

Outward Bound Monaco April 2008 Course report

Judy's diary.....

Day THREE 19 April 2008:

The Via Ferrata at La Colmiane: this was universally acknowledged as THE biggest challenge of the course. Most participants had never seen a Via Ferrata before let alone done one.

They set off from Cap d'Ail in the mini bus for La Colmiane in the Mercantour region behind Nice and two hours later were kitted up and briefed by guide Pierrot. With helmets, ropes and clips to negotiate, this was not going to be a mountain stroll.

In fact one member of the group decided after the first descent that it was stretching him beyond reasonable limits and not wishing to jeopardize the day's activity for the rest of the group, opted to give the rest a miss and Diane kindly volunteered to accompany him back to the start. We had practised assertiveness the evening before in the EQ session and the art of saying no when really necessary and he felt that this was the moment, although he admitted it was a very hard decision to make.

The others ploughed on, often not daring to look down, gingerly negotiating the rock faces, braving the suspension bridge and the snow. Often pushed to the limits of bravery not knowing whether they would make it to the end without giving up, and yet encouraged by the support of the rest of the group, they pushed on and combined courage with agility and team spirit.

There was a stop for lunch and then back to the climb. There are points where turning back is just not an option and then of course there are the others both in front of you and behind.

There were breath taking views and breathtaking moments (see cliff hanging photos). Guide Pierrot made it look like child's play but ask the group!

An exhausted but proud group incredulous of their own performances came back to Cap d'Ail having conquered what was for some the most feared physical challenge of the week but all unanimous that it had been one of the major highs of the week (see testimonies).

Steve wrote me a text message later that evening which is testimony to the quality of the activity and the course in general: "It was the best day I have had with Outward Bound as long as I can remember. There were some remarkable performances".

I can only add that those kind of performances are testimony to the trust and confidence that each member was prepared to put in the other and that does not just 'happen', it is the result of good quality support and instruction and that is what Outward Bound is all about!