



# ACTIVITY TEAM EVENT

## Winter Skills Training 2010

Each year the County Activity Team looks at introducing new training opportunities. Winter 2009 saw the introduction of a winter skills course, aimed at those who wished to learn the skills necessary to enjoy our hills and mountains in winter conditions. As this proved to be a success, the Activity Team decided to run the course for a second year.

The course started with an informal evening session, looking at a professionally produced video from the MLTB showing some of the situations and conditions people on the course could have to deal with, allowing them to decide if they would be able to cope with the extra demands of winter mountaineering.



The session also involved looking at the various types of winter boots and crampons that are available today and assessed whether those held by individuals were suitable. By the end of the session everyone had been equipped with a pair of boots and crampons which they could use for the duration of the course.

As we had been experiencing ideal weather for this type of course, we decided to go to the Long Mynd, instead of Snowdonia, to carry out the practical part of the course on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2010. The snow conditions were ideal for the training session, with the group being able to start practicing the necessary skills within 5 minutes of leaving the car park.

Learning to walk in stiff winter boots and carrying ice axes was the first challenge for those on the course. The ridges and snow filled gullies were ideal for practicing the correct use of ice axes especially for learning how to perform ice axe arrests.

The group then looked at snow pack evaluation and avalanche risks and were shown how to construct a snow hole in which you could have spent the night if necessary.

After this training session, crampons were put on. For many of the group this was the first time they had worn and attempted to walk in crampons.

The day ended with the group climbing a short gully and negotiating a cornice before descending a ridge back to the car park.



The course was put together in an attempt to give people the confidence to go out into the hills in winter conditions. Their training has given them an insight into the skills and equipment required and how to use them in order to have a safe and rewarding experience.

If there is enough interest shown in running another next winter we will look at the possibilities of doing so.

**Join the adventure**

The Scout Association

Colin James. ACC Activities. Tel: 02476 405331  
email: colinandelaine@woodridgeave.freemove.co.uk

