

Imperial College Pyrenees Expedition - Hiking the GR10



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Imperial Exploration Board

CGCA (City and Guilds College Association)

Without whom this experience and expedition would not have been possible.

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INTRODUCTION and INFORMATION

A group of 4 of us who met from the Imperial College Outdoor Club decided to do an expedition over Summer 2015 involving hiking. While it took us a long time to decide on the exact location we eventually settled on the Pyrenees mountain range and the GR10 route.

Location

The Pyrenees mountain range forms the border between France and Spain with the principality of Andorra situated approximately halfway along. The two main trails along the Pyrenees are the GR10 and GR11 trail which are along the French and Spanish side respectively. Both trails go from coast to coast but we chose to trek the GR10 trail as resupplies in towns are slightly easier. Due to time constraints, we were not able to hike the whole of the trail from coast to coast as the recommended time for doing so is 50 days not including rest days. As we had only 30 days we aimed to start about a third of the way along in Lourdes and end in Prades, a few days before the end of the trail. Lourdes was chosen as the start point due to convenience to get to although it left us with 2 ½ days of hiking to reach the GR10 trail from Lourdes.

Maps

There is a GR10 guide that we found very useful, especially for initial planning. We stuck to the guide fairly loosely though, sometimes combining shorter days or doing 1 ½ “guidebook days” in a single day and also incorporated rest days occasionally which the guidebook omits. The Maps we used were IGN carte de randonnées 1:50,000 scale which were perfect for the trail although we sometimes struggled on the occasions we went off the trail due to smaller paths not being marked. While it is easily possible to do the trail without maps as the guidebook is quite specific and the GR10 is very well signposted we needed them on the occasion that we left the trail and they would have been useful had an accident occurred.

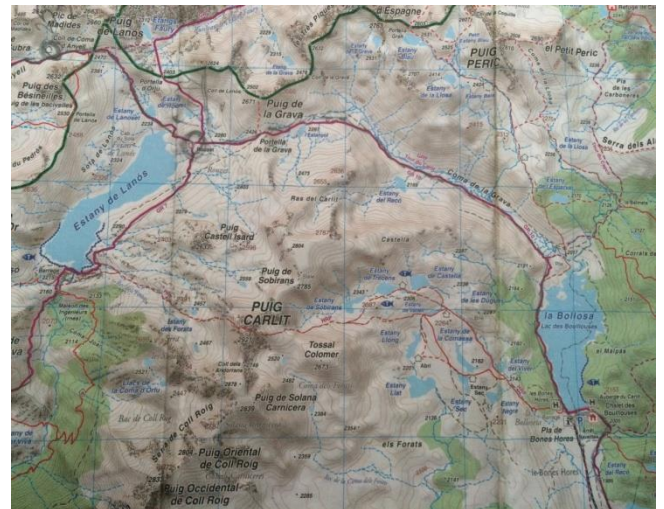


Figure 1. An exert from the IGN carte de randonnées maps.

Getting Around

In order to get to the start of the trail we took a Megabus coach from London to Toulouse and then a train to Lourdes. There was a point where we had to jump ahead of the trail due to being held back by illnesses where we again used trains to get around. At the end of the trail, there are multiple buses that go to Perpignan from various locations that we planned to pick up and did indeed use. At the end of the trip we flew back from Perpignan airport with Ryanair.

Accommodation

We took a 4-man Wild Country tent with us for when we camped which was about 70% of the time either on campsites, outside refuges or wild camping. We used free mountain cabins (referred to as cabanes here on) where available, we also stayed in manned refuges or gites a couple of times. While the tent was cramped with 4 people inside, it was no problem and we wanted to keep weight down so we feel we made the right decision as the porch was large enough for all of our kit.

Food and supplies

Most of the food we bought in towns and occasionally supplemented it with food bought in the manned refuges. Most of the time we didn't have to carry more than 3 days food at once but we stuck mainly to pasta, couscous, dried meat, tinned vegetables and porridge to try and minimise weight and use foods that were unlikely to spoil in the heat. For filling up on water we mainly used the services at manned refuges, towns or campsites but took water purification tablets with us for streams when safe water was unavailable.

Typical Days Food:

Breakfast: PORRIDGE!! Made with water with vanilla sugar and sometimes fruit and nut

Lunch: Dried meat sandwiches or cold couscous with raisins

Dinner: Pasta with fish or dried meat and sauce

Snacks: Cereal bars, dried fruit, nuts, snickers

We also took a solar charger with us to keep phones (which doubled as GPS devices) charged which worked surprisingly well when in direct sunlight, although it was sometimes hard to keep it in sunlight when hiking as we were trying to stay to the shade.

Medical

All members of the team were trained on the Outdoor first aid course and two were trained with an expedition first aid course. Due to never being more than a day or two from a town we didn't take any antibiotics, although we did take an expedition first aid kit as well as various painkillers.

Training

Aside from the various Outdoor trips that members of the team had been on, we did some night-time navigation to help improve our orienteering and also did a 4 day hiking trip in the Chilterns to get used to the heat (temperature was in the region of 25 degrees) and heavy loads. While the Chilterns may not seem the ideal place to practice for the Pyrenees, very few places in England can prepare you sufficiently for the mountains and as the main reason was to get used to the extra weight on our back it worked surprisingly well.

Language and Culture

Fortunately the culture of France is very similar to England apart from having better food and strange shop opening hours (which did catch us out once or twice). Less fortunately, in the mountainous areas few people speak English so we had to get by with Brad's French GCSE, Tom's Spanish GCSE and pointing and grunting which worked surprisingly well.

Weather and Climate

The climate is hot, especially in the early and mid-afternoon, particularly in the valleys, easily reaching 30 degrees and feeling hotter with the sun beating down on us. To avoid this we stuck to as much shade as possible but also started early, trying to be out before 7:30 most days and tried to arrange it so that most of the ascent was in the morning. In contrast to this, the Pyrenees also experiences frequent thunderstorms at about 4PM that last an hour or two but have torrential rain during that time. We were fortunate in that we somehow avoided most of these although we were caught out once or twice and just sought shelter beneath the tent. Having said this, it can get extremely cold in the mornings if high up which lead to several mornings of arguments about who should get up first.

Terrain and daily distance

The terrain is mountainous with a reasonable amount of ascent and descent each day which we found the limiting factors in the amount we hiked each day much more than the horizontal distance. Most days we aimed to do between 1000-1500m of both ascent and descent as we spent most days moving from valley to valley. As the days were dictated by the change in altitude, the horizontal distance hiked varied greatly but was normally in the 20-25 km region.

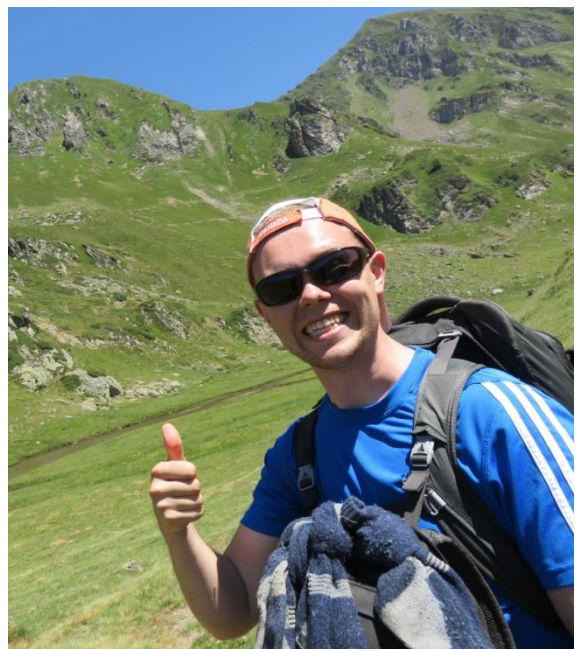
TEAM MEMBERS

TOM WHITING

ROLE: Leader and logistics

AGE AND BACKGROUND: 22, 4th year Physics MSci

Tom has enjoyed hiking from a young age, being involved with Scouts before joining university. He has been in the Outdoor Club for two years, was last years treasurer and is the President of the society next year. He has also being involved in the Exploration society and was this year's treasurer. He has been skiing in Norway, climbing in Turkey and hiked up Snowdon more times than you can count. He was banned from cooking by the end of the first week so took to just washing up and stinking up the tent with his feet. Due to my constant wearing of a knee brace I managed to develop a lovely tan line on my left knee by the end of the expedition as well. This picture of me shows my ingenious method to dry socks in the Summer Sun, it can get pretty smelly but works pretty well (patent pending).



BRADLEY PRING

ROLE: Treasurer and Translator

AGE AND BACKGROUND: 21, 4th year Civil Engineering MEng

Previous to this trip I was a member of Outdoor club for a year and Scouts before that. Having completed Duke of Edinburgh bronze and silver awards, I had some experience of hiking before this trip. However the prior experience was nothing compared to what this trip was. Never had I hiked for more than three days, nor climbed a mountain more than the height of Snowdon. Hence I was quite surprised at myself at the speed I could go up mountains, inevitably helped by the fact I had much longer legs than the rest of the group. Unfortunately for the rest of the team my French skills were not really of the level required to translate properly, but I gave it a shot, even managing to ask what the plate of the day was at a restaurant, impressing the team, until I told them all I understood about



the reply was it contained beef. The picture above shows me with my wet socks after the first day walking when everything was wet, but the smile on my face was one full of gloat after managing to create a fire that Dave failed to do.

DAVID STEED

ROLE: Equipment and Photographer

Age & background: 22, 4th year Civil Engineering MEng

I have been enjoying the outdoors since a young age. I regularly go hiking, have been camping on numerous occasions and have taken part in a variety of outdoor sports and other activities. My favourite locations are in the mountains or on water: as such I have been skiing, surfing, kayaking, canoeing and outdoor swimming. All of these were undergone out of amateur interest rather than competing professionally (other than the outdoor swimming, which was done as part of life saving training). And of course now I have a month in the Pyrenees to add to my list! Over the course of the trip I was generally the one who carried too much but



was too stubborn to pass anything on. I would not recommend this, it hurts. I also ended up being the official DIY member of the group as I had all of the duct tape, knives, lighters, string, plasters...the list of every-day bits and bobs goes on.

LIZZIE BISHOP

ROLE: Itinerary and Head Chef

Age & background: 19, 1st year Physics

Lizzie had regularly enjoyed the outdoors prior to this trip, most notably going skiing and an expedition to Mongolia. She has been a member of Imperial Outdoor Club for the past year and has taken part in their weekend travels to (more often than not) Wales but, similarly to the rest of the group, had never undertaken a hiking trip of this scale before. She found it difficult to begin with but persevered and overall was glad to have pushed on and finished it. She also justified the presence of the first aid kit after a minor eye issue. Her other main roles turned out to be cooking, not getting us lost and using a ridiculous amount of blister plasters...



JOURNAL

DAY 1: 5TH July 2015

London – Toulouse

Having opted for the cheaper and slightly longer transport method of Megabus we arrived at Victoria coach bright and early eager to set off on our adventure. Megabus being Megabus, the bus arrived late and we had to wait an extra hour in the coach station but unperturbed we jumped onto the bus and started our journey to France. However, the novelty of being on a bus wears off after the first three hours and the team started to tire but we continued with our journey onto the ferry at 1:00 am and were soon in France. Once we reached France we realised that Toulouse isn't exactly close to Calais so did our best to catch up on sleep for the rest of the night.



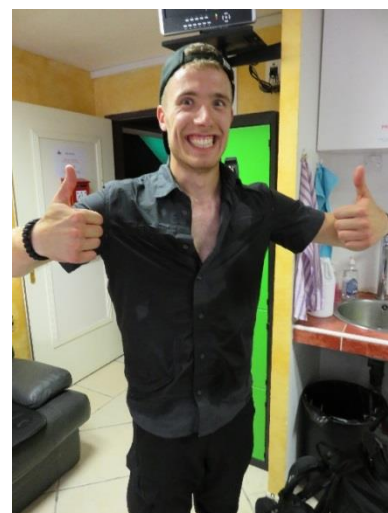
Left: The joy of having a brief break in Paris after a 12 hour coach ride overnight with 4 hours of sleep.

DAY 2: 6TH July 2015

Toulouse

Continuing on the Megabus for most of the day with a brief 10 minute stop in Paris to enjoy the sites, we eventually arrived in Toulouse and finally departed the Megabus for good. The short walk to the hostel left David in particular sweating more than usual, thankfully this was not typical of the whole trip. After we had all showered we went to explore and bought food before returning to the hostel to eat one

Right: Pre-acclimatisation sweat levels were quite high.



of our last good meals and play cards in the communal area.



Left: Our first and last meal on an actual plate

DAY 3: 7TH July 2015

Toulouse– Lourdes

Acting on the advice of the hostel workers in Toulouse, we took the opportunity of our wait for the train to take in the sights of the city. This included a visit to the oldest Basilica in the world, a walk along the canal and a visit to several markets. We stocked up on food and also took the opportunity to visit Decathlon, a French sports shop, where we purchased two gas cans to take with us as our primary fuel source along with a couple of other bits. At around 4pm we embarked on our final part of the journey to Lourdes by train, with the French train system being prompt and on time unlike its British counterpart!

Upon arrival in Lourdes we had our first glimpse of the mountains, as well as our last dinner that didn't involve pasta for a few weeks! It also offered us a glimpse of the culture of Lourdes as we witnessed a candlelit procession (and many, many Virgin Mary statues), before retiring to our hotel for an early night before the first day of our trek.



Above: Exploring the local culture.

Below: A candle-lit service in Lourdes



DAY 4: 8TH July 2015

Lourdes – Soum de Trezeres

We started out quite optimistic about the day. Walking out of Lourdes we could see the mountains looming out of the cloud before we immersed ourselves in the forest on the lower slopes. Our initial enthusiasm was quickly doused, quite literally, as fine rain and a perpetual mist engulfed us for the remainder of the day. Seeing as we had been expecting blazing sunshine this proved rather depressing. We trekked through woods and coniferous undergrowth for the whole day without really having any indication of how high we were climbing as visibility was very limited. Towards the end of the day we walked through fields inhabited by cows that kept jumping out at us from the mist and had to find a random place in a field to have dinner as it was getting late. We arrived at where we believed there was a mountain hut, but it took us a long time to find due to the mist. The sense of relief upon finding the hut (with mattresses!!) was huge, and we all settled down for a first night in the wild after hanging up our wet clothes by the fire (fantastically built by Brad after David's enthusiastic but massive failure of an attempt).



*Above: We're going on a bear hunt...
Below: Fire to warm our aching bones*



*Above: Our first sight of the mountains
Below: First night on the trail*



DAY 5: 9TH July 2015

Soum de Trezeres - Lac Bleu

Due to us sleeping in a cabin far from a water source and because we'd decided on porridge for breakfast, we had to go without food until we reached a stream where we had a hurried breakfast surrounded by mist and sheep. However, towards midday the weather started to clear up and we saw some of the views we had been promised. When the sun came out though we realised how hot the Pyrenees can get with the sun beating down on your back. We also realised we may have been slightly short on food when we shopped in Toulouse but fortunately we found a restaurant able to supply us with some snacks. After lunch we had a lot of uphill to do in the heat of the day which we found exhausting and realised getting uphill out of the way early in the day is the way to go, but we looked forward to the nice cabin at the end of the day. Excitement spread through the group at the sight of the mountain hut next to a lake (a lake that David proceeded to take a, rather chilly, dip in). Unfortunately we learnt a further life lesson in that not all French cabins have mattresses or are even safe from collapsing so we decided to camp instead of risking the dangers of said cabin.



Above: Two huts, one locked and one nearly destroyed inside. Good job we packed the tent.

DAY 6: 10TH July 2015

Lac Bleu - Reservoir des Laquet

This was our last day before we joined the GR10 trail. We started off with a steep climb up from the lake. You could tell we were on a more official trail as the steepest bits had steel cable bolted to the rock! We completed our minimum distance for the day before we made

Right: Cables bolted to the rock assisted with this section



the first big mistake of the trip. We decided that if we got to the next hut it would make the next day considerably easier. However, we massively misjudged the distance, both horizontally and vertically. This led to considerable strain on all members of the group as we had already done a long day before this last section. Upon reaching the approximate location of the hut night had already fallen. After a fruitless search in the dark for the hut we set up the tent just off the track. Total time from leaving camp that morning to setting up the tent was 15 hours! This emphasised the importance of not overworking ourselves, especially when it was close to night fall.



Above: The only thing within 100 miles that wouldn't run away from Tom's smell



Above: I thought the troll is supposed to be under the bridge...?

DAY 7: 11TH July 2015

Reservoir des Laquets - Saint Lary Soulon

Right: We were quite disappointed the chair lifts were not running

After the long day previously, we embarked on this days trek slightly later than normally. As we were now on the GR10 we could follow the red and white markers as a navigational guide. Due to the long days previous to this one, we were quite tired. After finding the hut we had attempted to reach the day before we made the climb to the ridge. However after reaching the ridge there was a long descent required. It was by far the longest and steepest descent of the route so far. Despite the fact that we could see the town, it took longer than expected to get down, weaving our way down the mountain and into the valley where we made our way to a campsite.



DAY 8: 12TH July 2015

Rest Day

This was our first rest day. When we reached the campsite the night before the nearby supermarket was closed so when it was morning the three men left Lizzie to her beauty sleep and went food shopping. We discovered the danger of sending three very hungry hikers to do the food shopping. Self restraint proved troublesome and so we returned to the campsite weighed down by a massive quantity of food. Needless to say we ate very well that day. So well in fact that we all felt energised enough to have a plank competition towards the end of the day. Lizzie and Brad dropped out early leaving Tom and David to battle it out for the title. After nearly five minutes both dropped within milliseconds of each other, leaving the victor unclear. We all went to bed with full stomachs and sore abs, ready to be off again the next day.

Right: The challenge that day was to see who could go the longest without standing up



DAY 9: 13TH July 2015

Saint Lary Soulon - Ourtiga

We left the campsite in high spirits after our rest and found there was a lot of up to do quite early on in the day, before a lot of down to a nice town for lunch before even more hills upwards in the heat again. While our rucksacks were heavier due to the recent addition of lots of food we were in much higher spirits after the well-earned rest day and it was the start of the main part of our expedition as the previous days had been planned as getting to a point on the GR10 that coincided with the guidebook.

Right: The first hut we nearly had to share



DAY 10: 14TH July 2015

Ourtiga - Refuge de Espingo

After waking up to find mice had been at our bags and managed to find oats and Tom's cuppa soup, the breakfast portions were disappointingly small. Nonetheless we started the day with a steep hill, soon followed by a long, equally steep, descent. Upon arriving at our lunch stop it was soon discovered that a cafe was selling cornettos for €1 and so most of the group had 2! The path now became a popular tourist walk leading up to Lac d'Oo. We continued up past the Lake towards the refuge where, after finding no suitable places to camp, we decided to stay the night.



Above: One of many fantastic views we enjoyed after an ascent



Above: Lizzie was not impressed by our choice of route



Above: Lac d'Oo

DAY 11: 15TH July 2015

Refuge de Espingo - Bagneres-de-Luchon

After a good night of sleep with the luxury of mattresses, we took the opportunity to have breakfast at the refuge. This consisted of tea or coffee and bread with jam or honey, which although expensive was a welcome change from porridge. Departing at 7am, we had to walk a short way back along the route to the refuge to get back onto the GR10. The start of the day was a steep uphill, which was helped by the motivation to get up the hill before a couple behind us. Beyond the first uphill the majority of the day was either flat or downhill. Remarkably today Lizzie exclaimed her enjoyment for the day! This was a sign of the day being relatively easy, coupled with the benefits of sleep,



Above: A war memorial in Luchon town centre

breakfast and increased fitness levels. Upon arrival in the town of Bagnères-de-Luchon, we purchased food for the next few days and attempted to carry on the route to stop at a campsite on the outside of the town. However, despite an hour of searching the campsite was not found. So instead we moved away from the GR10 and to another campsite, which happened to be positioned right next to a supermarket! It was here that Tom, who was not feeling well the whole day, became worse and started experiencing diarrhoea. This was probably caused by not taking the care he should have the day before when taking water from streams, although that is speculation and not a confirmed cause.

DAY 12-DAY 15: 16th-19th July 2015

Bagnères-de-Luchon

TW: I spent most of the time in the campsite feeling sorry for myself and remaining close to the toilets although fortunately we had a lot of delicious rehydration solution. We found out that there is a lot of rainfall in the valleys while staying there as every day around 4-6PM there would normally be a lot of rain. The last couple of days I was able to move around more as we changed the route plan due to the delay, and much to my dismay I found that my so called waterproof camera was not as waterproof as it claimed.

DS: I was initially very excited at the thought of several days rest with access to showers and a pool of all things! I was of course very sympathetic to Tom's plight. My child like sense of fun was to be my downfall at this site as, upon finding there was a trampoline, I decided to release my inner gymnast...and injure my back in the process. This effectively immobilised me for several days (and proved to be a minor issue for the rest of the trip) but fortunately I was ready to get going again about the same time that Tom was feeling better. At this point in the trip my tan lines were also becoming quite prominent!



Above: Tan lines plus dirt makes for an interesting contrast in skin tones

LB: After having caught up on sleep I realised not bringing a book was a mistake. Luckily the campsite had a few English books so I managed to borrow one which lasted a few days. Unlike Tom and Dave I had no injuries so was able to enjoy the pool, supermarket and town by the campsite. By this point I had been badly sunburnt on my legs, ears and scalp so bought some after-sun and a sun hat!

BP: Fortunately I, like Lizzie, was not injured or ill. Hence the days sitting around involved me eating and reading mostly. I discovered Pate d'amande, better known as Marzipan, and allowed my sweet tooth to get the better of me, hence I ate quite a lot, much to Lizzie's astonishment. The rest provided me the



Right: The daily dinner time cloud burst

opportunity to actually read great expectations, a book I had been slowly progressing through for months. We also established that the stereotype of “girls can’t throw” applies to Lizzie! We probably experienced the first storm of the trip while at the campsite, a new experience to be stuck in a tent in a valley during a thunderstorm. The relief of being able to leave after a few days was evident as all of us were a little bored in the surroundings, but Tom did seem to be most relieved after having such a bad experience at the campsite.

DAY 16: 20th July 2015

Bagneres-de-Luchon - Tarascon sur Ariège

We finally got on the move again today and skipped ahead in the route to Tarascon. We used trains because it was the quickest mode of transport although it did involve a brief stopover in Toulouse where we had started our journey as apparently all trains in the South of France go through there. We ended up camping at what appeared to be one of the nicer campsites we’d visited on our travels although we soon found out the perils of going to the tourist centres of France as the campsite was more akin to Butlins than a campsite with loud music till the early hours of the morning and “Mousse parties” (best not to go into too much detail of what a mousse party entails). Suffice to say we were glad to be going back to the slightly more tranquil and secluded Pyrenees.

DAY 17: 21st July 2015

Pre Lombard - Gesties

We left the campsite early and headed back into the mountains. This day involved a long walk through the woods. Confusion over maps and some very poorly labelled route markers led to us being quite a long way off course. Thanks to the GPS and downloaded maps in Tom’s phone we discovered that the track we should be on was roughly parallel to the one we were on, just up a very steep hill covered in dense undergrowth. Because we had the GPS locator we decided to be bold and headed off uphill into the woods. This proved to be a rather difficult climb due to the gradient and undergrowth. About an hour and a half later we found the correct trail and continued on our way. The rest of the route was fairly uneventful and we finally arrived in Gesties, setting up camp on an empty patch of grass next to the cemetery. Despite our delay in the woods we still arrived in the early afternoon but decided not to go on as the next place to stop was too far.

DAY 18: 22nd July 2015

Gesties - Cabin d’Artaran



Above: It certainly didn't feel like higher than the top of Snowdon



Above: A carefully deployed washing line added a homely touch to the cabin

We were up and out early for the long day ahead and as always we started with a lot of uphill. Most of the terrain today had a lot of greenery and seemed like a jungle at times, however we ploughed on throughout and went fast the whole day, steaming up the last 600m of up at the end of the day. The original cabin we planned to stay out was infested with some sort of rodent (Using the power of the internet we think it is an edible dormouse, although none of us ventured to try one) that peered out at us when we entered. As such we had to move onto the next cabin which was a fair bit further on but turned out to be better than the previous one. It felt like one of the longer days because of the massive differences in terrain throughout the day; starting in a village, trekking through dense undergrowth and ending up in a field that stretched on endlessly in all directions.

DAY 19: 23^d July 2015

Cabane d'Artaran - Refuge de Rulhe

We headed out from the cabin and stopped at a waterfall about 15 minutes down the trail to fill up on water. The first part of the route was through an area that became a ski resort in the winter and so much of the trail was very open and surprisingly flat for long stretches. If it was winter we could have taken full advantage of the dog-sled attraction we passed. However, seeing as it was summer it was closed and we had to make do with being barked at by huskies as we passed by. The mist we were walking through in the morning quickly burnt off and it became sunny and hot again. But due to the gentle terrain we made good progress and reached a refuge in the early afternoon after passing over a series of grass covered hillocks. We took advantage of arriving early to wash and dry clothes, charge phones and shower. We discovered too late you had to insert coins to get warm water and so endured very quick freezing cold showers. We cooked dinner outside the refuge and enjoyed the company of some American hikers also staying at the refuge. They were old hands at long treks and took weight very seriously, even tearing pages out of their guide book as they went!



Above: We leapt on any chance to wash and dry our clothes

Below (Overleaf): Brad quickly took the only bit of shade at the refuge



Above: Enjoy the view or check the route for the next day

Below (Overleaf): Lizzie experimenting with her new look



DAY 20: 24th July 2015

Refuge de Rulhe- Refuge Besines

After sleeping at the refuge, which despite finding the door had been left open all night by another walker, leaving the room very cold, we were well rested. During the night, Lizzie managed to make us all laugh when she started sleep talking by repeating “no!” multiple times in the night. We started early cooking porridge before sunrise, however, we were fortunate in the fact that when Tom spilled the water that was being prepared for the porridge, firstly it wasn’t yet boiling so it didn’t scald David when it landed on him and secondly that the water was not in short supply at this location! Suffice to say Tom was officially banned from cooking (he had previously managed to burn multiple breakfasts and even pasta as well...).

Right: The site we gave up a ‘helicopter landing pad’ for



The majority of the route to Merens-les-Vals was downhill and the day according to the guidebook was almost complete by midday. Due to the large amount of downhill it was a tough morning on the knees and backs of the team, but the promise of reaching a village and hence a shop for lunch had spurred us on. However, Merens proved a disappointment when the shop was very small and very expensive, causing the cost of one days food to be much more than normal. After lunch we started on the long uphill, a difficult feat in the heat of the day, which was helped by the cover of trees. However, Lizzie started feeling unwell, and we stopped for an hour to see if she would get better and continue or if we would have to return to the small village of Merens. After taking painkillers she felt better and we continued the slow climb up to the next refuge. When we reached Refuge de Besines we pitched up our tent, and due to the late time of our arrival most suitable pitching locations were taken. We managed to find a perfect spot though that was flat and close to the water but soon got shouted at by an angry Frenchman stating that it was for “hélicoptère” whatever that means. As a result we had to move to a new pitch which was not as suitable as it was basically a big rock with some dirt on it and being exposed to the wind made us concerned for the stability of the tent as we laid

Right: The sun rose on another day of our mighty quest



inside attempting to sleep, although we were reassured when it was still standing in the morning.

DAY 21: 25th July 2015

Refuge de Besines - Planes

After a quick descent and then crossing a boulder field we climbed up to what would be the highest point we did as a whole group, just shy of 2500m. The route then became a series of plateaus with lakes interspersed with steep descents. We eventually arrived at a very large and beautiful lake. We walked for about an hour along its shore. We all became very spread out along this route due to the low gradient: we could all see each other from quite a long way away. David especially was not very talkative in any case as his encounter with the trampoline yet again returned to haunt him and left him with a painful back following the long descent. At the end of the lake we stopped at a cafe (the lake was quite a popular tourist spot) for a drink before continuing onto the next “guidebook day” and into the next town where we stocked up on food and had dinner. It seemed that four hikers cooking dinner at a bench outside a shop was not an odd sight in France and many shoppers wished us ‘bon appetit’ as they passed us by. Having refuelled we continued for another hour and a half into Planes where we stayed at the campsite next to a gite so that we could take advantage of the showers there.



Above: Water, water everywhere

Below: They say that in France you are never more than 6ft from a baguette...



Above: The group at the end of the lake

DAY 22: 26th July 2015

Planes - Refuge du Ras de la Caranca

Still tired from yesterday but we made a lot of progress early on, finishing all of the ascent we had to do before lunch. Three of us decided to quickly jog up 300m to reach a height of 2667m which was the highest point we reached in the expedition. There was then a downwards slog to descend 1300m which took its toll, especially on Tom and Dave. Fortunately there was a nice refuge at the bottom of the mountain and we were happily resupplied with bread and wine. Nearby we also found the worst toilet we had ever come across which was fairly modern but also happened to be infested with insects and was considerably worse smelling than us. To finish off the day we crossed the nearby stream and camped just outside of range of the sign saying we couldn't camp near the refuge. Having had a much shorter day and relaxed in the afternoon we felt prepared for the next day of adventure.



Above: The group (minus Lizzie) reached a 2667m peak

DAY 23: 27th July 2015

Refuge du Ras de la Caranca - Vernet-les-Bains

This day started off gently, climbing gradually to the highest point of the day. Following this was a flat section which was supposed to take no time at all, until Tom, behind the others, led himself and Lizzie off the path by accident and did not realise until it was too late. Using GPS they managed to find their way back to the GR10 but were in front of Brad and Dave who had stopped to wait. Brad and Dave then followed the path the others had taken by mistake, whilst Tom had gone back on the GR10 to find them! However we all found each other shortly and could continue. After a drinks and much needed fruit stop in the village of Mantet, there was a long descent into Py. We continued until the point where we would leave the GR10 to head to a town where Lizzie could get the bus into Perpignan. The new route led us to a viewing point and hence we enjoyed fabulous views before the long descent into the town. Upon arriving at the campsite we stopped for a group photo, as this was our last day walking all together ☺.



Above: Who builds a town on such a steep hill?



Above: Brad enjoying a rest while he waited for everyone else



Above: We all quickly found out just how sweaty our backs were

DAY 24: 28th July 2015

Rest Day in Vernet-les-Bains

In preparation for the departure of Lizzie the next day we went to the supermarket whilst looking for potential bus stops for Lizzie to take. After arriving at the supermarket we bought food for the next few days and searched for fuel as our gas supplies were diminishing although they only had the clip on gas type (whereas we had twist on stoves) so we decided to hold off until the next, larger town to buy gas. Upon returning to the campsite and an eagerly anticipated scramble egg breakfast, Lizzie spilled the eggs, leaving a minimal amount of egg to moisten the breakfast baguettes and 3 distraught guys!

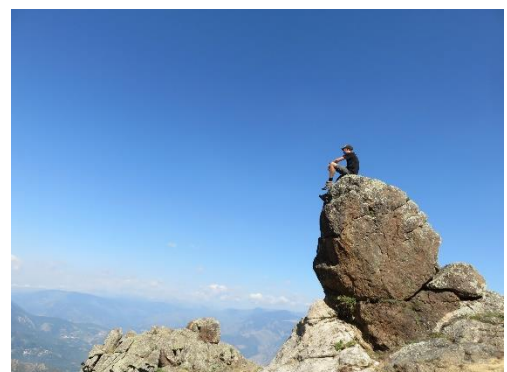
We relaxed the afternoon away in the campsite and ventured into the town for a departing meal with Lizzie. It was here that we witnessed the arrival of French rock legend (apparently) Johnny on the back of a procession of bikes. Johnny then proceeded to perform a rock concert until the early hours of the morning, which could be heard from the campsite, and keeping Lizzie in particular awake.

DAY 25: 29th July 2015

Verens les Bains - Hut l'Estangol

Having descended into Verens les Berens our first day without Lizzie had a 1500m ascent to return us to the GR10 trail. The climb challenged everyone, but in more enjoyable manner than at the

Right: It's not quite The Lion King's Pride Rock but it will do



start of the trip, our fitness levels had very noticeably increased by this point. We finished the ascent and arrived at our first choice of huts in the early afternoon. However, despite the modern and comfortable exterior it turned out that the hut was heavily infested with bedbugs so we decided to move on. The next hut was only a 40 minute walk further on so we had a short rest outside this hut first. We arrived at Hut l'Estangol around four in the afternoon and proceeded to become very bored as everyone had finished their books, phone batteries were dead and there was no sun to allow for charging. To top everything off we had pretty much run out of gas!! But this did lead to the very exciting prospect of cooking on an open fire in the available fire pit. Although Tom wasn't happy at the blackened state of his pan afterwards.



*Above: Putting the 'bag' in baguette
Below: One of the cleaner huts we used*



Above: We never thought running out of gas would be so much fun



DAY 26: 30th July 2015

Hut l'Estangol - Gite de la palette

The start of the day was one of the most boring parts of the trail that we saw. It was just flat and misty with no views and little excitement in the terrain which was road for a good fraction of the day. We arrived in Aux-les-thermes all ready to resupply on gas and get back to hot meals but alas they only stocked the clic-on gas as opposed to the twist on gas and we learnt the valuable lesson of if you're going to take two gas stoves, take different types. As such we stocked up on



Above: We could only avoid the rain for so long



Above: A nice cup of tea at the end of a hard day

sausage and beans in a tin among other things because we could eat it cold if need be. After lunch and a brief rest in the town we went back onto the GR10 and did the fastest section of up that we ever managed, ascending 400m in a mere 40 minutes. To add to our problems of lack of gas it started to pour down in the middle of the day so we strung the outer tent up between a few trees for a couple of hours as we had no desire to hike in torrential rain. Fortunately the rain eventually stopped and we reached a lovely Gite where we were even able to heat up our sausage and beans. After being cold, wet and miserable, the warm shower and tea that we were given felt incredible and raised the spirits somewhat.

DAY 27: 31st July 2015

Gite de la Palette - Las Illas

The day started very slowly, with it taking 1h 45m to get up in the morning although we were partially delighted at the prospect that it was the last morning of porridge we would have for the trip. David managed to leave his camera at one rest point, only realising about a kilometre later and so had to hurry back for it! The day offered glimpses of Spain and the sea from the top of a ridge and then we descended to a small village called Las Illas. Due to the lack of gas we had a sausage, lentil and bean mix which came from tins allowing it to be eaten cold, however we were able to add some heat to it with the remaining gas. We stayed on a small green in the village with access to a water supply and public toilet nearby. During the evening though the weather turned and we had potentially the biggest storm of the expedition, with lightning striking every few seconds and heavy rain lashing down on the tent.

DAY 28: 1st August 2015

Las Illas - Refuge de Tagn Arede

This was a rather frustrating day as it began with several kilometres of walking along roads before venturing back onto the trail. After an uneventful hike we arrived in a town on the French/Spanish border where we resupplied and had lunch. Were we in an enterprising mood we could have taken advantage of the numerous discount alcohol shops. We had a very entertaining lunch during which we watched numerous people fill their cars to the brim with cheap alcohol before driving off. After lunch we headed off towards one of the last major peaks before the end of our trip. On an open grassy plateau we saw a wild boar and its young



Above: The last hut

running across the plain in the distance. We stood and watched for the few seconds they were visible before Tom confirmed we had acted appropriately and not gotten between the boar and it's young (in his role as team leader we assume that Tom had the risk assessment memorised). After this not-so-close call we continued to the final hut we would stay in and were delighted to find mattresses untouched by mice or insects!



Above: Last major peak for the 3 intrepid explorers

DAY 29: 2nd August 2015

Refuge de Tagn Arede - Banyuls sur mer - Argeles-sur-plage

FINAL DAY HIKING! The fact that it was our final day of hiking turned out to be the main motivation for us completing the day as we hadn't had a rest day since Lizzie left and there were a lot of aches and pains spread throughout the rest of us. Tom found the downhill tiring and had little motivation until 11 when he remembered how hot the weather gets in the middle of the day, after which he sped up. We went through some lovely vineyards that stretched along the coast as far as the eye could see and every glimpse of the town gave us more hope and pushed us that little bit further. We reached the town just after midday but were too hungry to bother looking for the marker signifying the end until after lunch. Once our hunger had been abated we finally found the marker signalling the end of our trip and proceeded to lie on the beach and have our well-earned rest. In the evening we moved further North to a bigger town with a sandy beach as we thought it would provide more suitable spots for wild camping. How wrong we were, unlike Banyuls-sur-Mer which had been a quiet town with a few locals, Argeles-sur-Mer was very much a tourist town which happened to be hosting an electronic music festival until 2 AM which only added to the noise coming from the seemingly endless bars and restaurants. We didn't care that much though as our plans for the next day were pretty much non-existent.



Above: The end of the trail was harder to find than you would think

DAY 30: 3rd August 2015

Argeles-sur-plage

After awaking in the middle of the night to the sound of tractors driving round the tent and flattening the sand we eventually managed to return to sleep and upon awaking we went and bought breakfast. The day consisted of relaxing on the beach and a little exploration of the town. We learnt from our previous mistake of sleeping on the beach and this time slept in a foresty picnic bit which was much more peaceful.

DAY 31: 4th August 2015

Argeles-sur-plage - Perpignan

After a thankfully uninterrupted night we packed up and got on the first bus we could to Perpignan. Upon arrival we checked into the hotel and cleaned up before heading out to explore. After a long walk to Decathlon we purchased clean t shirts that wouldn't smell for the journey home! For our final night in France we treated ourselves to a meal out and enjoyed tapas and a French take on fish & chips. After a 'quick' milkshake we headed back to the hotel as the wear and tear of the last month was catching us up and everyone was quite tired.

DAY 32: 5th August 2015

Perpignan - London

With a mid-afternoon flight we didn't have anything to get up for so some of us (Dave) slept for a solid 12 hours. With not much to do until we had to go to the airport we just grabbed breakfast and dossed about in the hotel. We then had a nice 4 hour wait in the tiny airport in Perpignan but it felt damn good to be going home where luxuries such as hot showers, comfy beds, television and hot meals are no longer a luxury.

Itinerary

Date	Start Point	End Point	Sleep	Start Time	End Time	Ascent (m)	Descent (m)	Distance (km)	Cum. Dist. (km)
5 th	London	Calais	Coach	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
6 th	Calais (ish)	Toulouse	Hostel	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
7 th	Toulouse	Lourdes	Hotel	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
8 th	Lourdes	Soum de Trezeres	Cabin	7:30	19:50	1875	651	18.1	18.1
9 th	Soum de Trezeres	Lac Bleu	Camp	7:30	17:30	1355	1038	15.6	33.7
10 th	Lac Bleu	Reservoir des Laquets	Camp	7:30	22:30	1756	1594	20.5	54.2
11 th	Reservoir des Laquets	Saint-Lary-Soulan	Campsite	9:30	18:30	1088	2361	22.9	77.1
12 th	Saint-Lary-Soulan	Saint-Lary-Soulan	Campsite	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	77.1
13 th	N/A	N/A	Cabin	7:30	18:00	1724	933	19.4	96.5
14 th	Cabine Ourtiga	Refuge d'Espingo	Refuge	7:30	16:30	1740	1361	13.2	109.7
15 th	Refuge d'Espingo	Bagneres-de-Luchon	Campsite	7:00	18:00	2288	4629	29.5	139.2
16 th	Bagneres-de-Luchon	Bagneres-de-Luchon	Campsite	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	139.2
17 th	Bagneres-de-Luchon	Bagneres-de-Luchon	Campsite	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	139.2
18 th	Bagneres-de-Luchon	Bagneres-de-Luchon	Campsite	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	139.2
19 th	Bagneres-de-Luchon	Bagneres-de-Luchon	Campsite	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	139.2
20 th	Bagneres-de-Luchon	Tarascon-sur-Ariege	Campsite	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	139.2
21 st	Tarascon-sur-Ariege	Gesties	Camp	7:30	14:00	902	404	12.9	152.1
22 nd	Gesties	Cabine Artaran	Cabin	6:50	19:50	2371	1677	20.2	172.3
23 rd	Cabine Artaran	Refuge du Rulhe	Refuge	6:50	14:00	1198	669	17.4	189.7
24 th	Refuge du Rulhe	Refuge des Besines	Camp	6:30	20:50	1926	2028	22.1	211.8
25 th	Refuge des Besines	Planes	Campsite	7:05	20:45	769	1373	36.2	248
26 th	Planes	Refuge du Ras de la Caranca	Camp	7:50	15:50	1168	837	14.8	262.8
27 th	Refuge du Ras de la Caranca	Vernet-les-Baines	Campsite	6:40	18:30	1489	2640	24.8	287.6
28 th	REST DAY	Vernet-les-Baines	Campsite	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	287.6
29 th	Vernet-les-Baines	Hut l'Estangol	Cabin	7:00	15:50	1457	435	16.5	304.1
30 th	Hut l'Estangol	Gite de la Palette	Campsite	7:10	18:00	929	1668	24.6	328.7
31 st	Gite de la Palette	Las Illas	Camp	7:45	16:00	902	1013	21	349.7
1 st	Las Illas	Refuge de Tagn Arede	Cabin	7:45	18:00	1259	773	28.9	378.6

Aug									
2nd	Refuge de Tagn Arede	Bayuls (END OF WALK)	Camp	7:10	12:30	346	1382	20.1	398.7
3rd	Baylus	Argeles	Camp	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	398.7
4th	Argeles	Perpignan	Hotel	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	398.7
5th	Perpignan	London	Home!	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	398.7



Figure 2. Map showing the final route, yellow lines are borders, white lines represent the actual route hiked and the red line represents public transport (via train)

Kit List

The kit that we took with us was divided into two categories: equipment that was shared by the whole group and individual kit. Group equipment was split fairly between us but everyone was responsible for their own individual kit. By the end of the trip we had all realised there were things we could have changed or have done without completely. Examples of this are pointed out in the list below, although there are others not included (mentioning no one who took two, yes, two toiletry bags).

Alongside the equipment required for hiking we all took our passports, EU health cards and any necessary print outs of hotel and flight travel bookings.

Group kit:

Tent (3-4 man Wild Country)	2 MSR stoves + gas	Petrol stove + bottle
First Aid Kit	4 x mess tins	Water purifications tablets
Food (varied)	Solar charger	Maps + map case +guide book
Survival blanket	Metal trowel	

From this list the petrol stove was not required at all because gas bottles lasted a lot longer than we anticipated. In any case we did not come across petrol stations very frequently and so the petrol stove was an impractical choice in hindsight. The only issue with the MSR stove was that the ones we had screwed into the gas bottle, whereas the French seem to favour the clip-on versions and so the correct gas bottle was difficult to come by apart from in the larger towns.

The first aid kit was also rarely used apart from a few plasters and small dressings. However, this is one item that you need to have as you never know when it might be needed. The same goes for the survival blanket. There were several situations where if something had gone wrong then a serious injury could have been incurred so a first aid kit is always necessary.

Example of individual kit list - David

General:		
65l Vango Rucksack	2 season sleeping bag	Inflatable sleeping mat
Inflatable pillow	Sleeping bag liner	Boots
Flip flops	5 dry bags (various sizes)	Sunglasses
Clothes:		

3 lightweight tops	1 pair of shorts	1 pair walking trousers
Sun hat + bandana	Waterproof jacket	Fleece jumper
Canvas belt	4 x sport boxers	4 pairs of walking socks
Electronic + Entertainment		
Phone	Ipod	Book
Camera	Head torch	Small hand held torch
Cables + spare batteries	Emergency phone charger	
Toiletries:		
Sun cream (factor 50)	Razor	Toothbrush + toothpaste
Soap	Microfibre towel	Toilet paper
Blister plasters	Lip balm	Anti-bacterial hand gel.
Miscellaneous:		
1l water bottle + plastic mug	2l Camelbak water reservoir	Whistle
Lighter	Folding knife + Fixed Knife	Small multi tool
550 paracord	Watch	Compass
Fork + spoon	Duct tape	Freezer bags
Pen + notebook	Knee brace + wrist brace	Fire steel

DS: In hindsight there was not a lot that I would have changed about this list. I could have got away with a smaller sleeping bag as it was very warm, even at altitude. My sleeping bag liner did not get used at all. I will never again doubt inflatable sleeping mats: it was smaller than a standard foam mat and far more comfortable. The same goes for the pillow. It was an extra thing to carry but earned its space in my rucksack when it came to sleeping.

I feel that I took the right clothing, other than I would have swapped the trousers for a second pair of shorts. Even on the one or two colder days I still wore shorts. Some of the most useful things I took were the little things that could have been quite easy to overlook. The lighters, folding knife, paracord and duct tape were all used extensively for small repairs, lighting the stoves, cutting food and other every-day chores. The fixed knife was not really used (apart from one emergency hole digging episode...) so it might not have been necessary to take it.

I personally feel that my insulation case for my Camelbak was a good investment as I always had cold water in there (it also proved useful for stopping chocolate melting). It made the

water bag more bulky and I imagine many backpacking purists will say it is unnecessary but I was very grateful for having cold water in the high temperatures we experienced!

One item omitted from this list is deoderant. I very quickly realised it was pointless to use it as I sweated from pretty much every part of my body regardless. Needless to say the deodorant got thrown in the bin very early on (apart from Lizzie's who was determined until the end not to stink... she failed)

Budget

EXPENDITURE					
Item	Item cost	Quantity	Total Cost**	Receipt number*	Pre-expedition estimate
TRANSPORT, ETC					
International travel			£366.77		£300
<i>Megabus</i>	£32.50	4	£130		-
<i>Lizzie flight</i>	£88.77	1	£88.77		-
<i>Tom, Brad, Dave Flight</i>	£49.33	3	£148		-
Travel in France			~£122.5	-	£200
<i>Train from Toulouse to lourdes</i>	£8	4	£32		-
<i>Travel from luchon to tarascon</i>	€27.50	4	€110		-
<i>Bus travel to Perpignan from vernet les bains</i>	€1	1	€1		-
<i>Bus from Banyuls-sur-mer to Argeles sur plage</i>	€1	3	€3		-
<i>Bus from Argeles sur plage to Perpignan</i>	€1	3	€3		-
<i>Bus to perpignan airport</i>	€1.30	4	€5.20		-
ACCOMMODATION					
Accommodation on arrival/before we leave etc total of 3 nights			£188	-	£240
<i>La Petite Auberge de Saint</i>	£17.37	4	£69.47		-

<i>Semin, Toulouse (hostel)</i>					
<i>Hostel in Lourdes</i>	€10	4	€40		-
<i>Ibis Hotel Perpignan(Tom Dave Brad)</i>			£60		-
<i>Lizzie (Hotel in Perpignan)</i>	£29	1	£29		-
Hut and campsite accommodation			€488.4 ~£361.77		£800
<i>Camping d'Autun (campsite on 12/7)</i>	-	-	€66.80	A1	-
<i>Refuge d'espingo (hut on 14/7)</i>	€9.85	4	€39.40	A2	-
<i>Camping Pradelongue (campsite for nights 15/7-19/7)</i>	-	-	€168	A3, A4, A5, A6, A7	-
<i>Le Pre Lombard (campsite night 20/7)</i>	-	-	€39.00	A8	-
<i>Refuge de besines (hut on 24/7)</i>	€13.80	4	€55.20	NR	-
<i>Campsite in Prades (25/7)</i>	€8.00	4	€32.00	NR	-
<i>Camping les Cerisiers (campsite on 27/7&28/7)</i>	-	-	€58.00	A9	-
<i>Gite de la palette (camping 30/7)</i>	€10	3	€30.00	NR	-
MEDICAL AND TRAINING					
First Aid Supplies	£80	1	£80		£100
First Aid Training	£50	4	£200		£200
Training Trip	£44.03	4	£176.12		£0
EQUIPMENT					

Personal Equipment Costs	-	-	£1335.95	-	£1792
<i>Dave</i>	-	-	£427.80	-	-
<i>Tom</i>	-	-	£324.08	-	-
<i>Brad</i>	-	-	£278.31	-	-
<i>Lizzie</i>	-	-	£205.78	-	-
<i>Miscellaneous group items</i>	-	-	£99.98	-	-
Maps/Guides	-	-	£137.36	-	£100
Food & drink	-	-	€986.09 ~£730.44	-	£1440
<i>carrefour 06/7</i>	-	-	€23.33	<i>E1</i>	-
<i>Pizza at restaurant in Lourdes 06/7</i>	-	-	€51.00	<i>NR</i>	-
<i>carrefour 07/7</i>	-	-	€33.78	<i>E2</i>	-
<i>Food at restaurant in ski resort 09/7</i>	-	-	€31.25	<i>NR</i>	-
<i>Sandwich at a mountain hut 11/7</i>	-	-	€22	<i>NR</i>	-
<i>Carrefour 12/7</i>	-	-	€62.24	<i>E3</i>	-
<i>crisps from carrefour 13/7</i>	-	-	€1.20	<i>E4</i>	-
<i>Bread from bakery 13/7</i>	-	-	€1	<i>NR</i>	-
<i>Drinks at refuge d'Espingo 14/7</i>	-	-	€12.80	<i>NR</i>	-
<i>Breakfast at refuge d'Espingo 15/7</i>	-	-	€28.00	<i>NR</i>	-
<i>Food shopping at Casino 15/7</i>	-	-	€39.39	<i>E5</i>	-
<i>Intermarche 16/7</i>	-	-	€5.68	<i>E6</i>	-
<i>intermarche 17/7</i>	-	-	€7.20	<i>E7</i>	-

<i>intermarche 17/7</i>	-	-	€10.88	E8	-
<i>intermarche 17/7</i>	-	-	€16.06	E9	-
<i>intermarche 18/7</i>	-	-	€2.84	E10	-
<i>Food casino 18/7</i>	-	-	€6.48	E11	-
<i>intermarche 18/7</i>	-	-	€11.02	E12	-
<i>Carrefour 20/7</i>	-	-	€6.97	E13	-
<i>intermarche 20/7</i>	-	-	€28.65	E14	-
<i>Epicerie Merens les vals 24/7</i>	-	-	€55.15	E15	-
<i>Auberge du Carlit drinks 25/7</i>	-	-	€11.20	E16	-
<i>Boucherie Blanc 25/7</i>	-	-	€31.13	E17	-
<i>Drinks and food at refuge du ras de la caranca 26/7</i>	-	-	€20.50	NR	-
<i>Drinks at auberge cafe le bouytic 27/7</i>	-	-	€12.50	NR	-
<i>intermarche food 28/7</i>	-	-	€36.02	E18	-
<i>Meal at restaurant 28/7</i>	-	-	€48.00	NR	-
<i>Mountain Cafe drinks 29/7</i>	-	-	€4.50	NR	-
<i>Spar 30/7</i>	-	-	€18.30	E19	-
<i>drinks at gite de la palette 30/7</i>	-	-	€8.00	NR	-
<i>drinks in las illas 31/7</i>	-	-	€9.00	NR	-
<i>food in Le Perthus 1/8</i>	-	-	€9.00	NR	-
<i>Franprix 2/8</i>	-	-	€7.26	E20	-
<i>food in argeles sur mer 3/8</i>	-	-	€8.26	NR	-
<i>Meal in restaurant in Perpignan 04/8</i>	-	-	€26.50	NR	-
<i>Personal snack contribution</i>	€70	-	€280	NR	-

<i>throughout the trip</i>					
Fuel			€24.85 ~£18.40	-	£150
<i>Decathlon</i>	€7.95	2	€15.90	E21	-
<i>intersport</i>	€8.95	1	€8.95	E22	-
Total			£3717.31	-	£5322
INCOME					
Item	Unit cost	Quantity	Total		
Personal Contribution	£500	4	£2000		
Exploration Board Grant	£500	4	£2000		
CGCA award	£50	4	£200		
Total Expenditure			£3717.31		
Total Income			£4200		
Budget surplus (deficit)			£482.69		

*receipts for French purchases, NR means no receipt is available. See appendix for the receipts

**Using an exchange rate of £1=€1.35

RISK	CONSEQUENCES	PREVENTATIVE MEASURES	Likelihood	Severity	Overall Risk
Car/Coach/Bus Crash	Serious injury/death	Use recognised coach and bus companies, remain alert during journey	1	5	5
Theft/Mugging	Loss of property/personal injury	Travel in towns according to FCO advice and use common sense. Remain in a group at all times.	1	2	2
Road Crossings	Injury/Death	Take extra precaution whilst crossing the roads	1	4	4
Stove Breakage	Inability to cook	Take maintenance and repair kit for stove, including spare parts. Take two identical stoves, so should one fail within the group one operational stove may be constructed. All equipment will be checked to make sure everything is operational and in good working order, prior to expedition. Also take twig kettle for a more basic approach to cooking	2	3	6
Fuel loss/leakage	Unable to cook. Potential fire or explosion causing serious injury	Visual and frequent checks of stoves and fuel bottles. Use several fuel containers and fill stove bottles with funnels. Stoves filled with fuel where possible. Only use appropriate fuel containers. Twig kettles allow water to be boiled when we don't have fuel	1	3	3
Tent fire	Loss of tent; potential	Never cook inside tent. Make sure the tents are sufficiently	1	5	5

	burns	separated and away from source of fire. Refill fuel bottles well away from the tents and cooking area			
Suffocation (from CO)	Death	Ensure tent is well ventilated. Never do tent zips up fully or cook inside snow holes or other unventilated refuges to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.	1	5	5
Tent loss / breakage	Breakage: Repair. Loss of tent: More persons in each shelter.	All persons will assist with tents in bad weather. Check tents before departure and take repair kits if possible.	1	3	3
Disorientation and loss of direction	Lose track of where we are and be possibly unable to find shelter or get back on our route	Frequent reference to compass and GPS units. Ensure navigation is shared amongst group and all members must know route and plans for each day. Navigational skills will be refreshed and improved prior to departure	2	3	6
Exhaustion, fatigue, dizziness	Lowered core body temperature. Irritable and irrational behaviour. Possible stumbling or falling.	Frequent and adequate rests. Party moves at the slowest person's pace. Over-compensate on food and fuel supplies. Take lightweight and high energy food products to ensure weight is minimized and calorific value is maximized.	2	3	6
Dehydration	Headaches, dizziness, stumbling	Regularly and frequently take in liquid. Drink at least 3-4 litres of fluid per day.	3	3	9
Bad Weather	Most likely to be rain, difficult navigation	Put water damageable items in waterproof bags. If weather is	1	1	1

	and some items may be ruined	too bad seek better shelter and wait for it subside			
Tripping over guy lines/equipment	Sprained, twisted, fractured or broken ankle or knee. Other injuries.	Use torches at night, be observant, particularly around the campsite	2	2	4
Small accidents (cuts, sprains etc)	Inability to use affected part of body	Never walk alone, be sensible, all members should be able to deal with small injuries	2	2	4
Larger injuries (sever bleeding, fractures)	Possibly serious and permanent injury if no medical assistance sought.	Never walk alone. All members are be first aid trained and two to a higher level to provide immediate assistance.	1	4	4
Injury from lifting heavy packs	Strain and or muscular damage. Inability to complete daily tasks and load carrying.	Distribute loads between the group based on abilities of each member. Only take essentials as we are going to have to carry everywhere whatever we take.	2	4	8
Separation from group	Left alone without vital equipment for the night/trek in general	Everyone walk in at least a pair at all times. Agree on start and end points for the day. If lost go back to the last point you saw your team members.	2	2	4