollywood Arms in Chelsea and proudly powered by Ollie Phillips and his firm Optimist Performance, are recorded and available to those who are unable to attend in person.

Our exciting new website displays the impact the work the SES is having on discovering, researching and conserving the planet and has a growing library of videos and reports from all the expeditions it has supported since 2011 via our Explorer Awards programme.

Our Oscars of Exploration presentation evening at the Royal College of Surgeons in October reached a new pinnacle of success with a record number of honorary

and grant awards. It was also the first time that special awards were made for young individuals from less advantaged backgrounds to participate in Raleigh International programmes in Costa Rica, South Africa and Brunei. Thanks to David Taylor-Smith and Jeremy Fish for raising support for these grants among Raleigh Alumni.

Our sincere thanks go to Tim Mitchell, President of the Royal College of Surgeons for again allowing us to hold the Oscars in their beautiful library, to RSK our headline sponsor, Base Camp Food our supporting sponsor and to Lucy Constable and Raleigh International for their participation and help in launching the new SES Raleigh Explorer Award.

The Oscars were started in 2011 and have grown in strength and breadth each year under the direction of Diane Allen who has been chair of our Awards Committee. Our grateful thanks go to Diane and her wonderful team for their excellent work – in

particular our Explorer Awards Manager, Nikki Skinner, and Ed Cooper who will take over from Diane as chair. A special word of thanks also to Preet Chandi and Reza Pakravan who so professionally co-hosted our Oscars this year and introduced the extraordinary list of awardees which included famous explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes (a veteran member of SES) for Lifetime Achievement, to our youngest awardee ever, 14-year-old Jack Dalton, from the USA, for Young Scientific Explorer and his work with saving Orangutans in Indonesia. Jack's confident acceptance speech was remarkable for a person of his age. For the complete Oscars programme and list of awardees please visit our website.

Our Advisory Board has grown in strength in the past year with the addition of exceptional individuals who have made their mark in exploration and other fields relevant to SES. These include: Benedict Allen, whose expeditions are known for their lengthy immersions with remote tribes; Damon de Laszlo, founder of the Bradshaw Foundation which initiated the Rock Art Network to promote and conserve rock art (The de Laszlo Foundation is the generous sponsor of the John Blashford-

Snell Explorer honorary award); Professor Alexander Finnen, who writes on the management of post-conflict and its impact on nature and cultural heritage; "TJ" Halbertsma, financier, philanthropist, author and adventurer, Colonel Martin Romilly OBE, a founder member of the SES and Daniel Leeb, founding Partner of the Iceland Space Agency.

New initiatives are underway for 2025 including a 'meet our explorers' podcast series featuring our stellar Advisory Board and other outstanding members of the Society; the initiation of the *American Friends of the SES* to be launched in February with a reception in Miami Beach attended by Colonel John Blashford-Snell CBE, our lifetime President and co-founder, and the launch of a "legacy" campaign to encourage inclusion of the SES in members' Wills thereby helping to sustain the Society for future generations. Please feel free to call or email me about this critically important programme at [pmfelix9@gmail.com](mailto:pmfelix9@gmail.com).

SES waves the flag for expeditions as a fundamental way to explore the planet and report back on its condition. Our explorers risk personal safety and make large

sacrifices to pursue their passion for exploration just as the great explorers of the past. SES is not only a community of explorers, and those interested in exploration, but exists to provide new expeditions with financial support and advice and also to highlight the contribution that exploration can make to understanding and protecting our planet. Your financial support is fundamental to our success. Henrietta, our CEO or I will be delighted to discuss ideas with you and to encourage your participation in our ambitious plans for the future.

Finally, our thanks go to our Council, our Advisory Board, our Volunteers and especially our wonderful team, led by Henrietta who somehow, with minimal resources, manages to organise our growing list of activities and expand our footprint in the world of exploration.

With kind regards,

**Peter M Felix, CBE**  
**Chair**  
[pmfelix9@gmail.com](mailto:pmfelix9@gmail.com)

## Patron's Circle

As a small charity that relies on the generosity of its community, we hope that you might consider providing a legacy for SES in your Will.

We are very sensitive to the personal nature of such a decision which must be influenced by the needs of family and others with a claim on your loyalty and life experiences.

However, we make the request knowing that participation in exploration and adventure can have a great impact on people's lives, especially when experienced at a young age.

Thus, we know from anecdotes and personal histories how much participating in Operations Drake and Raleigh has influenced lives and indeed careers.

Other expeditions organised by SES over the past 50 years have provided life-changing opportunities to

those with a willingness to test themselves and, in the process, give back to others and the planet, often in remote regions of the world.

We have created a special community for those willing to confirm a legacy which, with the consent of our Patron, HRH Prince Edward, Duke of Edinburgh, we shall name 'Patron's Circle'.

Membership will attract VIP invitations and special recognition. We recognise that decisions of this kind require consultation and reflection. Please feel free to get in touch with either our **Chair, Peter Felix** ([pmfelix9@gmail.com](mailto:pmfelix9@gmail.com)) or our **Founder, John Blashford-Snell** ([jbs@ses-explore.org](mailto:jbs@ses-explore.org)) to discuss your interest, both of whom have committed to provide SES legacies in their Wills.

We hope that you may consider joining the Patron's Circle in ensuring that SES has a sound and financially viable future for the next generation.

# Oscars of Exploration

According to those who attended the evening, *“this was the best Oscars ever”!* Sincere thanks to the Royal College of Surgeons for inviting us once again to hold our event in The Lumley Library and to our headline sponsor, RSK and supporting sponsor, Base Camp Food. Thanks also to our wonderful co-hosts, Advisory Board members, Preet Chandi MBE (also 2023 Explorer of the Year), and Reza Pakravan (also 2019 Neville Shulman Explorer), for doing such a marvellous job introducing everyone. Huge appreciation to all our winners, supporters, presenters, volunteers, Advisory Board, Council, members, and the incredible team at The Royal College of Surgeons. Watching the video of the evening (made by filmmaker Ty Rediff) is a **MUST** (visit our YouTube channel). There is also a photo album (taken by photographer Frances Eyre)...below are a few of them which I hope will encourage you to look at them all.



Sir Charles Blois Explorer, Elic Weitzel, with Amber Carter, who won the award in 2022.



Elodie Sandford Explorer, Mirali Shukla, in between her award supporters Paul Sandford and his sister Sue.



Judith Heath Explorer, Fraser Cook, with Sue Sljivik, Founder of RSK, the headline sponsor of the Oscars.



Neville Shulman Explorer, Gerson Ferrer, with his award supporter Neville Shulman CBE.



O'Hea Explorer, Daniel Grace, with his award supporter Janie Corbisiero.



SES Explorer, Alyssa Sargent, with one of her award supporters, Kate Coleridge.



Young Scientific Explorer, Jack Dalton, with his sponsors Peter and June Felix.



Pioneer with Purpose, Dr Paula Kahumbu, with Tim Mitchell, President of the Royal College of Surgeons.



A snapshot taken during the award presentations in the stunning Lumley Library.



John Blashford-Snell Explorer, Ella Al-Shamahi with John Blashford-Snell!



SES Raleigh Explorer Award winners with their supporters.



Our brilliant co-hosts, Advisory Board members Preet Chandi and Reza Pakravan.



SES CEO Henrietta Thorpe and SES Explorer Awards Manager Nikki Skinner.

# Explorer Award Winners

## SIR CHARLES BLOIS EXPLORER AWARD FOR SCIENCE & ADVENTURE

**ELIC WEITZEL**

Ulqin Archaeological Project (Montenegro)

£5,000 grant and the title *'2024 Sir Charles Blois Explorer'*

Elic is a human ecologist and archaeologist who studies the complex relationships between people and their environments. He has conducted research in both North America and Europe focusing on how human population change and diverse economic systems impact the sustainable use and management of natural resources.

Elic's expedition is an archaeological field survey expedition taking place in the Ulqin Municipality of southern Montenegro. His team will work to locate, identify, and document cultural heritage sites through field survey, drone imagery and terrestrial LiDAR technology to better understand the history of this region.

**Expedition Dates:** 1 June to 30 June 2025



## ELODIE SANDFORD EXPLORER AWARD FOR AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHY

**MIRALI SHUKLA**

Expedition Palawan (Philippines)

£7,100 grant and the title *'2024 Elodie Sandford Explorer'*

Mirali is an interdisciplinary researcher whose work focuses on the connections between people and nature, and the conflict and peace dynamics that are related to these interactions. She is passionate about the communication of science through art and has conducted research in countries from the Arctic to the South Pacific.

Mirali's expedition will investigate vulnerabilities in the socio-ecological systems of Palawan. The expedition objectives are: to highlight the overlooked impact of in-migration on ecosystem carrying capacity and to get an accurate abundance estimate for a small, critically endangered subpopulation of Irrawaddy dolphins. This expedition will offer baseline data for informed decision-making and future conservation efforts amidst the fast-changing realities of in-migration, species movement and climate shifts.

**Expedition Dates:** 1 March to 15 May 2025



## JUDITH HEATH EXPLORER AWARD FOR BOTANY & RESEARCH

**FRASER COOK**

Ornamental Plants in Kapuas Hulu (INDONESIA)

£5,250 grant and the title *'2024 Judith Heath Explorer'*

Fraser is pursuing his PhD in Biodiversity Management in collaboration with The Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology at the University of Kent and IPB University in Bogor, Indonesia. His research in Indonesia focuses on botany and the conservation of ornamental plants across different islands.

Fraser's expedition in the remote and biodiverse region of Kapuas Hulu will conduct the first extensive mapping of ornamental plant collecting sites, species habitats and rural nurseries in this region, in parallel with an e-commerce trade analysis. This unique approach will enhance the plant conservation and horticultural trade discourse. By integrating indigenous and conservation science with a rigorous systemic assessment of species distribution in forests and semi-wild nurseries, including in-situ community conservation and sustainability assessments.

**Expedition Dates:** 14 April to 15 August 2025



## NEVILLE SHULMAN EXPLORER AWARD FOR EXPEDITION FILMMAKING GERSON FERRER

Looking for the Lost Monkey of the Clouds (Peru)

£7,000 grant and the title '2024 Neville Shulman Explorer'

Gerson is a Peruvian social communicator, photographer and conservation practitioner specialising in the design and implementation of community-based conservation projects and participatory cinema. He leads the communication and education team at Yunkawasi, where he implements strategies for conservation, working closely with protected areas and local communities.

Alongside local Andean communities, Gerson's expedition will explore the cloud forests of the Tropical Andes in Peru to search for the endemic and critically endangered Yellow-tailed woolly monkey.

Documenting the expedition is part of the communications campaign 'Stand-up for the Yellow-tailed Woolly Monkey', which aims to highlight the importance of this primate, promote the creation of new protected areas and engage audiences at both local and national levels in conservation efforts.

**Expedition Dates:** 1 March to 31 March 2025

*\*Neville Shulman Explorer Award for Expedition Filmmaking is now ten years old! Sincere thanks to Neville Shulman CBE for his incredible generosity not just for this award but also all the support he continues to give the Society in every aspect of its activities.*



## O'HEA EXPLORER AWARD FOR OCCUPATIONAL & ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

DANIEL GRACE

Livingstone Revisited 2024 (Zambia)

£5,000 grant and the title '2024 O'Hea Explorer'

Daniel, a GP based in South Wales, embarked on the Livingstone Revisited Expedition, a 2,000km journey through the remote heart of Zambia. He is no stranger to adventure and has provided medical cover across the globe, including in the deserts of Jordan, the frozen Canadian Arctic and remote Pacific islands.

Daniel's ambitious expedition aimed to transform healthcare in some of Zambia's most isolated communities, using the Virtual Doctor's telemedicine application. Solar lanterns and chargers were distributed to ensure these clinics can stay operational during frequent power outages. His expedition also included a critical educational component, and the team delivered pre-hospital snakebite and trauma training programmes for local healthcare providers.

**Expedition Dates:** 12 September to 2 October 2024



## SES EXPLORER AWARD FOR INSPIRATIONAL & SCIENTIFIC TRAILBLAZING

ALYSSA SARGENT

Hummingbird's Eye View (Colombia)

£5,000 grant and the title '2024 SES Explorer'

Alyssa is a wildlife biologist who specialises in applying tiny electronic devices to study hummingbirds. She is equally passionate about devising creative ways to share the wonder of the world's smallest birds with people everywhere – such as with Hummingbird Sugar Rush, her ongoing board game project. A 4th-year PhD candidate at the University of Washington, Alyssa conducts all of her fieldwork in Colombia.

Alyssa's expedition to the Colombian Andes will explore the lives of hummingbirds in an age of escalating, human-driven scarcities. Working alongside and learning from the local community, she and her international team of experts will leverage novel technologies like tiny tracking devices and hummingbird-mounted cameras to learn what makes hummingbirds 'tick' when they're surrounded on all sides by competitors.

**Expedition Dates:** 1 August to 20 September 2025



# Honorary Award Winners

*Our Honorary Awards recognise and celebrate those individuals who have achieved great things, and whose passion, determination, and grit are an inspiration to us all. Meet this year's incredible winners who certainly meet the criteria.*

## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

*Proudly sponsored by Christopher Wright FRGS*

### SIR RANULPH FIENNES Bt OBE

Ran is a British explorer, writer, poet and co-creator of Sir Ranulph Fiennes Great British Rum, who holds several endurance records.

He was raised in South Africa, served in the British Army for eight years, including a period on counterinsurgency service while attached to the Army of the Sultanate of Oman.

Ran embarked upon his first expedition in 1969 with the help of SES – a journey by hovercraft up the White Nile River that began in eastern Sudan and ended at Lake Victoria in southern Uganda.

The following year he left the military and married Virginia (“Ginny”) Pepper, whom he had met as a child and who, until her death in 2004, would be his collaborator in launching a series of record-breaking expeditions that kept them ahead of their international rivals for three decades.

Their expeditions include a trip to Jostedal Glacier in Norway (1970), a first north-south traverse of British Columbia, Canada, via water (1971) and by a northward trek into the Arctic (1977).

These expeditions were all in preparation for his circumpolar expedition – the Transglobe expedition – a journey of three years around the globe on its polar axis using only surface transport making him the only man alive to have done this.

In May 2009, at the age of 65, he reached the summit of Mount Everest. Via his expeditions and endurance achievements, Ran has raised more than £20 million for charity.

[ranulphiennes.com](http://ranulphiennes.com)

## PIONEER WITH PURPOSE

### DR PAULA KAHUMBU

Paula is a distinguished Kenyan conservationist and wildlife filmmaker renowned for her work in environmental education and advocacy.

As the CEO of WildlifeDirect, she has spearheaded initiatives such as “Hands Off Our Elephants,” driving significant policy changes in Kenya.

An award-winning filmmaker, her documentaries, including National Geographic’s “Secrets of the Elephants”, have garnered international acclaim.

Paula is also a National Geographic Explorer and a passionate advocate for youth engagement in conservation, fostering a new generation of environmental stewards across Africa. Her dedication to preserving wildlife and empowering communities makes her a prominent figure in global conservation efforts.

[wildlifedirect.org](http://wildlifedirect.org)



## YOUNG SCIENTIFIC EXPLORER

*Proudly sponsored by Peter and June Felix*

### JACK DALTON

Jack is a fourteen year-old animal activist, public speaker, author, educational YouTuber and fundraiser by the name Kid Conservationist.

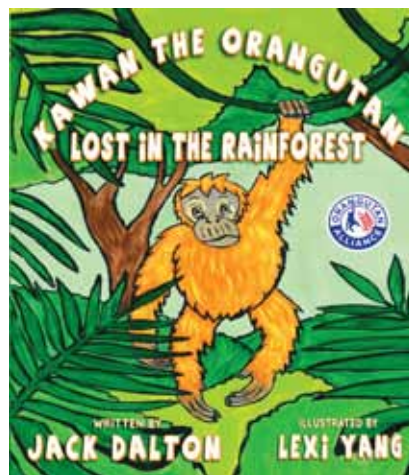


His goal is to get orangutans off the endangered species list and to protect the environment through the power of education, inspiration and action.

Jack has raised over \$40,000, helped to plant over 15,000 trees in Indonesia and gained over 1.25 million views on YouTube from 143 countries.

His book, *Kawan The Orangutan, Lost In The Rainforest* (available to buy in the US from [kidconservationist.com/shop](http://kidconservationist.com/shop)) has sold over 4,000 copies. For every book sold, a tree is planted in the rainforest critical to orangutan survival. Please email [kidconservationist@gmail.com](mailto:kidconservationist@gmail.com) to purchase bulk orders outside the US.

[kidconservationist.com](http://kidconservationist.com)



## JOHN BLASHFORD-SNELL EXPLORER\*

*Proudly sponsored by The de Laszlo Foundation*

### ELLA AL-SHAMAH

Ella is a National Geographic Explorer, palaeoanthropologist, evolutionary biologist...and stand-up comic. Her debut book *The Handshake: A Gripping History* (Profile Books) is a Times and Sunday Times Book of the Year and covers the history and anthropology of the handshake.

She holds a BSc in Genetics from University College London, an MSc in Taxonomy and Biodiversity from Imperial College London/Natural History Museum and is currently undertaking a PhD in Neanderthal rates of evolution at University College London.

Ella is an expert in her field, specialising in Neanderthals and caves. She can be often found on expeditions in hostile, disputed and unstable territories.

[instagram.com/ella\\_alshamahi](https://www.instagram.com/ella_alshamahi)



*\*This award was formerly known as 'SES Explorer of the Year'. We changed it this year to 'John Blashford-Snell Explorer' which we feel more closely reflects the essence of this award; a modern-day explorer, who echoes the same grit, determination, and integrity as our Founder, John Blashford-Snell himself.*



Find out more at:  
[thewildernessmedic.com](http://thewildernessmedic.com)

# The Livingstone Revisited Expedition (Zambia)

*By 2024 O’Hea Explorer, Daniel Grace*

The Livingstone Revisited 2024 Expedition was an exciting multidisciplinary project linking telemedicine, historical adventure and education to explore some of the challenges in accessing healthcare in Zambia. Working alongside the Ministry of Health, our 3,500km journey onboarded new clinics to the Virtual Doctors telemedicine platform whilst providing solar lighting and charging capabilities to rural health posts.

The Virtual Doctors charity use a bespoke mobile app to connect isolated health centres in rural Zambia with volunteer doctors, based predominantly in the UK. I have been privileged to be the charity’s volunteer medical director since 2020, and to date we have onboarded more than 270 clinics within Zambia, which serve around 2.5 million people with no direct access to a doctor.

The expedition’s origins can be traced back to the weekly meetings that took place between myself and Mr Huw Jones, the charity’s founder, during the COVID pandemic. Like many not-for-profit organisations, the pandemic was a challenging time, with many funding streams being cut and understandably diverted to focus on COVID. Whilst discussing our contingency plans, we became aware of the need to re-visit some of the facilities we supported, to better understand the challenges that they faced. For myself, this was very important, as despite having worked in low resource settings, I had never been to Zambia. As we started planning our route, we noticed the historical link with Dr David Livingstone and some of his journeys. We coined the phrase “From Scottish missionary to digital missionaries” which became the expedition’s tagline. Rather than being religious missionaries, we would spread access

to healthcare through technology. Zambia is roughly the same size as France, Belgium and the UK put together. We needed to balance our aim of visiting clinics, against the fact that we were only going to be in Zambia for three weeks. We settled on a 3500km route that would skirt around the corridor of the DRC in the North, take us within touching distance of Malawi and Mozambique, and finish adjacent to Zimbabwe in Livingstone on the Victoria Falls.



The Expedition Route.

5am on a dry and dusty September morning saw the expedition team

wake bleary-eyed, ready to head up the Great North Road, towards Central Province and Chitambo. As dawn was breaking, we packed our tents and loaded our gear into the vehicles. This, combined with a healthy portion of freeze-dried granola, would become somewhat of a daily ritual. Large trucks hauling their loads lined the roads out of Lusaka, and we made slow progress over the often-melted tarmac.



One of our Landcruisers "Sticky" outside Game rural health centre.

At Chitambo we ran our first trauma training session at the main district hospital, which was founded in memory of Dr. David Livingstone who died nearby. The hospital was staffed by Scottish medical missionaries for many years until it became a Zambian Government hospital in the 1970s.

We ran a total of three trauma sessions for 47 participants, which covered a range of topics, including primary survey, bleeding control, improvised tourniquets and pelvic binders. These sessions were a two-way learning process, and it was sobering to hear about the challenges in managing road traffic collisions and animal-related trauma with limited resources. We taught participants how to disseminate this knowledge to other clinicians, police and lay-people, who are often the first people on scene, and this forms part of an ongoing project within Zambia.



Running a trauma training session at Kakumbi clinic.

It was time to swap tarmac for dirt tracks across the southern most section of the Great Rift Valley to reach communities living in proximity to the South Luangwa, a 9,050 km<sup>2</sup> national park. This was our longest day of driving with a 14-hour journey to descend the valley escarpment and reach our campsite. Sticky and Dusty, our two Landcruisers, did us proud. Later that night, a young bull elephant wandered through camp, feeding on the seed pods of an acacia tree next to us, and we woke to see crocodiles and hippos happily relaxing in the Luangwa River just 50 metres from our tents.

Over the course of our journey, we onboarded 60 new clinicians to consult using our telemedicine platform, giving them access to specialist medical advice, all through their smartphones, completely free of charge. Evidence

of climate change and its impact was ubiquitous. Zambia generates much of its energy from the hydroelectric dam on Lake Kariba, the world's largest artificial lake, which is only 13% full. It has been suggested that up to five years of normal rainfall may be required to restore these levels, and power rationing is mandated on a daily basis to try and reduce this power deficit. Clinicians described using mobile phone torches to manage emergencies and deliver babies overnight, and there were also challenges with maintaining connectivity and keeping devices charged. We distributed 331 solar lanterns during the expedition, some of which had built in charging capabilities to help mitigate some of these issues.



Wilson onboarding a new clinic.

Towards the end of the expedition, we ran a snakebite training pilot session. This took place in a deep rural community of Zimba district and was a huge success. Marcel, from our partner Snake Safety Zambia, has just authored the new guidelines for the management of snakebite in Zambia, and we look forward to this continued partnership.

Mentoring and developing the next generation of expedition leaders was something that I wanted to build into the project. We were joined by two expedition interns, Kat Green, a junior doctor based in Glasgow, and Keira Lockie, a student paramedic from Nottingham. They became valued members of the team and were hugely enthusiastic. The mentoring aspect of the internship will continue with ongoing support and access to the team moving forwards. For myself, organising and leading the expedition was a huge personal learning experience, and I learnt so much about leadership and managing a newly formed multi-cultural team. Thanks must be given to the Scientific Exploration Society, the O'Hea Family, our partners and sponsors, and everyone who supported us through our Go Fund Me page. The expedition would not have been possible without their kind and generous support.

**Thank you to our partners:**

*The Virtual Doctors, The Ministry of Health Zambia, Solight Design, On Call Africa, Snake Safety Zambia, Proton Dx*

**Thank you to our sponsors:**

*Scientific Exploration Society, EMATS, Micropharm, MERE, Grayl, Wildcross, Nomad-Masta, Prometheus Medical International, Barbet Zambia, Lomo, Cell AED, Hypesware, Pioneer Camp, Kasanka Trust, Eagles Rest Resort, Croc Valley Camp, Spencerville Church, New Hope Church, Suffishent, Kenton Dental*

# News from our Explorers

## Elic Weitzel – 2024 Sir Charles Blois Explorer

Elic spent several weeks in the field in Montenegro this past summer, conducting archaeological survey work in the Ulqin Municipality. His team identified multiple archaeological sites in the region that were previously unknown, dating from the Bronze Age to the Ottoman period. With help from the Scientific Exploration Society through the Sir Charles Blois Explorer Award, he will be returning to Montenegro in 2025 to conduct additional archaeological reconnaissance work, specifically targeting the mountainous areas in the north of the Municipality.



Elic in the field in southern Montenegro holding a colubrid snake skin found while surveying a rocky clearing for archaeological artefacts.

## Reza Saputra – 2023 Elodie Sandford Explorer

From February 19 to March 10, 2024, Reza led an exceptional team on an orchid exploration in the South Tamrau Mountain Nature Reserve, West Papua, Indonesia, specifically near Asai Dua Village in the Testega District. The site, located within one of West Papua's most remote conservation areas, presented both unique challenges and rewards. Reaching the research area involved navigating through unexpected obstacles – from a 4WD vehicle stuck in deep mud to river crossings without bridges.



A close-up photo of *Cryptostylis arachnites* (Blume) Hassk taken by Reza while on his Bird's Head Peninsula Orchids expedition (West Papua, Indonesia 2024).

Heavy rains added further difficulty, causing landslides, rockslides, and floods. Due to its inaccessibility, this location had never been visited by botanists before.

The team was captivated by the untouched, pristine environment, an ideal habitat for orchids. This

expedition turned out to be extraordinary, leading to the documentation of approximately 214 species of native orchids, 124 of which were in bloom. Among the many significant findings:

- 28 orchids recorded as new for the Bird's Head Peninsula.
- 14 orchids were photographed for the very first time.
- 15 orchids were rediscovered after more than 50 years.
- 8 orchids are suspected to be new to science.

One particularly notable discovery was a population of *Macodes pulcherrima*, a species not seen in over 115 years. This finding represents a new distributional record for Indonesia, and for the first time, the species has been photographed in the wild. Rudolf Schlechter, the renowned New Guinea orchid taxonomist, once described *M. pulcherrima* as the most magnificent leaf orchid he had encountered. Before Reza's discovery, it had only been recorded once in Madang, Papua New Guinea, in September 1909.

Reza is now preparing several publications based on the expedition, including scientific manuscripts describing new species and a book on the orchids of the Bird's Head Peninsula in collaboration with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Preliminary results from the expedition have already been shared through an oral presentation at Indonesian Biodiversity Week 2024 in Jakarta – satellite event of the World Species Congress, IUCN – and a scientific poster presented in Bali. Reza has also used data from the expedition to assess the conservation status of some species for the IUCN Red List.

## Dewi Lestari – 2023 Judith Heath Explorer

Dewi has finished the Rafflesia Expedition in Teluk Sumbang, Berau, Kalimantan Timur, Indonesia. From the Rafflesia expedition, four populations of Rafflesia consisting of 33 living individuals in various stages: 15 copulae, 11 bractea, two perigones, nine post-bloom and five fruits were found. There were ten rotten brakteas and one rotten copulae. These populations were found at an elevation of 200-300 meters above sea level, in highly shaded conditions, with relatively high temperatures and humidity. The soil at this level was quite acidic and very moist.

Two Rafflesia species were found in the perigone stage and were severely predated, with some organs starting to rot, and did not reach the blooming stage, preventing a morphological identification. But DNA samples also have been collected as a backup.

Sixty-six specimens are to be collected to be conserved at Purwodadi Botanic Garden (including the host of Rafflesia, *Tetrastigma* species and association plants that are potentially ornamental plants). Dewi and her team also collected *Mangifera pajang*, an endemic mango species with a vulnerable conservation status.



Dewi and her team observing Rafflesia Habitat in Teluk Sumbang, Berau Kalimantan Timur (Indonesia).

Currently, Dewi is doing numerous analyses on field samples and preparing drafts of scientific papers based on her findings. She is also preparing a manuscript to be presented at an international symposium at the end of 2024. She has also successfully acclimated the hosts of Rafflesia collected from Teluk Sumbang in Purwodadi Botanical Gardens. Two species of the hosts have survived. After the Rafflesia expedition, Dewi undertook another expedition, also in Kalimantan Timur. She is preparing two more expeditions, in Kalimantan Barat and Java, Indonesia, at the end of the year.

### Nat Knowles – 2023 Neville Shulman Explorer

Following her Neville Shulman Explorer expedition, Kayapo Defenders of the Amazon in Brazil, Nat has completed her doctorate and has moved into working full-time with the Kayapo Project in the Brazilian Amazon.



Kayapo Forest Team has a snack of fresh caught and barbequed piranha and traditionally made farinha on a wild banana leaf platter. Photo by Marcos Hlacc (Kayapo Indigenous Territory, Brazil 2023).

Based off the success and support of the SES grant, the Kayapo youth Forest Team has grown into a fully-fledged education and training program where Kayapo Indigenous youth are using citizen science, film, and photography to document and protect the incredible biodiversity within their territory as well as their traditional ecological knowledge, practices and livelihoods. This past summer 40 Kayapo participated in this program, with many new faces getting the opportunity to use cameras, fly drones and set camera traps for the first time!

Nat is also currently in post-production of her Neville Shulman Explorer short film which will be released shortly. She and the Forest Team are also preparing for cross territorial expeditions to document more of the cultural and natural heritage of the interior of Kayapo Indigenous Territory.

Beyond the Forest Team, Nat is helping to run an undergraduate and graduate-level field course and eco-tourism lodge in Kayapo Indigenous Territory. The Kayapo youth Forest Team actively participates in these programs

as guides and interpreters, creating a rich space for knowledge exchange. For those interested in exploring and learning with the Kayapo Indigenous community members about their land, culture and their fight to protect their territory, please reach out to Nat ([natlbknowles.com](http://natlbknowles.com)), as she loves bringing more explorers into the incredible Amazon rainforest!

### Sarah Tubbs – 2023 SES Explorer

Over 2024, Sarah planned and embarked on an incredible conservation journey by leading the expedition Conserving Cambodian Cetaceans. Once funding was secured (after a lot of hard work in 2023!), 2024 became the year to plan. This involved recruiting an expedition team, sourcing equipment, organizing on-site logistics, conducting detailed risk-assessments and finding a research vessel for the expedition.

In August, the expedition began, and Sarah flew to Cambodia to meet the rest of the team in person: Chhayhy, Thary, Rydot, Rynang, Jessie, Joe and Lokkaman. The expedition started with a thorough week of field training, allowing time for the international team members to overcome jet lag and acclimatise to the tropical weather of the Southeast Asian monsoon season.

After training, the team were ready to embark on nine weeks of daily boat surveys, starting at the Vietnamese maritime border and zigzagging their way along the coast toward the Thai maritime border. At night, the team stayed as close to the water as possible, often on small islands, to maximise their daytime survey effort.

At the time of writing, the team were currently seven weeks into the expedition and had spotted several groups of their focal species: Irrawaddy dolphins, Indo-Pacific humpback dolphins and Indo-Pacific finless porpoises. Once the expedition is complete, the sightings data will be transformed into results on species population sizes and distribution – information urgently needed to guide conservation strategies for these threatened species.

### Emi Koch – 2022 Elodie Sandford Explorer

Emi embarked on her participatory expedition Ông Nam Hải: The Quest for Lord Fish through Vietnam's winding and enchanting Mekong River Delta. The expedition explored the country's unique whale worship tradition (Tục thờ cá Ông) and its deep connection to marine conservation within local fishing communities. During this journey, Emi collaborated closely with young marine scientists from the Centre for Biodiversity Conservation and Endangered Species (CBES). Together, they documented and analysed whale worship practices while engaging elders in discussions about the social, ecological, and spiritual importance of marine mammals.



The historic Lăng Ông Nam Hải in Bini h Thuận Province is situated in the middle of bustling Phan Thiết, a port town and the province's capital city.

The team visited 25 Lăng Ông Nam Hải whale temples, though their work revealed that hundreds more exist, many hidden within the Delta's villages and along tributary riverbanks. These sacred spaces, maintained by the aging Vạn Chài guilds, house the skeletal remains of cetaceans and provide valuable insights into historical marine mammal diversity and community dynamics. However, industrialization, urban migration, and environmental degradation are reshaping fishing villages, threatening these traditional practices.



Hung and Mai, CBES researchers, with a member of the Vạn Chài, noting data points about the dolphin skull's size to identify the species.

As small artisanal fishing villages transition into bustling industrial ports, the spiritual reverence for Cá Ông has shifted toward a more utilitarian perspective. Once honoured as divine protectors, whales are now often seen as good luck symbols or, in some cases, taxidermied displays used to attract donations and tourists. The economic pressures faced by these communities have diminished the intimate care between humans and whales.

A core aspect of the expedition involved building relationships with the Vạn Chài and engaging local youth in exploring their temples. Emi provided cameras from Coast 2 Coast, her educational non-profit, for local children to document their own perspectives and interactions with the temples and marine life. This participatory approach sought to encourage curiosity about marine science through a visual storytelling medium known as PhotoVoice.

The expedition revealed key insights: the number of temples exceeded expectations, the transformation within whale worship reflects broader changes in fishing communities, and there is significant potential for intergenerational dialogue to revitalize Tục thờ cá Ông for marine mammal conservation. Emi hopes to return to Vietnam next year. Emi will talk via Zoom about her expedition as part of the 2025 Explorer Series on Tuesday 25 November (see page 2).

### Wendy A Mustaqim – 2022 Judith Heath Explorer



Wendy observing the northern Sumatra endemic Paphiopedilum lunatum (Indonesia).

2024 has been a wonderful year for Wendy despite the situation that halted his plan to climb Mount Kemiri. He carried out and or was involved in other expeditions in the northern part of Sumatra from the threatened mangroves to the dense and magnificent northern Gayo Plateau tropical rainforests. During this period, he made important findings that included new species, new records for Sumatra, rediscovery, and encountering plant species endemic to the northern part of Sumatra. He published the red-flowered Gayo balsam flower, Impatiens bungeilang, a narrow endemic species restricted to the northern part of the Gayo Plateau.

This finding gained interest from the local community in Aceh Tengah and Bener Meriah regency appreciating the beauty of the flowers and the fact that the plant is new to science. In one of these expeditions, he found two important orchids.

- The first is *Corybas geminigibbus* which represents the first report of the species in Sumatra. The miniature orchids are among the most-searched ornamental plants for their beautiful flower.
- For the Second, he also climbed some of the threatened forest fragments to observe the natural population of the narrow endemic the crescent-shaped staminode *Paphiopedilum* or *Paphiopedilum lunatum*, a plant threatened by illegal poaching for ornamental purposes.

Wendy published some conservation status assessments of Indonesian native plant species including the northern Gayo Plateau endemic, Bangham's magnolia (*Magnolia banghamii*), a species on the brink of extinction (Critically Endangered). Lately, he led a team for Sumatran mangrove studies as part of his department research project while finishing the arrangement of the Mount Kemiri expedition in December 2024.

### Jody Bragger – 2021 Sir Charles Blois Explorer

In July 2024, an expedition team – led by Jody and comprising Jack and Ryan Bushong and Alex Mundt – ventured deep into the unexplored Wondiwoi Mountains of West Papua. Their goal was ambitious: to rediscover the critically endangered Wondiwoi Tree Kangaroo, a species unseen since 1928 and thought by many to be extinct. Undeterred by the rugged terrain, the team pressed on, driven by a sense of adventure and the thrill of potential discovery.



The Team

Though the kangaroo itself remained elusive, excitement mounted when the group found strong evidence of its survival. Fresh claw marks, tree damage, and signs of recently disturbed vegetation indicated the presence of the mysterious animal. These clues provided hope that the Wondiwoi Tree Kangaroo might still roam the remote forests, hidden from human eyes for nearly a century.



Photo by Jody Bragger, 2021 Sir Charles Blois Explorer, on his In Search of Ghosts expedition (West Papua).

But the expedition's discoveries did not stop there. As the team traversed the mountains, they uncovered a wealth of biodiversity. Ornithological findings included major range extensions for multiple bird species previously undocumented in the region. The team also discovered what could be entirely new species of possum, three frogs and multiple insects, further underscoring the importance of preserving this unique ecosystem.

The expedition not only reignited hope for the survival of the Wondiwoi Tree Kangaroo but also highlighted the untapped biological riches of the Wondiwoi Mountains. Despite the challenges of navigating such remote, difficult terrain, the journey showcased the critical need for further exploration and conservation efforts in this under-researched area.

This adventure was more than just a search for a single species; it was a testament to the untamed wonders of the natural world and the importance of protecting biodiversity hotspots like the Wondiwoi Mountains. The team's findings lay the groundwork for future expeditions and the conservation work needed to safeguard this fragile ecosystem.

### **Eleanor Drinkwater – 2018 SES Explorer**

Eleanor has embarked on a new insect-tracking adventure. Building on her previous work funded by the SES tracking titan beetles, she has taken on a post-doc position at Western Sydney University and is now working with a team trying to map the migratory flyways of the iconic Bogong moth. The Bogong moth has an incredible migration of over 1,000km from the breeding areas in

the lowlands to cool caves in the high alpine areas of the Australian Alps, bringing key nutrients into the mountain regions. However, climate change is putting pressure on the species, with concerning population fluctuations, and critical warming of the caves it depends on. It is therefore key that we understand the migration patterns of this species to try to better conserve this species, and the wider alpine ecosystems which depend on it. To do this the team, headed by Dr Umbers, is using a range of methods to understand the behaviours of these moths.



Eleanor trekking across Australia in her trusty 4x4 called Chadwina looking for the moths in the field.

As part of this work Eleanor has been trekking across Australia in a trusty 4x4 called Chadwina looking for the moths in the field, providing important on the ground validation for modelled flyways. By Christmas, she would have racked up around 5,000km of moth search, and will hopefully have spotted a wombat!

Photo by Luis Garcia Solsol of SES-endorsed expedition leader, Rosa V Espinoza and her Amazonian stingless bee guarding its hive.



Photo of SES-endorsed expedition leader, Jose Luis Lescano, filming an episode at 4,300 MASL (Cusco, Peru 2024).



Photo by 2024 O'Hea Explorer, Daniel Grace,  
at the checkpoint for the Luangwa National Park (Zambia).



Photo by SES-endorsed expedition leader,  
Jose Luis Lescano, of a Royal Cinclodes (Cusco, Peru 2024).





[raleighinternational.org/explorer-award](http://raleighinternational.org/explorer-award)

# SES Raleigh Explorer Award

This year saw the launch of our groundbreaking partnership with Operation Raleigh Alumni, Raleigh UK Society (RUKS) and Raleigh International; an initiative that provides opportunities for young individuals from less socio-economically advantaged backgrounds in the UK to embark on transformative volunteering opportunities abroad.

Supported by the then Prince of Wales, the Society founded both Operation Raleigh (now Raleigh International) and Operation Drake, which engaged young people from many countries in life-changing exploration, citizen science and adventure.

SES Raleigh Explorer Award is supported by a small group of Operation Raleigh alumni; David and Jacs Taylor-Smith, James Cochrane, Jason De Carteret, Jeremy Fish, James Forrest, Nick and Nikki Horne, The Earl of Leicester, Richard Miller, Dom Moorehouse and Toby O'Connor. These individuals personally witnessed how these schemes in the past transformed the lives of the young people involved.

This award is also supported by Raleigh International, members of RUKS and SES. It will run for three years from 2024 funding 18 young adults to join a Raleigh Expedition.

**2024: 7 places** *(see winners below)*  
**2025: 7 places**  
**2026: 4 places**

The support covers places for a 10-week Expedition and flights to Costa Rica, South Africa or Borneo including insurance. Venturers are encouraged to raise funds for items such as kit and travel to the airport.

- 2025 applications open: beginning of February 2025 for three weeks.
- Winners announced: beginning of April 2025
- Expeditions available in 2025:
  - June–August
  - October–December

Thank you to everyone involved in creating this fantastic award.

## Meet our 2024 Winners



**Estrella Suyuri Ricapa**



**Aaron Joy**



**Austin Howard**



**Joshua Alvarez-Conroy**



**Kabuki Sabblah and Paris Ambersley**



**Melika La'Rosa**



[ses-explore.org/expeditions](https://ses-explore.org/expeditions)

# News from our Expedition Leaders

## Jose Luis Lescano: Avistando Perú

This year, our Avistando Perú expeditions took us to some of the wildest and most breathtaking places in the country, exploring five State Protected Natural Areas. We ventured from the mysterious Dry Forest of the Peruvian Coast to the mystical Andean Wetlands over 3,000m above sea level, and journeyed into the vast rivers and lakes of the Peruvian Amazon, where nature seems endless.

We faced extreme conditions, enduring 30-degree heat under the blazing sun while filming the Peruvian Plantcutter, a unique herbivorous bird endemic to Peru. We also navigated the humid Amazon, waiting patiently in nearly 40-degree temperatures to capture the Yellow-breasted Crake, a newly described bird species for Peru.



Photo of Jose Luis studying birds of Peru (Cusco, Peru 2024).

At 4,300m, we climbed into the polylepis woodland to document the Royal Cinclodes, a rare bird closely tied to this ecosystem. We were also fortunate to witness the Andean Cock-of-the-rock's remarkable nesting behaviour in the heart of the Cloud Forest.

Our adventure continued deep in the Amazon's clay licks, where we observed macaws in their vibrant ritual and captured their life in the hollows of palm trees. One of our most exciting achievements was recording the recently described Mono Tocón de Aquino, an endemic species.

In total, we documented more than 126 bird species, including over 58 species of hummingbirds and 20 endemic birds. This journey took us to places few have seen, showcasing the incredible biodiversity that makes Peru a top destination for birdwatching.

In Peru, some expeditions offer the opportunity to observe over 300 bird species along a single route. While this sounds incredible, it also poses a significant challenge. Many of these birds prefer to stay hidden and only reveal themselves through their songs.

For this reason, it's essential to thoroughly study their behavior, and most importantly, to learn and train your ear to recognize the different calls and songs of the species you are seeking. This can make all the difference between

a successful sighting and a day without any. Birdwatching expeditions require patience, preparation, and, above all, a well-trained ear.

## Dr Timm Döbert: Wings of Survival

Timm spent 2024 preparing for the first Wings of Survival expedition, a 30,000km cycling and packrafting expedition from Alaska to Patagonia, following the epic journeys of migratory birds across the Americas. To improve Spanish and train at high-altitude, he spent four months in Jardín, a colourful and bird-rich community in Colombia's Andes.

In July, Timm and his expedition partner, Leanna, cycled across Canada, coast to coast from Atlantic to Pacific. The duo completed the 4,500km journey in 30 days, featuring 30 key biodiversity and protected areas along the ride. They also collected scientific data on their minds, bodies and nutrition for a plant-based athlete endurance study, for which they partnered with the University of Alberta. The milestone event was widely featured in the media and promoted by NGO and corporate partners, including Birds Canada, Gorewear and Zeiss Nature.

Timm also partnered with Environment Climate Change Canada to present Wings of Survival at the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group meeting in eastern Canada. The conference enabled new partnerships with shorebird conservation experts from all 15 countries across the Pacific-Americas migratory bird flyway.

In October, Timm attended the Wildscreen Film Festival in Bristol where he pitched the story to international film producers and distributors to strengthen the impact initiatives associated with the expedition. He held in-person meetings with Global Sustainable Sport and Athlete Media Group, two key partners at the Sports for Nature interface.

The team also continued collaboration with Edmonton-based Moving Artistry Productions, collecting further professional documentary footage in Alaska and Colombia.

When Timm began to develop the concept of the Wings of Survival expedition series in 2021, little did he know about the time it would take to build the partnerships and secure the funds for an initiative of this geographical and temporal scale. Three years and many important milestones later, he fully appreciates the patience and grit essential to succeed, especially where socio-environmental impact is the prime motivation.

Wings of Survival is a three-part expedition series that uses sports to drive nature-positive outcomes across the world's flyways aimed at rewilding minds and the planet.

For more information visit [wingsofsurvival.com](https://wingsofsurvival.com) and follow them on [@wingsofsurvival](https://twitter.com/wingsofsurvival).



# TOP TIPS

## Daniel Grace

1. Assemble your team nice and early.
2. Surround yourself with people who buy into your expedition ethos and vision.
3. Don't underestimate journey times!
4. Being on expedition can pose challenges – try to embrace these.
5. At the same time, make sure you have a way to de-stress.
6. Be prepared to accept that even the best made plans will change and that this is part of your journey.

## Dewi Lestari

On a tropical expedition, always have a variety of oils to protect from insect bites – it is not enough to just use one!

Before working with the locals, have a clear head and avoid prejudice. This will improve your understanding and help you learn from one another.

Talk with everyone you meet – conversations can lead to opportunities!

## Elic Weitzel

Fieldwork is tough, and unexpected challenges are bound to arise. The key to weathering all of these is to approach everything as an important experience.

Not all experiences are enjoyable, but they are all useful in shaping you as an explorer and teaching you lessons that you can carry into the future.

Living life fully is all about having experiences, both good and bad. Even with the bad experiences, you often get a good story out of it!

## Emi Koch

1. Learn a few local phrases so that you can connect with local people more easily.
2. Book an Airbnb or local homestay to meet locals and get the best insights!

3. Take a cold shower in the morning to boost your endorphins and beat jetlag.
4. Don't forget an external battery, water bottle, sunglasses, and a hat, even in a cold climate.
5. Take a deep breath when there is a stressful moment – it is part of the adventure!

## Jody Bragger

1. Plan meticulously: Research the terrain, weather and wildlife. Know what you're getting into.
2. Bring the right gear: Pack for all weather conditions and rugged landscapes. Don't skimp on essentials like first aid, GPS and communication devices.
3. Stay adaptable: Flexibility is key. Be prepared to change routes or plans based on real-time conditions.
4. Document findings carefully: Record evidence with photos, notes and GPS coordinates.
5. Teamwork: Ensure clear communication and trust among the team.
6. Respect the environment: Tread lightly and minimize your impact on the ecosystem.

## Nat Knowles

Never underestimate the amount of fuel needed. Whether it's for boats or team members, having extra fuel on hand keeps everyone moving even on a long journey!

Good snacks are especially important for those times you underestimate boat fuel and have to paddle!

Forest Team favourites include: chocolate, crackers, Brazil nuts, farinha and tang.

## Reza Saputra

Share your discoveries through captivating photographs! High-quality images can engage a wide audience, transcending language barriers and even resonating with children.

Photography is one of the most impactful ways to communicate your conservation work, capturing the beauty, urgency, and importance of nature in a single frame.

Powerful visuals can tell stories that words alone may struggle to convey, inspiring a deeper connection to conservation efforts and encouraging action among viewers from all walks of life.

## Sarah Tubbs

1. Be adaptable – things will never go to plan.
2. Have a reasonable sized contingency in your budget.
3. Choose your expedition team wisely – you may be living in very close quarters so it's essential you all get along.
4. Make sure you and your team are always aware of the plan and are safe.
5. Make sure you and your team eat and sleep well. A rested and fed team is a happy and hard working team.
6. Take time to enjoy where you are and what you are doing! It is a unique and one-of-a-kind journey.

## Wendy A Mustaqim

Respecting the local society's customary law, being interactive, and adjusting one's habits to the local people, are several keys to successful fieldwork in remote areas.

Taking time to share many things, either simply talking about random things to a serious topic like the result of scientific expeditions, will gain a wholehearted connection between the researcher and local people.

The consequence is that you can flawlessly introduce some basic sciences to the public.

- Alegra Ally
- Alex Kerridge
- Alicia Colson
- Alyssa Sargent
- Amanda Hewes
- Amy Meek
- Ana Melisa Fernandes
- Andrea Bernal Rivera
- Andrew Christensen
- Aneeshwar Kunchala
- Aneira Williams
- Anna McWilliams
- Briana Gervat
- Briony Turner
- British Exploring Society
- Young Explorers 2022
- Charlene Murphy
- Charlie Hewett
- Chaz Powell
- Chloé Frommer
- Christopher Sweetman
- Eleanor Drinkwater
- Ella Meek
- Emma Askew
- Emma Miller
- Fabien Schultz
- Gustavo Rodríguez
- Hannah Parry
- Iro Tsarmpopoulou-Fokianou
- Luke Daly
- Jaime A Buitrago
- Jill Wheatley
- John Volanthen
- Joshua Powell
- Kirsten Hamilton-Sturdy
- Leticia Benavalli
- Matt Heaven
- Matthew Marroitt
- Meganne Christian
- Meg Holgate
- Melissa Flagg
- Michael Murphy
- Michelle Ellison
- Nandini Velho
- Nathan Smith
- Neil Humpage
- Niki Alsford
- Nikki Skinner
- Nora Lee
- Oliver Beardon
- Paul Neil
- Paula Reid
- Ram Alluri
- Richard Pyshorn
- Robert Wuebker
- Rosemary Hartley
- Rosemary J Brown
- Rowan (Junior Editor)
- Rupert Allen
- Sadie Whitelocks
- Sam Moore
- Sateesh Venkatesh
- Scott Pallett
- Simon Hoyte
- Stefanie Rogg
- Steve Backshall
- Stuart Cox
- Susannah Cass
- Timm Döbert
- Wendy Mustaqim

# EXPLORATION *Revealed*

## News from the Editors

### ISSUE 4

We have had an exciting array of articles this year – if you are yet to read Issue 4, take a look.

[bit.ly/ER-issue4](https://bit.ly/ER-issue4)

### ONE FORM CATCHES ALL

We've also had a few changes in our materials and the editorial team. We now have ONE form for everything – whether you want to propose an article idea, sponsor an issue, submit an article, join the editorial team or, for existing authors, update your profile in our directory.

[bit.ly/ER-submit](https://bit.ly/ER-submit)

### A WARM WELCOME

We'd like to share a warm welcome to the latest member to join our editorial team: Dr Susannah Cass.



Susannah's background is in ecology and environmental science, with extensive experience in scientific and outdoor education and expeditions.

### LOOKING AHEAD

We are working on linking this all up to our Zenodo community and publishing all articles on Zenodo which will give each article its own Digital Object Identifier (DOI).

We already have a batch of new articles our editors are working on so keep an eye out for new releases via our socials and the SES newsletter.

### HELP US

We are on the lookout for sponsors for future issues – to cover the costs of our publishing platform and the plagiarism checker – and for a social media officer(s) to help us promote the fantastic articles. Join the team!

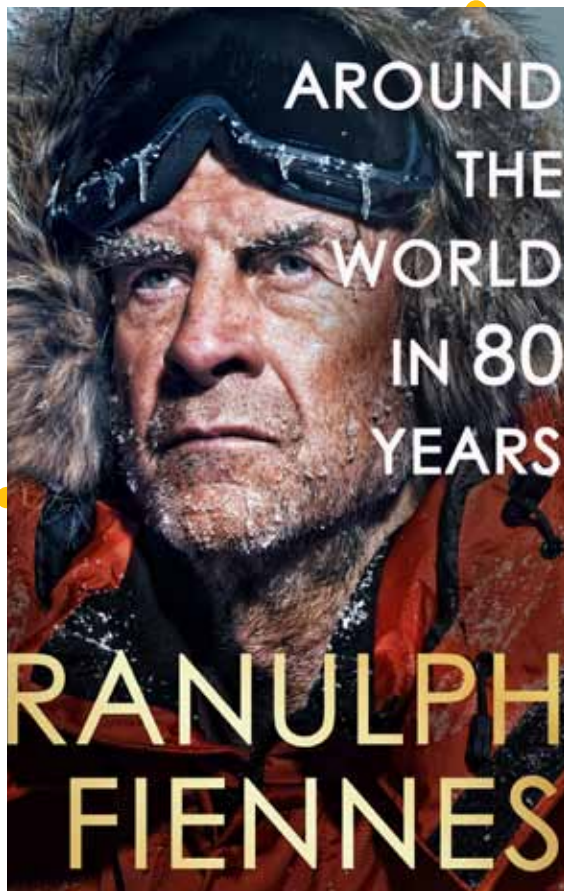
### GET IN TOUCH

If you have relevant experiences to share and would be happy to be interviewed by one of our editors or wish to submit an article, please use this form.

[bit.ly/ER-submit](https://bit.ly/ER-submit)



# Members' Books... MUST READS!



## **Sir Ranulph Fiennes – AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 YEARS**

On the eve of his 80th birthday, Sir Ranulph Fiennes looks back at his remarkable life and adventures.

He's climbed Everest not long after a heart bypass operation, he's run seven marathons on seven continents in seven days, he's hauled loaded sledges across both polar ice caps and he's circumnavigated the earth...

Ran truly is the world's greatest explorer, and this book celebrates his 80th birthday by showcasing his greatest achievements in his own words. Featuring interviews and tributes from his friends, colleagues and admirers, *Around the World in 80 Years* celebrates the incredible life of a legendary explorer. Contributors include Bear Grylls, Monty Don and Levison Wood.

Ran was the first man to reach both poles by surface travel and the first to cross the Antarctic Continent unsupported. In the 1960s, he was removed from the SAS Regiment for misuse of explosives but, joining the army of the Sultan of Oman, received that country's Bravery Medal on active service in 1970. He is the only person yet to have been awarded two clasps to the Polar medal for both Antarctic and the Arctic regions. Ran has led over 30 expeditions raising more than £20 million for charity.

In 1993, Her Majesty the Queen awarded Ran the Order of the British Empire (OBE) because, on the way to breaking records, he had, at the time, raised over £14 million for charity. He was named Best Sportsman in the 2007 ITV Great Briton Awards and in 2009 he became the oldest Briton to reach the summit of Everest.

## **Sir Charles Blois – BY POWER AND SAIL: Sixty Years of World Travel**

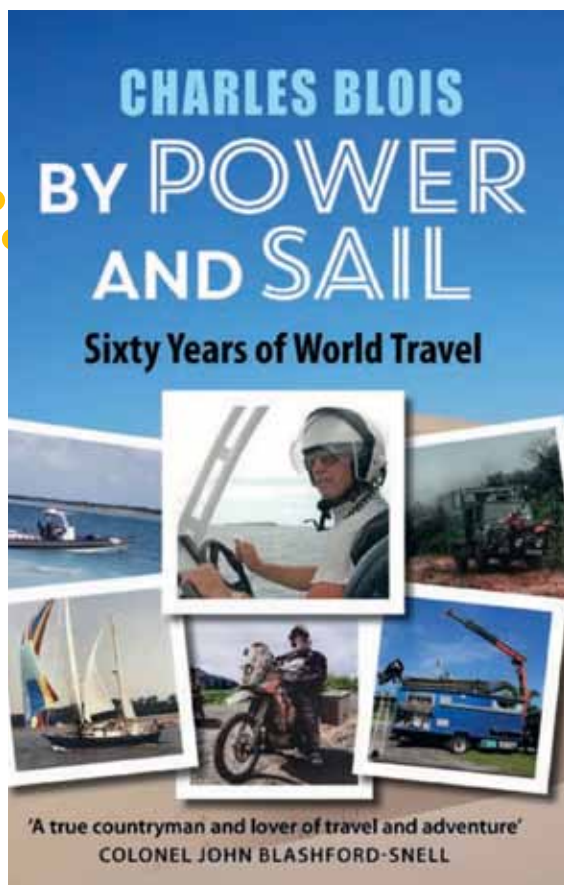
Sir Charles Blois is a long-time friend of SES and the proud supporter of one of our Explorer Awards, the Sir Charles Blois Explorer Award for Science & Adventure.

Sir Charles was born on Christmas Day 1939 and is the eleventh holder of the baronetcy which was created for his forebear Sir Charles Blois in 1686. He was educated at Harrow, Trinity College Dublin and the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester.

From an early age he has had an obsessive love of travel and in 60 years has, in various ways, travelled the circumference of the earth ten times. His passion for travel and adventure is unquenchable and on a par with that of our Founder, John Blashford-Snell, who he hails as his inspiration.

Sir Charles' book, 'By Power and Sail - Sixty Years of World Travel' is an account of his adventures in more than 160 countries.

If you would like to receive a copy, or copies, please contact CBL Distribution Ltd and quote 'By Power and Sail - MAIL ORDER' or telephone 0121 608 3952.



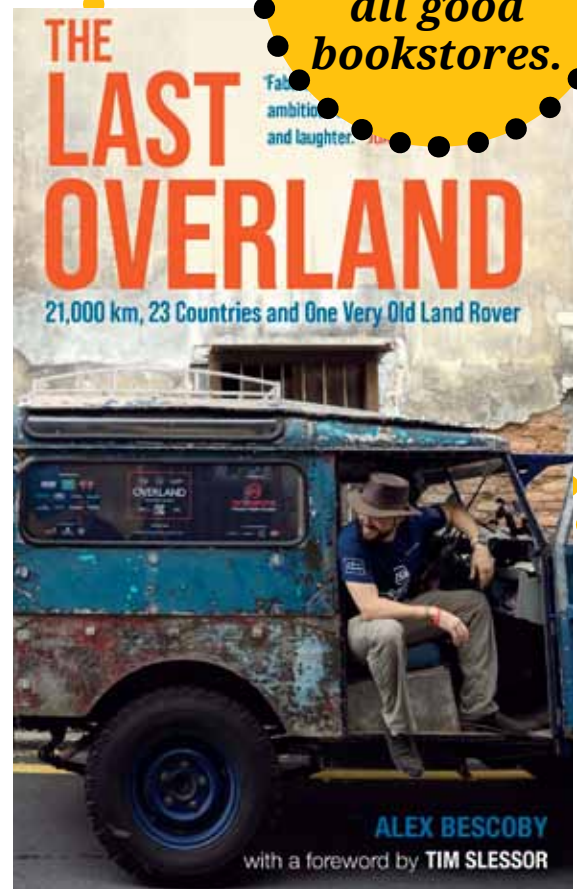
## Alex Bescoby – THE LAST OVERLAND

Alex Bescoby is an award-winning documentary filmmaker, writer and presenter with a love of history, travel and storytelling. A Cambridge University history and politics graduate, he has written for BBC News, The Telegraph, National Geographic and Lonely Planet. Co-founder of Grammar Productions, his long and short-form films have been shown by global broadcasters including the BBC, History Channel, Discovery and Canal+.

In 1955, a young TV producer named David Attenborough was approached by a team of six young graduates with the aim of embarking on ‘the unclimbed Everest of motoring’ – driving overland from London to Singapore. Although many had tried and failed before, Attenborough gave The Oxford and Cambridge Far Eastern Expedition enough film reel to cover their attempt. Led by graduate filmmaker Tim Slessor, the team went on to successfully complete the 19,000 mile journey as documented in the popular Traveller’s Tales series, which captivated a nation emerging from post-war austerity. Tim Slessor’s bestselling book, *The First Overland*, was published shortly after and soon became the Bible of the overlanding religion. *The Last Overland: Singapore to London: The Return Journey of the Iconic Land Rover Expedition* recounts Alex’s extraordinary recreation of the journey.

Inspired by Attenborough’s comment nearly fifty years after the original expedition that it was a journey ‘I don’t think could be made again today’, Bescoby made contact with the then 87-year-old Tim Slessor, and together they planned an epic recreation of the original trip, this time with the aim of bringing the original ‘Oxford’ Land Rover home from Singapore to London. This book recounts Alex’s defining trip of a lifetime, investigating how the world has changed since *The First Overland*, and exploring themes of family ties, post-colonialism and the Land Rover religion.

Books available to buy from all good bookstores.



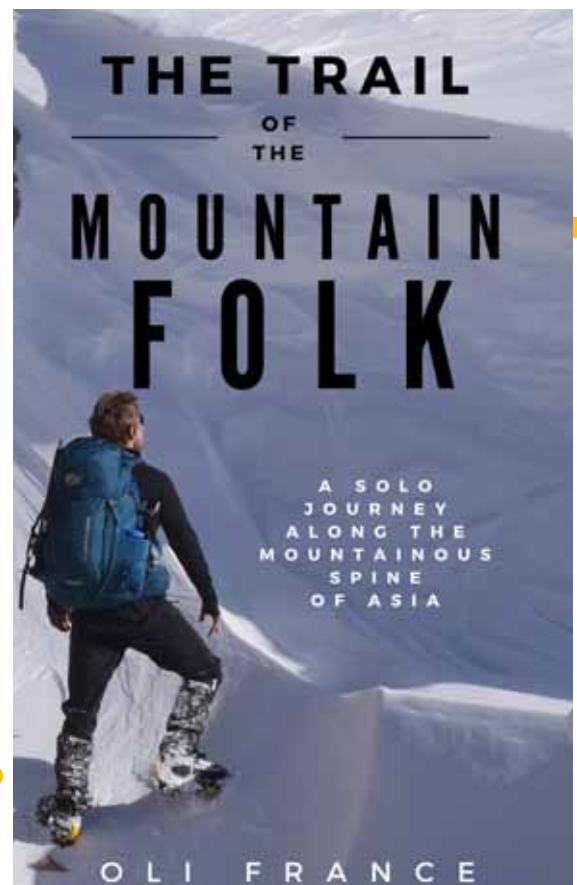
## Oli France – THE TRAIL OF THE MOUNTAIN FOLK

Oli France specialises in guiding teams through remote and hostile destinations, from Iraq to Somalia, Syria to Yemen, and Congo to Siberia. During his travels through 75+ countries, Oli’s adventures have taken him through deserts, jungles, mountains, and war-torn regions. He has faced spies, interrogators, minefields and arrest, along with avalanches, earthquakes, meningitis and severe dehydration, all while attempting to complete challenging journeys in remote corners of the world, alone or while leading a team.

Oli’s adventures include a solo winter 8,000-mile mountaineering journey from Hong Kong to Istanbul, climbing Iraq’s highest mountain and summiting the Congo’s volcanoes. He has completed a 400-mile solo unsupported winter crossing of Lake Baikal, Siberia, and a 1650-mile human-powered journey from Lac Assal, Djibouti, to the summit of Kilimanjaro.

Most recently, Oli has just completed a 64-day 3,588-mile human-powered journey from Death Valley to Denali, becoming the first person this century to complete this feat.

Oli is not only a member of the SES but also a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and Winter Mountain Leader with a degree in Outdoor Leadership.



To learn more and support, go to:  
[amazonresearch.org](https://amazonresearch.org)



Photo of Rosa V. Espinoza  
by Ana Sotelo (Amazon).

# The Hidden World of Amazonian Stingless Bees (Peru)

*By Dr Rosa Vásquez Espinoza*

In July 2024, I traveled over 10,000km from a small village in Somerset, UK, to my home country, Peru.

Rising before dawn, embraced by an unusual winter breeze and lingering jetlag, I felt the adrenaline kicking in before the coffee had a chance to. I was about to embark on a journey to one of the most remote and least explored areas of the Amazon Rainforest – so remote, it couldn't even be found on a map.

I'm no stranger to the Amazon. I grew up in Peru spending summers visiting family in the rainforest. Riding the *peke peke* (traditional boats) along the tributaries of the Amazon River was my version of Disneyland. My upbringing was marked by a deep connection to nature, a worldview where we live in harmony with our natural world, respecting animals, plants and human alike.

Today, as the Founder and President of Amazon Research Int., a Peru-based organization dedicated to exploring and protecting the Amazon Rainforest, my work takes me deeper into the rainforest than I ever imagined.

At the airport, I met our team, the largest group I have ever led. Adventurers, scientists, artists and environmental lawyers that had traveled from the US, Canada, Chile and across Peru to join us in expanding our Stingless Bee Project – a multi-year effort to explore and protect one of the lesser-known species of the Amazon, the stingless bee.

The purpose of this expedition was to document, for the first time, the Ashaninka people's knowledge of stingless bees and their ecosystems. This included origin stories that

explain the use of the bees' honey in treating illnesses, from COVID-19 to infertility, and their essential role in culture. The scientific data collected would help us advocate for national protection of the stingless bee as a flagship species of the Amazon ecosystems.



Rosa and local team entering the Ashaninka territory  
by Luis Garcia Solsol.

This expedition also marked a personal milestone. It represented a step toward realizing our goal of creating an encyclopedia of Ashaninka traditional medicinal

knowledge in partnership with indigenous partners – a first in Peru. Uniting modern science with traditional knowledge has been a dream I’ve held since I was a little girl. This dream is inspired by the lineage of indigenous female healers I descend from, including my Andean grandmother and my Amazonian great, great-grandmother. My heritage fuels my passion for exploration, and my work honors these roots.



Ashaninka children expressing their emotions about the need to protect the stingless bee (by Luis Garcia Solsol).

Our journey began with a flight to Southern Peru, where we were welcomed by the vast Andean Mountain range. Everywhere we looked, our eyes met brown, expansive mountains that defied life with their harsh cold temperatures and high-altitude. Upon landing, we embarked on a 10-hour drive along serpentine roads that connect the Andes with the Amazon. In some sections, we passed cliffs plunging thousands of meters. This trip is not for the faint-hearted. We finally arrived to the city of Pichari in Cuzco, as the sun set, where we joined our local team, including Ashaninka leaders and park rangers.

The next morning, as we loaded our gear into the trucks under a grey sky, the drizzle began. The Ashaninka “Apu” (leader or “mountain” in Quechua) confided that rain at the start of a journey meant the “Avireri”, a sacred nearby mountain harboring the Ashaninka God’s spirit, was wary of the newcomers. *This might put local people on alert* – he warned. It is imperative that science respects culture at every step of exploration. Thus, we agreed that if the rain persisted, we would exit the car a few kilometers prior entry to the community and enter by foot as a gesture to honor the mountains. To our luck, the clouds parted halfway into our journey, signaling that the mountains had accepted us.



Rosa receiving a vaporeo traditional Ashaninka treatment to immerse in local culture (by Luis Garcia Solsol).

For ten days, we lived among Ashaninka communities in the UNESCO-recognized Avireri-Vraem Biosphere Reserve, where stingless bees are seen as guardians of the rainforest. In the Ashaninka worldview, stingless bees such as “neronto” (*Melipona eburnea*) or “shinkenka” (*Tetragonisca angustula*) are powerful spirits and

friends. They provide medicinal honey, food, natural dyes and play a crucial role in sustaining the Amazon’s ecosystems. Stingless bees are native to our tropics, with approximately 175 species identified in Peru alone. Due to their inability to sting, they have developed alternative defense mechanisms such as biting, toxin production and the use of antibacterial tree resin to build their nests.

Our exploration yielded remarkable outcomes. First, it led to a scientific publication where Ashaninka indigenous members are co-authors of the work, a first in Peru (1). This paves the way for inclusive science and indigenous scholarship to empower local communities to become the leaders in research rather than mere subjects of study. Secondly, the Ministry of Environment invited us to the United Nations COP16, where our indigenous partners shared our collaborative efforts to save stingless bees. Third, it inspired the creation of a Policy Brief that will inform local policy frameworks to protect the species and its ecosystems. Fourth, it launched the first stingless beekeeping training program for Amazonian indigenous women, empowering them as pioneers in bee conservation.



Indigenous women leading the way in bee conservation (by Luis Garcia Solsol).

Our work has reached the covers of *The New York Times* and *CBS News*, inspiring others to learn about and protect Amazonian bees. It’s difficult to capture the beauty and rawness of this experience on these pages—a deep dive into the human spirit and a reconnection to what is sacred on this planet. That’s why I’m honored to announce my first book, *The Spirit of the Rainforest*, publishing in May 2025 (available for pre-order now on Amazon, Waterstones or your nearest library). In it, I share a decade of Amazonian explorations through the lens of my indigenous heritage and scientific background, aiming to help others reconnect with the natural world, including the incredible stingless bee.

### References

1 Demetrio, R. A., León, D. C., Delgado, C., Correa, R., & Espinoza, R. V. (2024). Traditional ecological knowledge on stingless bees in two Ashaninka communities in the central rainforest of Peru. *Ethnobiology and Conservation*.

### Acknowledgements

This expedition was supported by Fondo Socioambiental del Perú, Proinnovate, Rights for Nature, Earth Law Center, and other individual donations. The expedition would have not been possible without the support and assistance of SERNAN (National Services of Natural Protected Areas, a part of the Ministry of Environment), Dr Cesar Delgado from the Institute of Investigation of the Peruvian Amazon, the indigenous organization ECOASHANINKA and our incredible local team members. Special thanks to the Scientific Exploration Society for endorsing this project.

To learn more and support, go to [amazonresearch.org](https://amazonresearch.org).

# Obituaries

## DAVID PRICHARD MBE (1934-2024)

Meeting with David was rather like encountering a dynamic entrepreneur with the charm of an angel. As headmaster of the now famous Port Regis prep school in Motcombe, he persuaded me to give lectures on expeditions to the pupils and encourage them to be adventurous. When a house nearby came on sale, David urged me to buy it, and give more lectures! Thus, Expedition Base was created.



David Prichard photographed at Port Regis in 2022  
(photo kindly provided by Port Regis).

He was aware of Port Regis's long links with the German kindergarten movement, so much admired by Charles Dickens and promoted in England by the school's founder, Alfred Praetorius. He abhorred the reputation many prep schools had for gradgrindian misery said the Times.

With incredible energy and an innovative spirit, David raised the number of pupils from 90 to 300 in the quarter of a century under his leadership, and the school became co-ed with equal numbers of boys and girls.

With his usual foresight, he sensed the growing importance of computers and was one of the first members of the Independent Association of Prep Schools

(IAPS) to advocate their use in schools. Furthermore, he introduced mechanical training so pupils could service a Land Rover and other cars.

David's success attracted several children from the Royal Family including Peter and Zara Philips, the children of HRH Princess Anne, as well as the son of the Crown Prince of Jordan.

The ambitious modernisation of the school drew much attention from far and wide, and in 1991 HM The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh visited Port Regis. Rather than allowing armed Royal Protection Officers at the school, David had members of the staff trained in the use of firearms!

In 1993 David became headmaster of Wycliffe College in Gloucestershire where he continued his innovative marketing ideas increasing their numbers from 400 to 800 in four years. Sadly, a serious motor accident forced him to retire early.

Born on the Isle of Wight, David's family were related to some of the grandest families of England and two of Queen Victoria's daughters became his godmothers. A keen oarsman, he rowed for the first eight at Radley and went on to be the Captain of Boats at Pembroke College, Oxford where he stroked the university Isis eight.

In 1992 he met another energetic head of a school and Elizabeth Major, Headmistress of Warwick Prep School became his wife. Retiring in 1997 they moved to Sherborne where David took a wide interest in local charities and chaired the governors at Sherborne prep school. He had also become an inspiring member of the Scientific Exploration Society Council and later played a leading part in the formation of Operation New World that aimed to provide an innovative educational programme for young people, culminating in an overseas expedition to develop environmental awareness, leadership, and community spirit.

A little while before he died, I met David at Expedition Base where he expressed his continued interest in the resurgence of Raleigh International and the work of SES. With his incredible energy he was still putting forward new ideas on the training and development of young leaders and to support our award programme he made a handsome donation.

Among the many comments by his former pupils were "He was a legend and respected by the world he graced" and "Once known, never, ever forgotten. A true leader, a gentleman and an example to all with his moral compass and infectious happy personality."

## JOIN THE PATRON'S CIRCLE

No matter how LARGE or SMALL, gifts left to the SES in Wills are particularly special to us, and are one of the most powerful ways to make a lasting impact.

Please consider joining the PATRON'S CIRCLE and help secure our future for years to come. Email **Peter Felix (pmfelix9@gmail.com)** for more information.

David Prichard was indeed a progressive legend who made a lasting impact for good on all the organisations with which he was involved. Alas, there are few men of such calibre around these days, and it was a great privilege to have known this dynamic, kind and delightful man who was loved by his pupils and friends. Our deepest sympathy goes to his widow, Elizabeth.

### MAJOR ALAN WESTCOB (1942-2024)

Alan Westcob was one of the outstanding expedition leaders on Operations Drake and Raleigh.



Major Alan Westcob (left) with the Guardia Nacional leader whilst commanding Operation Drake in Caledonia Bay, Panama in 1978.

Born in Nairobi, Kenya he attended the Prince of Wales School and later the RMA Sandhurst. He served in the Kenya Regiment and was commissioned in the Duke of Wellington's Regiment in 1963, serving in Germany, Cyprus, Hong Kong and Northern Ireland.

Alan was an all-round athlete and was in three Army Rugby Cup winning teams with the Duke of Wellington Regiment.

He led one of the early Operation Drake expeditions in Caledonia Bay, Panama, achieving great success in bringing together a multi-national team and winning over the support of the Panamanian Guardia Nacional. The expedition was noted for its work on the study of the early Scots colony and Fort St Andrews as well as the site of the lost city of Acla.

Later, during Operation Raleigh, Alan commanded another challenging expedition in the Bahamas. He proved to be a caring leader who was much appreciated by the venturers. It was on Operation Raleigh that Alan met Dr Judi Treadway whom he was to marry and live with for

29 years in Beaufort, South Carolina before moving to Greenville where sadly he died on 21 March 2024.

Alan never tired of helping young people, especially the less privileged. After leaving the Army he had a unique career, working as a leader on Vision Quest that provided treatment for troubled youth, being a tractor trailer driver and a racetrack tyre technician and a swimming coach.

He is survived by his first wife Geraldine and their daughters Lisa and Alex, and Charlotte, the daughter he had with Judi, his second wife. Alan adored his five grandchildren who will greatly miss their amusing and caring grandfather.

He was indeed a real asset to the Scientific Exploration Society's Operations Drake and Raleigh and will be remembered for all he did to help young people to lead adventurous worthwhile lives. between these days.

### DR STEPHEN SUTTON

*Tribute kindly provided by Andrew W Mitchell, Chair (Emeritus) SES.*

Dr Stephen Laurance Sutton, a leading entomologist and pioneer of forest canopy research on the SES round-the-world expedition, Operation Drake, has died in Sabah at the age of 85.



Photo of Dr Stephen Sutton, with thanks to the Sabah Rotary Club.

Stephen held a DPhil in zoology from Oxford, published 75 papers, and was a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Entomological Society.

As a young zoologist returning from the Malaysia/Royal Geographical Society Mulu Expedition in Sarawak in 1978, I met with Stephen at the RGS Tea Room. Here we first

sketched on a napkin the idea of building aerial walkways high in the rainforest canopy to conduct scientific research. We took the idea to John Blashford-Snell who embraced it as a project for Operation Drake's army engineers. Stephen's necklaces of insect traps hanging from the walkways to the ground became a feature on many expeditions across the tropics and revolutionised knowledge of insects in the rainforest roof.



Photo of a Borneo Birdwing Butterfly  
Troides andromache (Staudinger 1892) by Dr Stephen Sutton.

Stephen had a long career as a lecturer at the University of Leeds, before taking up a ten-year position as Research Co-ordinator at the then Royal Society South East Asia Research Programme (SEARRP) in Borneo's Danum Valley, in the late 1980's. Upon retirement Stephen, alongside Rosalind his wife, became the much-loved proprietor of Borneo Books in Kota Kinabalu, a mix between the Old Curiosity Shop and coffee parlour for intellectuals. His conservation work on the Kinabalu Birdwing Butterfly (Troides andromanche) led it to be declared as the State Butterfly of Sabah in 2023.

We shall greatly miss his incisive wit, colourful shirts, and constant mentorship.

### VINCENT RICHARD MARTINELLI (1935-2024)

Many members will be sad to hear that our long-standing member and supporter, Vince Martinelli, has passed away in Florida.

Born in Connecticut of Italian parents, Vince lived an exciting and adventurous life. Having left school early, he went on to enlist in the US Air Force and serve in Morocco and then attended Florida State University. Later he specialised in marketing with Pan-American World Airways before joining a company in Wall Street and starting a long career in finance and investment. He became a PA to Otto Roethenmund, President of Deak and Co, whom he introduced to The Explorers Club of which Vince was an enthusiastic member. Vince was also a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and a keen member of SES.

Combining travel with financial work he went on a Buddhist pilgrimage to India and met the Dali Lama. Crossing Russia on the Siberian railway, he visited the Gobi Desert, Komodo Island, the Andes and the Okavango Delta as well as the Kalahari Desert and Baffin Island. Loving fishing, Vince was also involved with a salmon fishing business in Iceland.

In 1976 I met Vince in Nepal with our mutual friend, the late Jim Edwards, who ran the legendary Tiger Tops Lodge. Although he had no experience of white-water rafting, Vince volunteered to join me on the first navigation of the Trishuli River which turned out to be quite an adventure. When I was swept out of the raft in a rapid, it was Vince who managed to haul me back aboard. At that time, he was married to Barbara, who also became an intrepid explorer and was one of the first women to join The Explorers Club.



Photo of Vince Martinelli (in the middle) at The Explorers Club, flanked by Barbara Price and Sir Edmund Hillary.

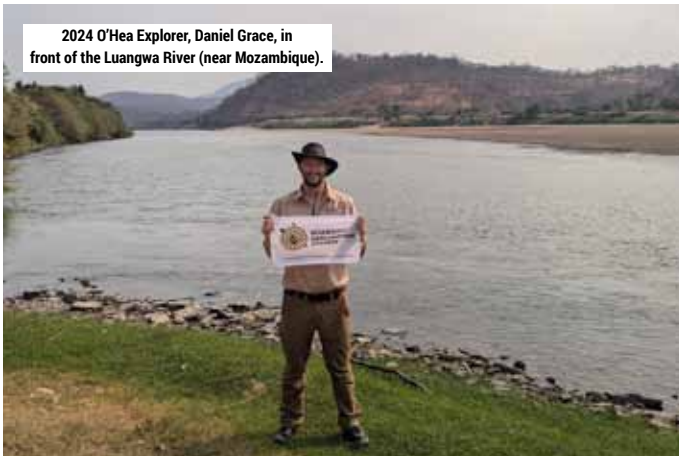
Apart from being an enthusiastic sportsman, Vince was a valuable member of many SES expeditions, joining me in the Quest for the Lost Colony of Scotland in Panama's Darien Gap, and being with us when the site of the fabled city of Acla was discovered. He also took part in Operation Drake in Papua New Guinea and came with us to Tibet and Mongolia on Operation Raleigh.

Back in Florida he helped his local methodist Church, lectured to young people and encouraged their sporting activities.

Vince spent much of his busy life helping others. He had a great sense of humour and was very popular with a wide circle of friends around the world. He will be greatly missed by many and by those who knew him on expeditions, especially by his fellow explorers and SES members Pam Stephany and Yolima Cipagauta.

We have been fortunate to have known this remarkable man and have him as a leading American member of our Society. I guess he will now be persuading the angels to go on expeditions!

# Proud flyers of the SES Flag



2024 O'Hea Explorer, Daniel Grace, in front of the Luang River (near Mozambique).



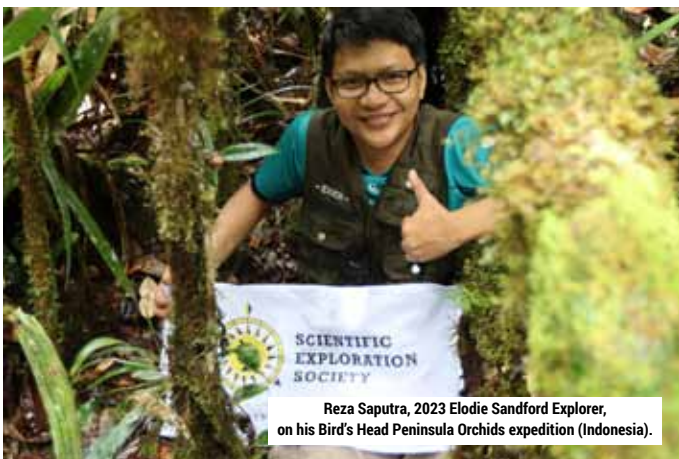
Dewi Lestari, 2023 Judith Heath Explorer, with her team on her Rafflesia Expedition (Indonesia).



Emi Koch, 2022 Elodie Sandford Explorer, Emi Koch at the "last temple" in Southern Vietnam hidden within the mangroves in Cà Mau Cape National Park!



Nat Knowles, 2023 Neville Shulman Explorer (Canada).



Reza Saputra, 2023 Elodie Sandford Explorer, on his Bird's Head Peninsula Orchids expedition (Indonesia).



Sergio Nolasco Plasier, 2023 Sir Charles Blois Explorer in the hard of the forest (Rikkert Loodveld).



Wendy A Mustaqim, 2022 Judith Heath Explorer, exploring mangroves (Eastern Aceh, Indonesia).



Chris Brown, the generous sponsor of our social channels, at Point Nemo.

# Medicine Chest

## How to diagnose and treat a tension pneumothorax at 35,000 feet



By Dr Sam Allen

BSc(MedSci)Hons, MBChB,  
DTM&H, FRCP(Lon),  
FFTM-RCPS(Glasg)

In 1995, Professor Angus Wallace and Dr Tom Wang received worldwide praise for their ingenuity and plucky derring-do for managing an in-flight tension pneumothorax by fashioning a makeshift chest drain kit from a coat-hanger, a urinary catheter, oxygen tubing, a bottle of Evian water and a dram of brandy re-purposed as alcohol disinfectant (1).

It followed the time-honoured tannoy call:

*“If there is a doctor on board would they please make themselves known to the cabin staff”.*

A 39 year old woman had fallen off a motorcycle on her way to Hong Kong Kai Tak airport having missed her original flight and had reported some arm swelling after boarding. A minimally displaced fracture was suspected by the attending doctors on board and a splint was applied.

About 45 minutes into the flight the medics were called again after the patient developed acute respiratory distress with chest pain. The patient’s fall had resulted in some rib fractures leading to the puncture of her pleural cavity causing a pneumothorax.

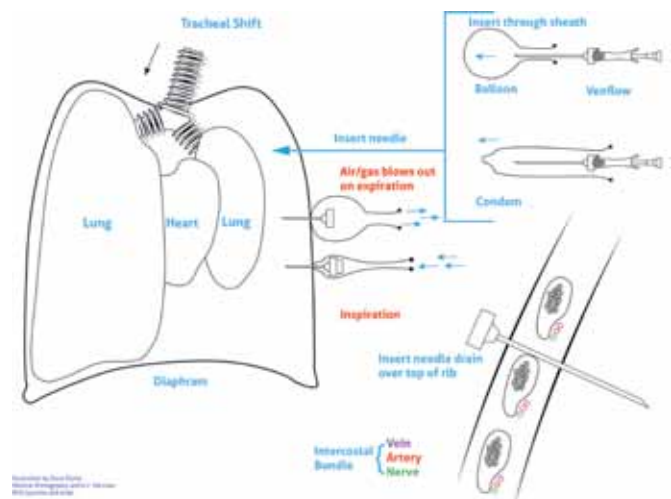
By now the Boeing 747 had reached a cruising altitude of 35,000 feet. Low level frequency (<4000 Hz) noise at sound pressure levels of about 65 dB render stethoscopes virtually useless. Therefore, the doctors had to rely on their clinical skills in making a diagnosis. They also found that the trachea was shifted away from the side of the injury – a tell-tale sign of a tension pneumothorax which is a medical emergency.

The tension is caused by influx of air into the space between the chest wall and the collapsed lung, increasing with each breath cycle. This in turn leads to progressive compression of the vital structures within the mediastinum.

Decompression of a tension pneumothorax is achieved by insertion of a one-way valve between the cavity and the outside.

The method employed by the emergency doctors was heroic but a less invasive simple method is described which involves hollow-bore hypodermic canula or needle and a rubber or latex balloon.

For this simple and effective miniature chest drain, the sharp end of the needle is pushed through the end of the rubber balloon (or condom) and then inserted through the chest wall.



The needle should be inserted just above the upper border of the rib to avoid the vein-artery-nerve (neuro-vascular bundle) that run below the arc of each rib. In a tension pneumothorax, a whoosh of air will be followed by rapid relief.

Pneumothoraces from shrapnel penetration of the chest are common injuries on the battlefield. The above method of surgical improvisation was used during the Viet Nam conflict using rubber condoms and a hollow-bore needle. The lubricated latex creates a one-way valve so that air may exit the cavity without the need for an underwater seal. Some treated invalids were even able to whistle through their makeshift chest valves.

Due to the differential diffusion coefficients of the gaseous constituents of air, after equilibration, the gas in a stable pneumothorax become pure nitrogen (2).

### References

1. Wallace TW, Wong T, O’Bichere A, Ellis BW. Managing in flight emergencies. *BMJ* 1995 Aug 5;311(7001):374-6. DOI: 10.1136/bmj.311.7001.374
2. Sahn SA, Haffner JE. Spontaneous pneumothorax. *N Eng J Med* 2000;342:868-74. DOI: 10.1056/NEJM20000323342120



Photo of the northern Gayo Plateau landscape (Gayo Plateau, Indonesia 2024) by Wendy A Mustaqim, 2022 Judith Heath Explorer.



Photo of SES-endorsed expedition leader, Timm Döbert (R) with Bill Ault (L) crossing Canada on bikes.



# Supporting SES

## *lots of opportunities available*

We are extremely grateful to those individuals and companies that have supported us in all sorts of ways during the year. As you can see, we have been extremely lucky to secure generous support and sponsorship for our Explorer Awards, Honorary Awards, Oscars of Exploration presentation evening, Explorer Series talks and our website and socials. There are still plenty of opportunities available and many different ways to support us...

### **SES Explorer Award for Inspirational & Scientific Trailblazing**

You can help us continue to enable the next generation of scientific explorers by contributing to our SES Explorer Award for Inspirational & Scientific Trailblazing.

Current supporters of this award are Rowan Bentall Charitable Trust, the Coleridge Family, David Prichard and the Trustees of SES.

We are seeking contributions of £1,000 or more to enable us to increase the grant amount to **£10,000**.

Contact **Nikki Skinner** (nikki@ses-explore.org).

### **Honorary Awards**

Our Honorary Awards recognise and celebrate those individuals who have achieved great things, and whose passion, determination, and grit are an inspiration to us all. Sponsors hold the privilege of presenting the award to the winner at the Oscars of Exploration presentation evening. There are four Honorary Awards:

- **Young Scientific Explorer**
- **Pioneer with Purpose**
- **John Blashford-Snell Explorer**
- **Lifetime Achievement**

Thanks to **Peter and June Felix** (Young Scientific Explorer sponsor),

**Christopher Wright** (Lifetime Achievement sponsor) and **The de Laszlo Foundation** (John Blashford-Snell Explorer sponsor – formerly Explorer of the Year), only one of our Honorary Awards remained unsponsored this year. These awards are sponsored on a three-year commitment cycle. This means we will be looking to renew sponsorship during 2025, ready for 2026.

Contact **Henrietta Thorpe** (henrietta@ses-explore.org).

### **Oscars of Exploration Presentation Evening**

Our Explorer Awards and Honorary Awards are presented to inspirational leaders and scientific trailblazers each year at our prestigious presentation evening in London – the **Oscars of Exploration**.

RSK Group is the proud Headline Sponsor of this unique event (and has been for the last six years). Base Camp Food is a Supporting Sponsor (and has been for the last two years).

We are looking for more Supporting Sponsors to help us grow this event. Items such as the Explorer Packs we give to our winners are available to sponsor!

Contact **Nikki Skinner** (nikki@ses-explore.org).

### **Explorer Series**

We organise a full and varied programme of talks each year (see **Dates for your Diary 2025** for this year's speakers).

These evenings are held at a central London location and give like-minded people the opportunity to get together and listen to an inspirational speaker in a relaxed and fun environment. Optimist Performance, via Advisory Board member, Ollie Phillips, is the proud sponsor of our Explorer Series.

We'd love some Supporting Sponsors too – the more, the merrier!

Contact **Henrietta Thorpe** (henrietta@ses-explore.org).

### **Publications**

We put a lot of time and effort into communicating with the SES family and friends. We'd like to enhance our communication and are looking for a Publications Sponsor to support the production and growth of this vital means of sharing all our expedition and exploration news. Publications include:

- **Scientific Explorer Annual Review**
- **Oscars of Exploration Event Brochure**
- **Exploration Revealed and our e-Newsletters**

Contact **Henrietta Thorpe** (henrietta@ses-explore.org).

### **Website and Socials**

Our Socials play a key role in how we share the impact of our work. We are really grateful to Lifetime member, Chris Brown, for his generous sponsorship of our Socials this year. We would welcome more support to enable us to develop and grow this engaging means of sharing our expedition and exploration news. Website and Socials include:

- **Website**
- **Instagram, Facebook, YouTube**

Contact **Nikki Skinner** (nikki@ses-explore.org).

### **Podcasts**

Our Podcast series is NEW and is an exciting initiative that will enable our community to listen to our explorers in conversation!

Contact **Henrietta Thorpe** (henrietta@ses-explore.org).

# Sincere Thanks

Without sponsorship, donations, and legacies left in Wills, it would be impossible for us to continue. We are extremely grateful to the following for their generous and vital support this year.

*John Blashford-Snell, Christopher Wright FRGS, Vanessa O'Brien, The de Laszlo Foundation, Peter and June Felix, TJ Halbertsma, Ollie Phillips (Optimist Performance), Chris Brown, Sir Charles Blois Bt, Family and Friends of Elodie Sandford, Judith Heath\*, Neville Shulman CBE, The O'Hea Charitable Trust, Rowan Bentall Charitable Trust, Coleridge Family, David Prichard MBE\*, Sue Sljivik, RSK, Base Camp Food, Verne Grinstead, Jane Davis FRGS, David and Jacs Taylor-Smith, Jeremy Fish, James Cochrane, Jason De Carteret, James Forrest, Nick and Nikki Horne, The Earl of Leicester, Richard Miller, Dom Moorehouse, Toby O'Connor, Raleigh International, Raleigh UK Society, Lt Col Mathew Woodward and the Household Cavalry (London Marathon runners), Grumbar Charitable Trust, Alex Finnen, Trevor Humphreys, S Wilson, Sherborne Science Café, Sutton Veny Church and the Trustees of SES.*

*\*Deceased*

## Other ways to support SES

### London Marathon

If you are interested in running the London Marathon to raise funds for SES, please contact **Vicky Hankinson** (admin@ses-explore.org).

### Make a Donation

Making a donation to SES is easy...and don't forget that Gift Aid enables us to claim an extra 25p for every £1!

- **JUSTGIVING** – type *Scientific Exploration Society* in the charity search.
- **CHARITIES AID FOUNDATION** – type *Scientific Exploration Society* in the charity search.
- **CHEQUE** – cheques should be made payable to **Scientific Exploration Society** and sent to Gail Lloyd, Scientific Exploration Society, Expedition Base, Motcombe, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 9PB.

We commit to using any donations received in an efficient and cost-effective way.



### RAISE FUNDS AS YOU SHOP!

If you buy online through the easyfundraising app, you will be raising funds for us. There are over 7,000 brands ready to donate, including eBay, Argos, John Lewis, and M&S, and it won't cost you a penny.

#### ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS:

1. Go to **easyfundraising** and join for free.
2. Every time you shop online, go to easyfundraising first to find the site you want and start shopping.
3. After you've checked out, the brand will make a donation to SES at no extra cost to you whatsoever!

There are no catches or hidden charges and we will be really grateful for your donations.

Thank you for your support.



# Accounts

## Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 30th June 2024

	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted fund £	2024 Total funds £	2023 Total funds £
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM</b>				
Donations and legacies	23,226	35,890	59,116	77,961
<b>Charitable Activities</b>				
Charitable Activities	15,786	-	15,786	16,155
Other trading activities	56,225	2,375	58,600	51,944
Investment income	3,652	-	3,652	1,714
<b>Total</b>	<b>98,889</b>	<b>38,265</b>	<b>137,154</b>	<b>147,774</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON</b>				
Raising funds	19,367	500	19,867	16,770
<b>Charitable activities</b>				
Charitable Activities	73,936	40,163	114,099	101,387
<b>Total</b>	<b>93,303</b>	<b>40,663</b>	<b>133,966</b>	<b>118,157</b>
<b>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)</b>	<b>5,586</b>	<b>(2,398)</b>	<b>3,188</b>	<b>29,617</b>
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>				
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>	<b>262,585</b>	<b>14,845</b>	<b>277,430</b>	<b>247,813</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<b>268,171</b>	<b>12,447</b>	<b>280,618</b>	<b>277,430</b>

## Balance Sheet at 30th June 2024

	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted fund £	2024 Total funds £	2023 Total funds £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>				
Investments	100	-	100	100
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>				
Debtors	2,571	-	2,571	1,155
Cash at bank	293,259	12,447	305,706	307,328
	295,830	12,447	308,277	308,483
<b>CREDITORS</b>				
Amounts falling due within one year	(27,759)	-	(27,759)	(31,153)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>268,071</b>	<b>12,447</b>	<b>280,518</b>	<b>277,330</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>268,171</b>	<b>12,447</b>	<b>280,618</b>	<b>277,430</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>268,171</b>	<b>12,447</b>	<b>280,618</b>	<b>277,430</b>
<b>FUNDS</b>				
Unrestricted funds			268,171	262,585
Restricted funds			12,447	14,845
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>			<b>280,618</b>	<b>277,430</b>

Please see the full accounts emailed to members for Notes details.

# Charity Information

## Founder and Honorary President

Colonel John Blashford-Snell CBE, DSc (Hon), D Eng (hc), FRSGS

## Patron

HRH Prince Edward, Duke of Edinburgh

## Chair

Peter Felix CBE

## CEO

Henrietta Thorpe

## Honorary Treasurer

David Zeitlin

## Honorary Solicitor

Jenny Wordsworth

## Council Members

Peter Felix CBE (*Chair*), David Zeitlin, Diane Allen OBE, Barbara Jeffrey, Trevor Moss, Briony Turner, Jeremy Fish

## Co-opted Council Members

Jane Davis FRGS, Jenny Wordsworth, Dr Alexander Finnen, Lucy Shepherd, Reza Pakravan

## Advisory Board

Benedict Allen FRGS, Steve Backshall, James Balfour, Philip Beale FRGS, Mark Beaumont, Dame Dr Claire Bertschinger, John Blashford-Snell CBE FRGS, George Bullard, Preet Chandi MBE, Simon Chinn, Craig Cohon, HSH Prince d'Arenberg, Jane Davis FRGS, Damon de Laszlo DL, Robin Edwards, Peter Felix CBE, Sir Ranulph Fiennes OBE, Dr Alexander Finnen, Ben Fogle, Dr Jane Goodall DBE, Bear Grylls, Pen Hadow, TJ Halbertsma, Annabel Heseltine, Sean Hotung, Neil Laughton, Daniel Leeb, Jennifer Murray, Simon Murray CBE, Vanessa O'Brien FRGS, Reza Pakravan FRGS, Major Timothy Peake CMG, Ollie Phillips, Dr Mary Jean Reimer, Colonel Martin Romilly OBE, Neville Shulman CBE, Konstantin Sidorov, Rosie Stancer (*Chair*), Professor Mike Stroud OBE, Haydyn Tanner FRGS, David Taylor-Smith MBE FRGS, Paul Turner, Per Wimmer, Levison Wood, Christopher Wright FRGS

## Honorary Vice Presidents

Phyllis Angliss, Wendy Bentall FLS, John Davies, Sir Ranulph Fiennes Bt OBE, Pen Hadow, Neil Laughton, Andrew Mitchell, Richard Snailham MA, FRGS, Rosie Stancer, Lucy Thompson

## SES Expedition Base

CEO Henrietta Thorpe ([henrietta@ses-explore.org](mailto:henrietta@ses-explore.org))  
Explorer Awards Manager Nikki Skinner ([nikki@ses-explore.org](mailto:nikki@ses-explore.org))  
Membership & Finance Manager Gail Lloyd ([gail@ses-explore.org](mailto:gail@ses-explore.org))  
Executive Secretary Victoria Hankinson ([admin@ses-explore.org](mailto:admin@ses-explore.org))  
Film Trusts Ros Wardall  
Honorary Logistics Officer Dave Smith ([dave@ses-explore.org](mailto:dave@ses-explore.org))  
Archivists Ros Wardall and Val Smith

## Awards Committee

Diane Allen OBE (*outgoing Chair*), Edward Cooper (*incoming Chair*), James Borrell, Nikki Skinner, Lucy Shepherd, Helen Spencer, Scott Pallett, Eleanor Drinkwater, Eleanor Flatt, Amber Carter, Eilidh Munro, Chaz Powell, Reza Pakravan, James Kempton

## Overseas Representatives

Econ Yolima Cipagauta (*Latin America*), Major General Joe Singh MSS, MSc (*Guyana*), Professor Terbish (*Mongolia*), Captain John Hinchliffe (*Myanmar*), Ato Solomon Behre (*Ethiopia*), Jill Weir (*Canada*)

## Volunteers

Charlotte Austwick ([charlotte@ses-explore.org](mailto:charlotte@ses-explore.org))  
Eleanor Drinkwater ([eleanor@ses-explore.org](mailto:eleanor@ses-explore.org))  
Alex Kerridge ([explorationrevealed@ses-explore.org](mailto:explorationrevealed@ses-explore.org))  
Michael Murphy ([explorationrevealed@ses-explore.org](mailto:explorationrevealed@ses-explore.org))  
Briana Gervat ([explorationrevealed@ses-explore.org](mailto:explorationrevealed@ses-explore.org))  
Dr Susannah Cass ([explorationrevealed@ses-explore.org](mailto:explorationrevealed@ses-explore.org))  
Kirsten Braund (*Press*)  
Ray Baldock (*Operation Drake alumni*)

## Voluntary Advisors

Anthony Belchambers, Julia Thorold

## Registered Office and Charity Number

Mullins Mead, Donhead St Mary, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 9DS  
Charity Number 267410

## Bankers

Natwest Bank plc, The Commons, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 8JY

## Independent Examiner

Dr Shona Wardrop CA, Chariot House Limited, Chartered Accountants, 44 Grand Parade, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 9QA

SES co-operates with SES Jersey.

## NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN Annual General Meeting

6pm on Wednesday 26 March 2025 at The Park Tower Hotel (Knightsbridge)

### AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting
3. Matters Arising
4. Chairman's Report
5. Treasurer's Report and Adoption of Accounts
6. Election of Council Members
7. Re-election of Independent Examiner
8. Any Other Business

Registered Office: Mullins Mead, Donhead St Mary, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 9DS  
January 2025

By order of the Council



**SCIENTIFIC  
EXPLORATION  
SOCIETY**

2024 Young Scientific Explorer, Jack Dalton –  
Kid Conservationist – planting a tree (Indonesia).

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*Scientific Explorer Annual Review designed and produced by SES CEO Henrietta Thorpe.*