



Hi!

It's been a hectic start to the season for me, starting in February with me flying from Switzerland to Norway to work on the Arctic expedition, a week of teaching Mountain and Arctic survival skills and then 3 days playing in one of my favourite environments with the other instructors once the clients had gone home. What more could I ask for? Well the best Northern light show in 20 years, evenings talking to Sami reindeer herders, Norwegian style saunas, Ice fishing on a frozen lakes and banter round the fire, the list could go on.

In March I was back in Switzerland to finish off the ski season, leading and instructing school age children skiing and snowshoeing finished off with plenty of Vin Chaud (obviously out of teaching hours!) This brought to an end a rather a disappointing ski tour season with avalanche risks jumping from two to four in a day, even the guides weren't going out! However, I Still managed some end of season off piste powder days and was happy to finish the season on a high of Morphine having caught a huge amount of air – backwards! On one ski, off a cliff (all intentional, honest!!) and knocked myself out – but no serious damage done!

April saw me back in the UK working on the Bushcraft Expeditions UK programme, a Foundation course. I love working on this course and always admire the determination and interest the clients have. To be able to step out of the 'real world' and enter the world of woodland wanderings and living is a brave and pioneering journey often having life changing effects on people.

From the foundation course, it was off to Georgia (the one near Russia) to be rope safety assistant for another TV shoot, amazing! My days consisted of running up and down scree slopes rigging safety lines and access ropes for the crew, hugely physical but the team were brilliant! Everyone mucking in with all the jobs and plenty of banter in a beautiful country with an amazing variety of environments. I found it moving talking to the locals about the devastation caused by the Russians, a very positive, down to earth people. I would love to go back next winter to ski tour some of the larger peaks. I have found a guidebook and have been planning my routes already!

From the TV shoot, I had 8 days down time to catch up on my Psychology degree that I am studying for and to get some much-needed rock climbing in with friends in Yorkshire before heading off to Nova Scotia on the Bushcraft Expeditions open canoe trip.

Nova Scotia, well, wow! 10 days open canoeing and practical bushcraft. The team that went out were from all walks of life and were a great bunch, working together, paddling, making camp and

generally looking after one another. The Tobiatic Wilderness area was stunning, photos do not do it justice; the first couple of days saw the team out practicing new canoe skills under the watchful eye of Jed and learning Campcraft skills with myself, Murray (a Mi'K Maq elder) and Woody. The rest of the trip was spent enjoying the sun, learning loads and enjoying the incredible views.

The Tobeatic is amazing, from the eerie pines of the flowage, where the land was intentionally flooded, leaving the pines standing dead in several feet of water, eternally suspended as twisted reminders that they were once part of the surrounding forest, to the many islands and streams. We visited the Old Growth Island, a site revered by the native Mi'K Maq Indians as a burial site and island of spirits. Although not superstitious myself, sitting within the pristine growth of the island I could feel the old forest alive around me. I have never been in an environment that feels so healthy and alive. It has never been forested or touched and stands as a reminder to us of how woodland is when untouched by human hand. I loved this trip and have made friends that will remain with me for many years to come.

From Nova Scotia, I was straight into another foundation course, and then I headed for North Wales to carry out my IML, this time being taught rather than teaching. I have learnt so much and hope to pass this knowledge on in the next few years as an International Mountain Leader. I aim to work all over the world meeting new and exciting peoples and cultures, introducing people to travel, passing on my love of the mountainous environment and having plenty of adventures both adrenalin fuelled and cultural along the way.

Finally, I am heading home to the Alps to meet up with some friends for a couple of weeks of play, plenty of routes to tick off, fingers crossed for good weather though plenty of places to go if not so great. Can't wait! Then a month of work as senior instructor on a summer programme with plenty of climbing instruction and bushcrafting in the Alps.

All in all a fairly busy year so far! I am back to the UK in August for more UK based courses before heading off to the adventures of the Bornean jungle in September. I look forward to meeting you all at some point whether in the UK or further afield. Happy bushcrafting.

Meg.