



## SIXTH FORM THREE PEAKS CHALLENGE FOR SIERRA LEONE

“When the going gets tough the tough get going,” so say a team of St. Ambrose College hillwalkers who completed the gruelling Three Peaks Challenge to raise £3,500 for next year’s school trip to Sierra Leone.

Nine sixth formers accompanied by veteran mountain man Matthew O’Neill, who doubles as the Hale Barns Catholic Grammar School’s Head of Religious Education, completed the 26 mile trek up.

Pen-y-Ghent (691m), Whernside (728m), and Ingleborough (723m) in the allotted 12 hours.

And as Joshua Reeves, 17, from Over Peover, said: “I enjoyed it, but I won’t be volunteering to do it again in a hurry. It was really tough.”

St. Ambrose will be sending a party of 12 students and five staff for an immersion trip to Sierra Leone’s capital Freetown where in partnership with fellow Christian Brothers’ school nationwide they set up a secondary school for some 300 pupils in 2010.



Pictured on the front from left to right are Charlie Conduit, Pierce Rispin, Tom Hughes and Harvey Graham and on the back Sam Nanda, Jack O’Donnell, Joe Hewitt and Joshua Reeves.

As Matthew O’Neill said: “It is the first time we will have gone out to Sierra Leone since the Ebola crisis and we are all looking forward to meeting up with old friends. As the government cannot afford to provide education, we now sponsor 10 girls orphaned by Ebola and I am sure the trip will open our young men’s eyes to the problems of the developing world and further confirm their sense of social justice.”

Tom Hughes, 17, from Altrincham, who has the bronze, silver and gold Duke of Edinburgh awards, said: “I am sure we will all come back completely different people from what I expect will be a life changing experience.”

He added with a smile: “I’m used to expeditions from my D of E awards but I know some of the others were definitely feeling the pace.”

Among those was Headboy Sam Nanda, 17, from Knutsford, who completed the walk just two weeks after taking off the plaster cast from his broken ankle: “I wasn’t going to miss the challenge and after the cast came off I did a lot of strengthening exercises, but it was still a little sore come the end.”

Another tough nut was Ken Alford, 17, from Altrincham who is a marathon cyclist having completed the Arnheim challenge from the German border to the Hook of Holland among many long distance jaunts. He said: “It’s not just physical strength but a mental attitude that is important in endurance events.”

The party will fly out to Sierra Leone next February and now have £5,000 towards their £25,000 target to fund their passage and donations to the school.

Matthew O’Neill added: “We happened to pick one of the coldest nights of the year to camp out scraping frost off our sleeping bags before we set off, but it brought the team together.”

St. Ambrose would like to thank its Sierra Leone local sponsors: Spie, Money Penny, Knutsford Lions Club, Primrose House B&B, TOL Events, IOM Hearing Solutions, Fit4lifeknutsford, Evoke, Ian Macklin, Long O’Donnell Associates LTD, Old Moat Hall, So Hale, Zenith House Developments, St Beuno’s Drinks, The Mobberly Brewhouse, Merggames, BSI, UK Electronics, The Design House and Truck Care MOT Station.