



annual report 2005

Financial Year: January 2005 - December 2005
Registered Charity No. 1102633



apex challenge

Registered Address:

2 Roman Place, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS8 2DS.

The **Apex Challenge** is a registered charity and is governed by its own Declaration of Trust, agreed and signed by its trustees on 11th December 2003 and received by the Charity Commission on 20th January 2004, and amended by Supplemental Deed, agreed and signed by its trustees on 22nd February 2004 and accepted by the Charity Commission on 15th March 2004 on which date the charity was accepted in the Central Register of Charities.

The charity operates throughout England and Wales. It is also part of the Scout Association and operates under its rules and guidelines. Its aims are: "to promote the development of young people in achieving their full physical intellectual social and spiritual potentials, as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of the local national and international communities particularly by the provision of specialised outdoor activities."

The Apex Challenge currently has three trustees. These first trustees are permanent appointments:

Matthew Richards

53 Clumber Street, Hull, HU5 3RH.

David Pape

2 Roman Place, Leeds, LS8 2DS.

James Webster

2 Roman Place, Leeds, LS8 2DS.

New trustees may be appointed by the existing trustees for a term of one year by a resolution passed at a special meeting called under clause 15 of the Apex Challenge Declaration of Trust. In selecting individuals for appointment as trustees, the existing trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity.



“ “

We believe that through adventure, we challenge individuals so that they learn and experience new things that enrich their lives. The Apex Challenge provides national activity competitions for Scouts aged 14-25, offering a unique adventure experience.

” ”



The **Apex Challenge** set the following aims and objectives for 2005:

- To maintain and slightly increase the number of teams at each competition.
- To use different areas for the competition to make more people aware of the event and make it more varied for teams taking part.
- To increase the number of hits the website is receiving from teams taking part, prospective teams and teams who have taken part.
- To improve the website's structure and navigation.
- To improve the quality of the prizes at both competitions
- To achieve a grant to better guarantee the Apex Challenge's funding.
- To increase automation of the event and so reduce the amount of hours work required.
- To increase the amount of press coverage the event gets.
- To develop a strategy to develop the event in new ways in 2006 to ensure it doesn't get stale.

progress towards 2005 aims

1. To maintain and slightly increase the number of teams at each competition. The target is to get 50 teams at each competition of which at least 7 will be Scout Network. The Overnight Challenge in May attracted 67 teams including five from Scout Network. There were 41 teams at September's Daytime Challenge of which six were from Scout Network. While taken in isolation the September event did not meet the high target, looking at the year as a whole, there were an average of 54 teams at each event. **OBJECTIVE PARTIALLY ACHIEVED.**

2. To use different areas for the competition to make more people aware of the event and make it more varied for teams taking part. The May event moved to Sherwood Pines Forest Park in Nottinghamshire. In September teams discovered Froggatt and White Edge for the first time. Both areas proved very popular and the competition benefited from good relationships with the landowners and agencies managing the sites.. **OBJECTIVE ACHIEVED.**

3. To increase the number of hits the website is receiving from teams taking part, prospective teams and teams who have taken part. 2004 saw 574,000 hits on the Apex Challenge website which broke down into 6309 unique visitors looking at 83788 pages. In 2005 this increased to 870,000 hits with more than 2000 extra unique visitors and 121,489 pages being viewed. **OBJECTIVE ACHIEVED.**

4. To improve the website's structure and navigation. The website was redesigned at the start of 2005 and while no statistical research has been done to substantiate the improvement, questionnaires show no users complaining about navigational issues on the website. **OBJECTIVE ACHIEVED.**

5. To improve the quality of the prizes at both competitions. 2005 saw the Apex Challenge secure its biggest ever sponsorship deal. After hearing good reports about previous events Karrimor donated 24 rucksacks for the top teams at the September event. As well as

donations from companies including Vango and Silva, we were also able to offer adventurous days out including ski lessons, a high ropes course and the opportunity to try parascending. Unfortunately the value of donations for the May event didn't quite match what was available the previous year but the winning teams still went away with an impressive set of prizes. **OBJECTIVE PARTIALLY ACHIEVED.**

6. To achieve a grant to better guarantee the Apex Challenge's funding. The Local Network Fund made a sizeable donation to the Apex Challenge funds. **OBJECTIVE ACHIEVED.**

7. To increase automation of the event and so reduce the amount of hours work required. The software used to manage the event has been continually developed and fewer web pages in particular now need to be generated by hand. **OBJECTIVE ACHIEVED.**

8. To increase the amount of press coverage the event gets. The winners of the May event featured both in their local newspaper and on a local radio station. Their story also appeared on the front page of the Scout Association's national website. The event was also mentioned in a Nottinghamshire newspaper. A longer article was printed in Sheffield's Active8 magazine in September. All the coverage portrayed both the competition and Scouting in a positive and modern way. **OBJECTIVE ACHIEVED.**

9. To develop a strategy to develop the event in new ways in 2006 to ensure it doesn't become stale. A new event - Apex EXTREME is being developed for Autumn 2006 which will be a competition spread across an entire weekend. This will run in place of the regular Daytime Challenge. The exact format has yet to be finalised. **OBJECTIVE ACHIEVED.**

summary of achievements

- Attracted record numbers to May Overnight Challenge.
- Secured the competition's biggest ever sponsor - Karrimor.
- Coped with rain on an event day for the first time at the Daytime Challenge in September.
- Redesigned website to improve navigation and encourage more repeat visitors.
- Introduced compulsory risk assessment for all activity bases.
- Developed software to automate the team entry procedure and results web page generation.
- Introduced an extreme t-shirt wearing photo competition to increase interest in the website.
- Coped with rain on an event day for the first time at the Daytime Challenge in September.
- Automated the starting system for teams setting off during the event to help Scouts get into the playing area quicker.
- Developed a new welcome screen for teams to see how many penalty points have been deducted when they return.
- Improved electronic security of Apex website focussing on the mailing list and message board.
- Provided more activities at the September event than at any other. Many of the 15 bases were organised by new recruits who are keen to become regular Apex volunteers.





Matt Richards - Event Organiser, Chairman.

Once again it has been a pleasure to be part of the Apex Challenge team in 2005. We set ourselves some demanding targets, but as you'll have seen we managed to achieve almost all of them. It was great to see so many young people joining us in Sherwood Forest for our biggest ever event in May, and to take the competition to two new areas.

While providing safe, exciting adventure activities is our main aim, it's also been great to have had success with other parts of our work. The website has grown into one of the UK's top Scouting sites, and it was a huge achievement that a famous brand like Karrimor wanted to be associated with us. We're hoping to continue to develop deals like this so we can offer our young people even more.

Of course the success of the Apex Challenge is down to the hard work of everyone who volunteers their time. We've seen the team of organisers and helpers grow to more than fifty with many new faces this year. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one for their efforts.

So with so many things achieved in 2005, will we be resting for 2006? Not a chance! Already plans are well advanced for another spectacular overnight event in May. We're also introducing a brand new format in October where the adventure of the Apex Challenge will be coupled with backwoods survival techniques over a full weekend. We're determined to make these events as good as they can be and we've certainly now got a team who can, and will, make it happen.



David Pape - Assistant Event Organiser, Treasurer, Software Designer.

My main aim through 2005 has been to develop things that'll add more of a 'wow' factor to add to the experience teams get when they take part in the Apex Challenge. It's all about finding new ways of impressing them with something they might not have been expecting in the hope it brings a smile to their faces and marks the Apex Challenge out as something slightly different to other competitions they've been to.

A prime example of this is the new automated starting sequence. Pre-recorded announcements are played out by a computer calling teams to set off in the staggered start as their allocated time approaches. To say this part of the event now runs like clockwork may be stating the obvious, but everyone who's heard it, combined with on-screen display has been visibly impressed.

Teams arriving back from their six hours gathering Apex points now get an instant readout on a screen showing them their overall time and whether they've managed to avoid picking up any time penalties. The software now also calculates the "as the crow flies" distance they have travelled and average speed. Behind the scenes the web pages showing their details are now generated automatically, speeding up the time it takes them to be uploaded.

During 2006 I want to continue innovating new ways of making the technology do things we might least expect it to. I hope it'll be possible to have the results presentation automatically produced rather than having to type it up by hand. I want to add further value to the information screens the teams see at the start and the end of events, and I want to come up with new ways of automating mundane tasks behind the scenes.



James Webster - Assistant Event Organiser, Secretary, Webmaster.

Getting more people visiting the Apex Challenge website has always been a personal goal. It is only through our internet pages that we can tell the world about the competition. I was ecstatic to see the number of hits has increased so much over the past twelve months. Through the year-round photo competition and a constant effort to keep the site updated with new and fresh content it has encouraged repeat visitors to keep checking back.

Another important way of raising awareness of the Apex Challenge is through eye-catching promotional materials and numerous people commented throughout 2005 how professionally produced all our documents look. They all have a standard design which is consistent and hopefully easily recognisable, something which will continue.

Something new which has been tested during 2005, and which will also continue, is the use of audio at the event. Pre-recorded announcements and the introduction of dramatic music into the results presentations will be looked after by a dedicated sound engineer who will mix music live at each event. We are also considering how the website can be used to offer podcasts promoting events and using audio from them once the competitions have happened. This should hopefully increase the number of hits the website receives yet further and will be a unique selling point.

2006 will be a huge challenge with the introduction of the Apex EXTREME but the opportunities it poses for new and exciting ways to reinvent the competition should ensure it continues to be one of the most popular events in the Scouting calendar.



may 2005 overnight challenge

It was when the catering team told me there were 700 rashers of bacon to cook on Sunday morning that it really hit home just how big this year's Apex Overnight Challenge was. They had 350 bacon butties to make in just one hour to feed the masses who were part of this huge event. But they did it, and did it easily; just one of the successes that made up this biggest ever Apex Challenge.

It was fantastic to see so many teams arriving in the sunshine on Saturday night, literally from all over the UK. We had Explorers here from Nottinghamshire and right across Yorkshire, but teams also travelling up from Essex, down from Scotland and even flying in from the Isle of Man. 67 teams was a new Apex record and there was so much demand we even had another fifteen on the waiting list. Obviously the word was spreading and spreading very quickly. As teams started checking their maps and planning their strategies, the start team were loading the computerised scoring system ready for the huge starting board to set



the teams off in the staggered start. Meanwhile the forty-strong team who were running the bases were out stringing up rope bridges, blowing up bouncy castles, lighting up mountain bike trails, filling buckets with maggots and refuelling lawnmowers.

Teams soon began flocking to the activities. Glowsticks lit the way along the rope bridge illuminating not only the wobbling lines, but also the swampy marsh lurking underneath. Of course there were several who ended up a little closer than they'd hoped to that mud pit. The glowsticks were also lighting the way at the mountain biking. Scores of teams taking the challenge through the weaving paths, across narrow bridges and

tough jumps. Meanwhile others were facing their fears at the "Delve of Doom". Here hands were disappearing into buckets of everything from spaghetti to sawdust to things far more wiggly. You could hear the screams for miles!

But it was uncontrollable giggling that could be heard on the way to the bouncy castle base, the winner of this year's "best base" award. It was a case of getting all the team members through four hoops suspended above the castle. There was leaping, diving, somersaulting and even just hurling team members through these rings - and that was just the Network members. It's true you can't grow out of bouncy castles!

Elsewhere teams were rescuing Land Rovers from ditches, doing laser-quest style shoot-em-up challenges, escaping from giant rope webs and defusing bombs, but my moment of the night came from the canoeing base. Here teams were faced with a lake and an open canoe. All four had to successfully paddle it round to four submerged barrels to complete the challenge. But one team didn't quite make it. Their wobbling got a little out of control and these two girls and two boys ended up having an unscheduled swim. But despite being submerged in freezing water on a fairly cold night they were desperate to continue the Apex Challenge.

That enthusiasm was also echoed by the teams of Apex Chasers. Their

job was to lie in wait for teams, capture them and take points away. There were four pairs of chasers patrolling the event area, one pair it seems getting very much into the role. We heard reports of snares, smoke bombs, ambushes and trip wires as teams were captured. But not one complaint; this chasing element of the game was rated amongst the best bits of the competition.

By 2:00am teams of exhausted Explorers and knackered Network members began to arrive back at the start. Here they were greeted by not only a hot dog and hot drinks, but also a projected display of themselves at all the activity bases. Cheers erupted whenever their team appeared on the big screen. But before long, everyone was heading back to their tents for a well-earned rest.



Meanwhile the results team were springing into action. All the control cards were checked, the data entered into the event computers and the final leader board began to take shape. By the time everyone woke up each team had its own personalised results booklet ready to collect and take home as a souvenir.





sept 2005 daytime challenge



It was hard to believe but this was our 7th Apex Challenge. Six events before it and not once had we had a problem with the weather. Every time it had been perfect. So surely our time was due, and it came on Saturday 15th September, and the rain didn't stop for the entire day. But did this cause a washout? Were teams dragging their soggy selves back to the marquee after just a couple of hours? Not at all! The wettest ever Apex Challenge was also one of our best ever. It may have had more rain, but this event also had more activities, more distance to travel and more determination than ever before.

As teams started arriving, the rain was at full pelt. Explorers and Network members were sprinting into the marquee looking as if they'd already spent a weekend in a monsoon, but so far had only had to tackle the run from the car. Maps were being studied, and the information booklets were being scrutinised as the teams began to plan their winning strategies. As the time for the event briefing drew closer it became clear several teams had failed to arrive. Not being able

to face the rain is clearly the first hurdle on the Apex and one those pathetic teams had failed to clear!

As teams got ready to set off The Mountain Rescue Team were on hand to offer advice for staying safe in the adverse weather. "Keep going and keep smiling" was the general gist of it and that's advice it seems almost everyone stuck to.

The computerised starting system was soon in action firing teams off into the mist and rain every thirty seconds. From outside the marquee you could see small crowds of four heading off in every direction. It would be six hours before most would be seen by us again. Straight away though the activities were underway. There were fifteen of them this year - a new Apex record. Crucially there were many new activities and most with more of a wow factor than before.

The rain failed to hamper the rock climbing and abseiling activities where the competitors were hurling themselves down Curbar Edge, then scabbling their way back up

the slabs of Froggatt to reach their punches.

The skill games proved popular, whether shuffling an egg down a series of drainpipes, firing a rocket 60 feet into the air or manoeuvring a radio controlled Land Rover through a demanding course.

But it was the wet ones which proved most popular. Many of the competitors said they loved catapulting water bombs at their team-mate at the 'Pair of Wangers' base while others were getting a little wetter than they'd hoped for at the open water canoeing.

Our base organisers from the emergency services had again hit gold with their activity where the teams had to tackle real fire fighting gear to blast a high-powered jet of water across the valley towards the punch, complete with yellow helmets!

But winner of this event's best base was the giant water slide, 'Conquest'. A huge plastic sheet covered in water, foam, and

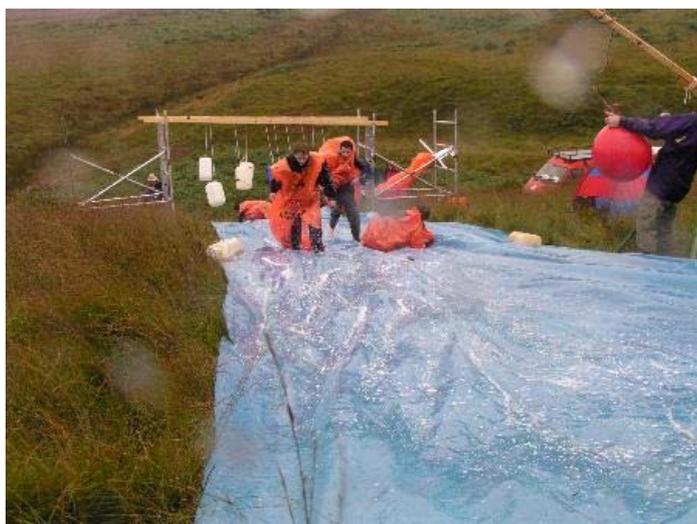


bubbles, which the teams had to race up and slide back down collecting flags as they went. Huge swinging obstacles were also knocking them off their feet. It was wet and wild, but then on a day like this, so was the whole competition.

As teams began to arrive back to the lure of the Apex barbeque, it soon became clear entering the results was to prove a little traumatic. Most of the control cards had become a ball of blue mush. Waterproof cards are now on the top of the list for next year. Some teams came back early with most more or less on time, but it was great to hear the huge cheer for the four guys from "Maltesers" as they stormed back to the tent more than two hours later than planned and still smiling.

Soon the results booklets were being handed out, everyone leaving with their own copy of the leader board, a breakdown of their team's performance and a map showing where they went. It soon became clear how missing the odd control, or going that extra mile had impacted on their score.

The rain may have been able to darken the skies, but it couldn't wash out the Apex Challenge.



accounts summary

The following accounts summary has been prepared from a full list of receipts and payments from the Apex Challenge accounts over the past 12 months. A full version of this detailing each item is available on request.

INCOME

Description	Amount
Balance Brought Forward from 2004	£ 583.16
Entry Fees & T-Shirt Payments (May 2005 Overnight Challenge)	£ 2120.00
Entry Fees & T-Shirt Payments (September 2005 Daytime Challenge)	£ 1230.00
Grant (The Local Network Fund)	£ 1100.00
Sponsorship Donation (Real Radio)	£ 125.00
TOTAL	£ 5158.16

EXPENDITURE

Description	Amount
Activity Base Expenses	£ 593.31
Asset Purchases	£ 410.00
Catering	£ 328.82
Event Day Equipment	£ 224.73
Event Site Fees	£ 70.00
First Aid Team Expenses	£125.00
Generator Hire & Fuel	£ 183.29
Marquee Hire	£ 857.75
Printing / Photocopying	£ 142.18
Prizes	£ 45.63
Stationery	£ 173.35
Toilet Hire	£ 70.00
Transport Fuel	£ 58.00
Trophies	£ 18.62
T-Shirts and Sweatshirts	£ 825.00
Website Hosting	£ 97.98
TOTAL	£ 4223.66

accounts summary (cont.)

BALANCE AS AT 31st DEC 2005

Description	Amount
Income	£ 5158.16
Expenditure	£ 4223.66
TOTAL BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD	£ 934.50

ASSETS HELD BY THE CHARITY

Purchase date	Description	Value at Purchase
03/05/2004	4 x Hi-Vis Tabards	£ 27.80
03/05/2004	Dark Peak Ordnance Survey Map	£ 7.11
03/05/2004	2 x Floodlights	£ 66.84
06/05/2004	Long arm stapler	£ 17.99
09/08/2004	Sound system (joint purchase with friends of Woodseats Scout Unit)	£ 220.00
06/09/2004	Laminator	£ 29.99
08/12/2004	Oki B4250 laser printer and USB cable	£ 185.65
10/05/2005	4 x Sodium Lamps	£ 110.00
08/11/2005	Projector (joint purchase with friends of Woodseats Scout Unit)	£ 300.00
	TOTAL VALUE AT PURCHASE	£ 965.38

LIABILITIES OWED BY THE CHARITY

Due date	Description	Amount
—	NONE	£ 0.00
	TOTAL	£ 0.00

This annual report is signed to certify it is a true and accurate record of the Apex Challenge's activities during 2005. To the best of our knowledge all details contained within this document are correct and no essential details have been deliberately omitted.

Matthew Richards (Trustee) _____

Date: _____

David Pape (Trustee) _____

Date: _____

James Webster (Trustee) _____

Date: _____



**If you would like further copies of
this annual report, please contact:**

Apex Challenge,
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A small charge to cover printing, postage
and packing will be required.



www.apexchallenge.co.uk