

Local Hero: Mike Laird

We catch up on Mike Laird's Polar Adventure

Earlier in the year we interviewed Corstorphine resident Mike Laird about his forthcoming trip to the North Pole.

Mike made it to the Pole and home safely... well, most of him did. There were some issues with blisters and toes, but we'll save those pictures for the website!

We talked to Mike about some of his experiences and the impression the trip made on him.

Okay, Mike, you made it back safely, so that has to be a good thing, right?

Mike laughs. 'Well, yes, I suppose so, but it wasn't without its challenges and some of us came back pretty battered. Most of it is fixable, though.'

Tell us about some of those challenges.

Mike has to think for a bit. 'There

were quite a few of them, you understand,' he says ruefully. 'For me, I guess, it was the mental challenge of constantly thinking about doing the right things... getting the right calorie intake (about 6,000 calories a day), making sure our clothing, especially the wind suits were secure and strangely, not getting too hot.'

This caused us to raise our eyebrows because Mike had told us of coping with temperatures as low as minus fifty five degrees centigrade, with the wind chill.

'The cold doesn't matter so much,' explains Mike. 'The sheer effort of walking to the Pole, towing a heavy sled puts a physical strain on your body, which gets hot and you sweat... and believe me, sweating in the polar regions is not good.'

So what about that physical challenge?

Mike shrugs slightly. 'I'm pretty fit,' he says, 'but you can never be prepared for how physically draining the wind and the walking is. Luckily, though, all our fuel was on my sled so it got lighter as the trip went on.' He pauses to laugh. 'I pitied the poor guy who had the refuse sled – his load just got heavier and heavier!'

But Mike had sent us some pretty graphic pictures of a foot injury. 'Yes, I did suffer from some pretty major blisters, which turned quite nasty! Walking was agony for a while.'

If you'd like to learn more about Mike and his adventures you can visit his website www.jockandthebeanstalk.com.

If you'd like Mike to speak at an event then call him on 07733 337711.



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