



British Exploring Society

Monday 11th – Tuesday 12th April 2022

Biographies



Lee Bagnall

Lee is the Chief Executive of JD Outdoor, this is the Outdoor Division of the JD Sports Fashion PLC Group, it includes Iconic Brands like Blacks & Millets as well as the largest outdoor retailer in the UK, GO Outdoors. Lee is passionate about the outdoors, he is also a non-executive Director for the Midlands Air Ambulance Trading charity and the Outdoor Industry Association. Lee started his career in the family furniture business and has previously held senior positions in several Blue Chip retailers including Wickes, B&Q & Bensons Beds.



Alison Bennett

Alison is currently Head of Sustainability at Plimsoll Productions. Plimsoll is an independent television production company, based in Bristol which make documentaries for UK and international audiences.

Previously, as Head of Community Outreach at Plimsoll, Alison created two full time internships and organised work experience opportunities for local young people through collaborations with schools and community groups like Babbasa.

Before joining Plimsoll, Alison worked as a Series Producer at the BBC.

'As a young person from Teeside I had two formative experiences. Firstly as a British Legion sailing trainee on a three masted schooner and secondly as a researcher at the Smithsonian Environmental Research station in Maryland USA. These opportunities opened my eyes to new possibilities and gave me a greater understanding of myself and the direction I wanted my life to take.





Oliver (Olly) Bolton

ClimateTech entrepreneur and CEO at Earthly, a platform that helps 250+ businesses remove carbon, restore nature and support the communities most impacted by climate change. He previously launched Europe's first B Corp drinks company Waterbomb, also a founding 2015 UK B Corp and co-founded the UK's leading subscription nutrition brand VITL. He is a Virgin VOOM award winner receiving a £2m prize package from Sir Richard Branson. An active B Corp Ambassador, he also mentors school children through The Prince's Trust. He is passionate about both reversing climate breakdown and restoring our planet.



Holly Burns

Holly joined British Exploring Society in Summer 2019 as Explorer Recruitment and Engagement Coordinator. An Adventure Tourism Management graduate, Holly's previous roles have included working as a Youth Worker and Youth Development Officer in the Scottish Highlands and teaching snowboarding around Europe and New Zealand. Holly is passionate about working with young people in the outdoor industry and believes that every young person should be entitled to the same opportunities no matter their background.



Dr Susannah Cass

Susannah has a background in the natural sciences, biodiversity and conservation, and is an Associate Lecturer in Environmental Science and Ecology at the Open University. She is also a qualified rowing coach, and trustee of East Anglia Youth Rowing. Susannah is currently completing a Masters in Education at the University of Cambridge, where her research interests focus on the intersection of science education and outdoor learning. She has been an expedition leader with the British Exploring Society since 2017, as Chief Scientist on two Peruvian Amazon expeditions and a Knowledge Leader in Iceland and Scotland.



Helena Craig

Helena has been interested in race equality, diversity and inclusion since a teenager. As a partner in a large Bristol law firm, she tackled white elitism, successfully turning her department into a diverse one of 30% Visible Minority Ethnic (VME) people. Since retiring, she has been involved in conservation, supporting her 18-year-old daughter Mya-Rose Craig (AKA Birdgirl <http://birdgirluk.blogspot.co.uk>) with her nature camps, Race Equality in Nature Conferences and campaigning. She is Chair of Black2Nature, aiming to make nature ethnically diverse.



Mark Downey

Since returning from Iceland in 1991 as a Young Explorer with British Exploring, Mark has spent the last 30 years working outdoors with young people. In 2015 Mark joined British Exploring as an Adventure Leader in the Peruvian Amazon, River Leader in the Yukon 2017. Returning to lead on UK Explorers Scotland and Yukon expeditions in 2019. As a qualified and current Mountaineering, Kayaking, Sailing, Powerboat Instructor Mark has led adventurous outdoor learning experiences for young people in the remote areas of the UK as well as overseas. In his role as Centre Director / CEO at CMC Adventure Mark has the responsibility for, the strategic guidance of the organisation and the day to day running of 2 Outdoor Education centres in North Wales.



Sam Drawbridge

Sam joined British Exploring Society as Membership Officer in September 2018, having previously worked in the corporate world for a number of years. In October 2020 he joined the Expeditions Team as Senior Expedition Coordinator and in January 2022 became Expeditions Manager.



James Dyer

James has over 20 years of expedition experience in all environments, with young people, commercial client's, research scientists and TV/ film crews.

A long history of working within the Outdoor Education Sector, he was the Operations Manager for the British Exploring Society between 2011 & 2016, and continues to work with the society in a range of advisory roles, as a Fellow and as a Chief Leader.

James works as a Safety & Security Advisor for TV/ Film productions, research expeditions and expedition organisations, organises and leads expeditions and continues to be involved with youth development through a range of other roles.



David Emmett

David works at the Hempel Foundation, which is based in Denmark. This foundation philanthropically funds projects around the world in two important sectors - education and nature. David is responsible for defining and overseeing the strategic direction of the foundation's philanthropic investments in nature conservation, and he ensures that the funding has the greatest possible impact to help address the global biodiversity crisis. His work involves strategic guidance for nature conservation, the development of new partnerships, and on-the-ground support for conservation partners around the world. David is also looking at ways to align the education and nature portfolios and programs of the Hempel Foundation.



Rhiane Fatinikun

Passionate about social inclusion, Rhiane is an award winning community advocate and the founder of Black Girls Hike UK CIC - A safe space for Black women to connect and develop in the outdoors, which is spearheading a movement that's making a vital difference to the mental and physical health of Black women.



Mark Fawcett

Mark is the founder and Chairman of We Are Futures and has 25+ years of experience in the field of youth development. He works directly with major corporates such as Sky, NatWest, bp and Pfizer to help them shape and deliver their approaches to social impact, community engagement and young talent development. His work challenges organizations to do more to tackle inclusivity and diversity as well as to drive improved social mobility. He was previously MD at World Challenge, training expedition leaders and young participants as well leading expeditions himself.



Sophie Fernandes

Sophie was elected as Chairman of The Portal Trust in March 2022, both the first female and BAME person to hold this role of either the Trust or its predecessor Sir John Cass's Foundation. Having sat on the Foundation and now Trust since 2012, Sophie also previously held the roles of Deputy Chairman and Chairman of Grants. In addition to the Trust, she is elected to the City of London Corporation as a Common Councilman (since 2009), holding the position of Chairman of Licensing. Following on from a life-changing time as an Air Cadet when younger, Sophie is passionate about the positive influence adventurous training can have on young people's lives, and now channels this into time as a Trustee for The Ulysses Trust, of which HRH The Prince of Wales is Patron. In her day job, Sophie works for a Bank in the City of London.



Alastair (Al) Floyd

Alastair is the recently appointed Chief Executive of Tall Ships Youth Trust — the UK's oldest and largest youth development sail training charity. He joined the organisation in October 2021.

Alastair has a wealth of senior leadership experience within the charity and commercial sectors, including Director of Engagement and Development at the National Museum of New Zealand and Group Director of International Business at New Zealand Post.

Most recently, Alastair has led significant growth in philanthropy, corporate partnerships and visitor experience at the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, supporting children and adults with sight loss.

Previously, Alastair served in the military for both the RAF and Royal Marines with a distinguished career that included an active role in the UK's counter terrorism security teams and several operational deployments, including Afghanistan. Alastair lives on the coast and his son, Archie, has just successfully completed his A-levels, with his daughter, Kesia, taking her exams in 2022.



Belinda Kirk

Belinda is an explorer, speaker, author and campaigner promoting the benefits of adventure on our wellbeing. For the past twenty-six years, she has led international teams on youth development expeditions, biological research missions and remote filming trips. Belinda has sailed across the Atlantic, searched for camels in China's Desert of Death, discovered ancient rock paintings in Lesotho and gained a Guinness World Record for rowing unsupported around Britain. She has encouraged 30,000 ordinary people to engage in outdoor challenges through "Explorers Connect" and she shares how adventure can improve our mental health through her conference series "Adventure Mind". In 2021 she published the first book to explain why adventure is essential for our wellbeing "Adventure Revolution: The life-changing power of choosing challenge".



Ian Maginnis

Ian has held a range of senior management and board roles in large companies, government and charities, and has particular expertise in strategy, business transformation and finance. He has an MBA from INSEAD, France.

In recent years, Ian has focused on working to transform the lives of young people, through outdoor education and adventure. He is a Duke of Edinburgh leader, and has taken school groups on overseas expeditions with World Challenge.

Ian was a trustee of YHA for several years, as well as being treasurer and chair of the performance & audit committee. He is currently the chair of British Exploring Society, and works as a magistrate in Portsmouth.



Rebecca Mahallati

Rebecca joined British Exploring Society as Head of Development in October 2021. She has worked in fundraising roles within the third sector since 2005, primarily working for medical research charities, before moving into the youth sector with roles at OnSide and the Peter Jones Foundation. Rebecca believes it is vital we offer young people opportunities to try something new, raise their aspirations and create a better future for themselves. As a fundraiser, Rebecca feels privileged to be able to connect people to a cause they are passionate about and show them the impact their support is making. Rebecca is also a trustee of a cancer bereavement charity, The Loss Foundation.



Daniel (Dan) Mazhindu

Daniel has worked in the outdoor industry for over a decade, all across the UK and Europe, where he has been an instructor, Chief Instructor and Senior Manager. His current main day job is Head of Training and Development at a UK university, based in Wales. He is also in his local Mountain Rescue team, where he is the Press Officer, a Medic and one of the Training Officers. He is married and has a young daughter.



Haroon Mota

Founder of Active Inclusion Network CIC.

Championing Diversity in Outdoors & Fitness. Founded projects include Muslim Hikers, Muslim Runners & Muslim Cyclists.

Former Head of Challenge Events at Penny Appeal. Highly experienced in fundraising & challenge events. Specialising in diversity and inclusion for health, fitness & outdoors.



Soo Redshaw

Experiential educator, Executive coach, Expedition leader. First-hand experience gained through working and volunteering of the benefits of being in the outdoors for people young and old. I am fortunate to live in Cumbria. I am involved (pro bono) in training and establishing more youth workers and helping with the strategy for an initiative to encourage more young people to be able to access the outdoors in my own wonderful county.



Jennie Richardson

Freelance outdoor and environmental education tutor based in North Wales. Mountain leader, sea kayak coach, geography teacher, field studies tutor, expedition leader and nature enthusiast.

British Exploring leader for 9 years and chief leader for the new 2022 Kyrgyzstan expedition.

Passionate about making the outdoors accessible, and the impact that time outdoors and expedition style experiences can have on a persons development and confidence.

I enjoy running, yoga and cooking. I can generally be found on the hills, on the sea, in a tent, in a boat ... or curled up by the fire with my dog.



Paul Rose

A man at the front line of exploration and one of the world's most experienced divers, field science and polar experts, Paul helps scientists unlock and communicate global mysteries in the most remote and challenging regions of the planet.

He is an experienced television presenter and radio broadcaster. With a proven track record in business engagements, Paul is a sought-after speaker, chairman, host and moderator for industry, government and NGO events.

Former Vice President of the Royal Geographical Society and Chair of the Expeditions and Fieldwork Division, Paul is currently Expedition Leader for the National Geographic Pristine Seas Expeditions.

He was the Base Commander of Rothera Research Station, Antarctica, for the British Antarctic Survey for 10 years and was awarded HM The Queen's Polar Medal. For his work with NASA and the Mars Lander project on Mt Erebus, Antarctica, he received the US Polar Medal.

Paul is a mountain and polar guide leading Greenland Icecap crossing and mountaineering expeditions and polar science support logistics. He worked for four years as a Mountain Safety consultant to the oil industry in the Middle East.

On his 2012 Greenland expedition, Paul led the first expedition to successfully traverse a new 275km icecap route of Knud Rasmussen Land and repeated his first ascent of the north face of Gunnsbjørnfjeld, the highest mountain in the Arctic.

His professional diving work includes science support diving in Antarctica as the British Antarctic Survey's Institute Diving Officer. He ran the US Navy diver training programme at Great Lakes Naval Training Centre and trained many emergency response dive teams including the Police, Fire Department and Underwater Recovery Teams. He remains a current and active PADI Dive Instructor.

Paul co-authored the BBC book, Oceans and wrote the Humboldt and Magellan chapters for the book Great Explorers published by Thames and Hudson in 2010. His commissioned magazine articles include the Sunday Times Eureka magazine and a monthly column for Sport Diver magazine.



Sat Singh

Sat founded the charity as a community project following personal experiences in his youth with health challenges and caring responsibilities. Having struggled at school with Dyslexia he was able to go to University and studied Art History at Goldsmiths College University of London. He was able to start the Foundation in 2006 which went on to become the charity it is today in 2009. He has continued to lead the charity's Strategy and future development. Sat was awarded The Anne Frank Award in 2007 and in 2011 The Business In the Community Charity Partner leader of the Year, and was selected to join an international Leadership Expedition to Antarctica in 2010 to help engage and inspire young people with the impacts of climate change. Outside of his work with Renaissance Foundation Sat is a passionate Arsenal Fan & sports enthusiast.



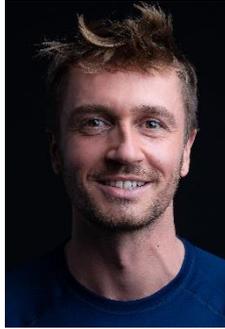
Rachel Smillie

Rachel has extensive experience in the Education sector, including in teaching, student support and outreach work. In her current role she leads on developing effective partnerships to deliver doctoral programmes and research training and skills development. Rachel is a rowing coach and is passionate about helping young people to enjoy the benefits of sport and the outdoors. She is training to row 3000 miles unsupported across the Atlantic as part of a female trio and is using this project as a platform to inspire girls and women to take on their own challenges. She is not very good at sitting still and enjoys fell running, bouldering and freediving when not messing around in boats.



Kate Suart

Kate joined British Exploring Society as our Head of Community and Impact at the beginning of 2019. Her previous roles involved helping young people develop the key skills needed for a successful future and connecting them with opportunities in the financial services. She is passionate about working with young people from less advantaged backgrounds and ensuring they have access to opportunities that can change their lives.



Jelle Veyt

As a 17 year old teenager Jelle had a dark period in his life being caught up in a difficult home situation and ended up living (squats) on the streets for 3 years. Lucky to find the right people there, he decided to get a job and finally get back to school. He didn't have the opportunity to fail and became a physiotherapist at Ghent University. Now he uses his mental strength to inspire others through difficult situations in their lives. He is dedicated to create opportunities in life for people all around the world.

Since 9 years he's on a mission to climb the 7 summits and getting there by human power: The Secutec Seven Summits. He covered more than 50.000 km by bike, rowboat, foot and climbed 4 out of 7 summits (Elbrus, Everest, Carstens Pyramid and Kilimanjaro). He tries to work with environmental ngo's that he meets around the world where he hopes to connect them and help them wherever possible.



Harrison Wavell

Harrison is the Schools & Colleges programme Manager at the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, based on the Isle of Wight. His work focuses on integrating the circular economy – a new way of designing, making and using things within the means of the planet – into school level curricula, as well as creating online and face to face learning content and experiences for educators and students. Harrison's experience in education includes teaching English as a Foreign Language, secondary level English (UK), Creative Writing, Physical Education, and a variety of outdoor education activities. Outside of the circular economy, Harrison enjoys writing for children, storytelling, travelling, and surfing.



David Williams

David is the CEO of Forward Ever Inclusive Education CIC, which is a community interest company that specialises in the youth, education and social care sectors. It provides a variety of unique services responding to the needs of children, young people, education staff, youth work staff, youth offending staff and a range of professionals working to meet the needs of young people at risk.

David has extensive history of youth service management, training and development, and a strong background in youth crime prevention and youth related training.

Across 23 years David has worked in progressive roles across London and the South East Region. He has refined relationship-building skills and has experience of working collaboratively with a wide range of stakeholders and maintaining healthy relationships.



Honor Wilson-Fletcher

Honor joined British Exploring Society as CEO in 2016.

Previously she was CEO for 6 years at charity the Aldridge Foundation where she helped establish 12 state schools in some of the most deprived parts of England. This is when she had her first opportunity to take part in and see the positive impact of challenging overseas adventures with young people.

She started two businesses in her twenties - one whilst at college. She then had a happy career in bookselling and publishing working at organisations including Penguin Books, Waterstone's and with BOL.com before jumping the fence to the world of not-for-profits. She has since worked as a Director at the British Museum, Southbank Centre and the National Literacy Trust. She has served as a charitable trustee since her twenties with organisations as diverse as the Edinburgh Book Fair and Enabling Enterprise and is now on the board of social business Catch-22 and a special advisor to CIC Skills Builder.



Nigel Winser

Kenyan born and trained as a life scientist at Westminster University, Nigel has worked with the international field science community all his life, notably with the Royal Geographical Society and Earthwatch. His expertise is to facilitate geographical research and citizen-science programmes that contribute to the protection and future management of natural ecosystems, notably in Africa, Middle East, Asia, Australia and the Indian Ocean. Nigel is currently working with conservationists in Oman, Kenya and India, is a judge of the Tusk Conservation Awards, the UK representative of the East African Wildlife Society and has continued links with Earthwatch and the RGS.



Shane Winser

Shane is responsible for expeditions and fieldwork at the Royal Geographical Society. She manages Geography Outdoors: the centre supporting field research, exploration and outdoor learning providing advice, information and training to anyone aspiring to undertake expeditions, fieldwork, and journeys with purpose that inspire action to create a more sustainable society.



Kwesia X

Kwesia grew up in Deptford, an inner city area of South-East London. Along with many of her friends, neighbors and peers, who all experienced a great deal of the challenges that come with living in an area, and with people, who have often been neglected, excluded and marginalized.

She struggled a great deal with making sense of senseless violence and trauma, she had faced, she found herself homeless, moving from sofa to sofa, and struggling with her mental health and well-being. Her life was chaotic, often harsh, without meaning or any sense of direction or purpose.

At her lowest, she received what could be regarded as a gift and a blessing. An opportunity to be part of a British Exploring Society's expedition to the Peruvian Amazon Rain-forest. She spent 3 weeks in a remote part of the jungle, with no phone or contact with the outside world, with a group of people that she barely knew.

This, in many ways, was a life-changing experience for her. She experienced the beauty of nature, where there was no judgement, just life teeming with energy and opportunity. And bonds of friendship and loyalty with strangers who had to discover ways to live and work together in order to be successful. On her return she started to think about connecting with other people, particularly with young people like herself, some of whom have never had the opportunity to experience anything other than poverty and hardship. She wanted to explore if a connection with nature, could touch them in a similar way that it had with herself.

This led to the start of City Girl in Nature, as a way to give back to her community. To share her love and passion for the outdoors, and belief that everybody should have the chance to be healed, to be nourished, and to life with abundance.

Dinner Guests



John Bothamley CBE

As well as a career in building design and property development I was able, in 1996, to establish the charitable Four Acre Trust supporting charities giving children a better start in life. From 2002 to 2006 I was on the board of the Association of Charitable Foundations ensuring the voices of smaller foundations were listened to.

From school governor to independent governor of a university my interests in education have grown over the years. In 2013 I started Talk The Talk a charity, hoping to become a social business, delivering workshops to children – 'confident communication for life' – possibly the most important attribute a child needs to succeed.



John Hartz

John co-founded Inflexion Private Equity in 1999. John's eagerness to see people make the most of themselves isn't limited to backing management teams to maximise their potential; he is equally keen to support young people. As such, he is a longstanding supporter of United World Schools, Outward Bound and The British Exploring Society. A keen skier and triathlete, John also enjoys travelling, with a particular love of trekking and climbing as well as camping under the stars in the Australian Outback.



Catherine Hartz

Catherine has spent all her working life as an NHS health care professional in a number of different roles and has had first-hand experience of supporting families to work with and overcome challenging situations. Keen to use her skill set she is a volunteer for a national charity. As Pastoral Governor for a school she is well aware of the challenges that young people face and the impact on their mental health and wellbeing. She would like all young people to have an opportunity to develop the skills and resilience they need to become confident adults and is a committed supporter of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, the Outward Bound and The British Exploring Society. An organic farmer, skier and walker.



Joanne Hay

Joanne has lots of experience in the not for profit and public sectors. She is an experienced leader currently with the Social Business Trust bringing together world class business expertise to tackle society's biggest issues.

Previous roles include CEO of a youth development charity, Advisor in the Prime Ministers Delivery Unit and in a Cabinet Office role leading on employee-owned business, alongside various board positions. Her early career started with doctoral research into environmental decision making and environmentally sensitive farming. Joanne is an avid hiker and passionate about everything outdoors.



Rahul Moodgal

Rahul serves as a Trustee, Patron and Development Board Chair for British Exploring Society. He works for some twenty charitable organisations as a Trustee, Patron, Advisor or in similar roles. His full time career is in Finance where he helps build organisations.



Alexandra Rickham

A sustainability consultant (social and environmental) specialising in sport over the last 5 years with the last 3 years building out the sustainability programme for a global sailing league. At the end of March 2022, I will take on the role of Head of Sustainability for World Sailing (international federation for sailing). Previous to this I was a full-time sailor representing ParalympicsGB at 3 Paralympic Games (Beijing, London and Rio) winning bronze medals at London 2012 and Rio 2016, 5 World Championship Titles and World Number 1 for over 7 years. My areas of focus are both environment and diversity & inclusion predominantly in sport.



Jon Slade

As chief commercial officer, Jon oversees the Financial Times' subscriptions business, global advertising sales operations, print and digital consumer marketing, customer services, business development and FT Strategies, the FT's subscription consultancy. Jon is the FT's first CCO, and was appointed to the FT Group executive board in December 2014.

Jon was previously the FT's B2C managing director, and before that the commercial director for global digital advertising and insight.

Jon joined the FT in 2002 as technology client manager, left the FT in 2005 to join News International, and returned to the FT in 2007 as commercial director for digital advertising.



Duncan Souster

Duncan is Chief Executive and a founding member of the Avelios team.

Duncan has significant experience working at board level across both the charitable and commercial sectors and is the former Chief Executive of The Jubilee Sailing Trust, where he led the charity's international expansion and worked with prominent philanthropists and corporate partners to establish high-impact programmes of work.

Prior to this, Duncan was Global Sales Director of ManpowerGroup, a Fortune 500 business services firm, where he led on a complex transformation to improve the management of key accounts across 86 countries.

Duncan has a BSc (First Class) from University College London, is a Trustee of the Voces8 Foundation (a charity that inspires young people through music) and a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Shipwrights.