

Hello all,

Wednesday 3rd July loomed fast, we met at Cadbury College to set off on our journey to Morocco. We headed for London to do all final checks on equipment and make the last minute preparations for our travels. Off we went from Gatwick on a mild day to arrive in Marrakesh to 54 degrees, a shock to the system. A hostel was our place of rest for the first night before setting off on a bus journey to the Berber village of Aremd where we slept that night, then spent some time under canvas before sleeping in the Berber village again. From arriving until leaving the Berber village we had the privilege of our own chef, tagines aplenty!!

The people in the village were very welcoming and we had a tour of the village which was helpful in understanding how they live and to see the work we would be helping with. The next day we set off on an 8k walk to the campsite in the Atlas Mountains which proved very difficult in the blazing sun. The campsite was very basic (interesting toilets) but in a lovely location. We had to undertake an acclimatisation walk to get used to the altitude before our ascent to the top of Toubkal. The campsite was at 2000m and the top of Toubkal was at 4125m, which was a heavy undertaking. The trek to the top was extremely difficult and we had to push ourselves to the absolute limit but in the end as a group we made it. The view was amazing despite the fog. Unfortunately in the mountains it was extremely cold at night and had a tendency to rain every time I put my washing out!

Over the next few days we spent many hours labouring, clearing and laying roads and wall building. We had lots of help from the local children who enjoyed filling my wheelbarrow to the absolute maximum and then laughing as I pushed it along. It was good to see the community making use of the road and the ease it gave them with their mules etc. The wall building was to secure an area to make a safe pathway for the mules. My heavy duty gardening gloves were appreciated during this period. Throughout this time we gave balloons and footballs to the local children, who were so grateful. The older children organised the games with the footballs and fun was had by all.

Now came our rest and relaxation time. We headed off on the long bus journey to Eassouira with the luxury of hotel accommodation for a night ahead of us. We had time on the beach for swimming and then some shopping before crashing out in our hotel. The next morning was an experience not to be forgotten as we went camel riding along the beach before setting off on our journey back to Marrakech. We had a few hours to see Jemaa El Fna and the Souks, both of which are a whole new experience in shopping!

Then came time to return to the U.K., exhausted but happy.

Again I want to thank everyone who supported me and helped me have this opportunity.

Evan ☺

