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LIVING OUR VALUES: COMMITTED TO INTEGRITY

The importance of a strong moral compass

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SILVER KAYAKING

Samuel Stuart, Secondary Geography Teacher and International Award Leader



On Thursday 10th January, 17 intrepid Year 12s set off from school to spend three days circumnavigating the island of Koh Samet by kayak, for their Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Silver practice expedition. Everyone was well-prepared for the adventure, having completed sessions on navigation, camp craft, cooking and, of course, kayaking. However, practising how to capsize in the calm surroundings of the 50m pool at school was an entirely different proposition to the first major challenge of the trip - a 3km crossing from the mainland to the north of the island. The groups set off in good spirits and immediately discovered the difficulty of paddling on a bearing, even in relatively benign conditions. With a few minor compass adjustments, all three groups made it safely to shore before continuing around the island to the first campsite. Tents were pitched in military fashion, dinner was cooked and there was even time for some swimming, before getting some well-deserved rest.

The following day, the challenge facing our paddlers increased. The weather was calm with a light breeze, but there was a tough 7km stretch between campsites, meaning that teamwork, communication and perseverance would be the order of the day. The route took us all the way round the southern tip of the island. As well as admiring the more rugged and less developed western shore, the students were also keeping an eye out for any evidence of human impact along the coast. Everyone arrived at the second campsite tired and sandy, but happy to have successfully completed a

gruelling day in the sun. The only piece of equipment not to complete the journey was Junha's glasses which, despite an extensive underwater search, were committed to the deep for all time.



The morning of Day Three saw everyone rested and in good spirits and all looking forward to the return crossing to the mainland. After an early wake-up call and a healthy breakfast the three groups gathered on the beach before launching off on the final leg of the journey. After a brief stop to practice some open-sea capsizing, 17 rugged-looking students landed at the final checkpoint in need of a shower and a comfortable bed.

All three groups impressed us hugely, with their positive attitude, cooperation, willingness to help each other out and sense of fun. Well done to everyone involved and the very best of luck with the qualifying expedition!