



# Going for Gold - Duke of Edinburgh Experience



**Q.** What happens when you take 30 colleagues aged under-23, and give them rucksacks, compasses and canoes in the Peak District?

**A.** Great teamwork and top banter. But that's not the only benefit created by Tarmac's partnership with The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE)



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Jack Gardner, operative at Sevenoaks quarry

Jack Gardner, operative at Sevenoaks quarry (and now-confident canoeist), talks about his DofE experience.

I found out about The Duke of Edinburgh programme after my manager thought it was a great way for me to gain new skills. It's an 18-month course where under-23s can work towards achieving a Gold Award – with Tarmac supporting us all the way. To get the award – and get the chance to meet Prince Edward at St James' Palace – we'll need to complete all the award sections, including volunteering, physical, skills, expedition and residential.

I wasn't sure if the residential trip would be my cup of tea. But I loved it. I've worked at Sevenoaks quarry for seven months and wanted to make the most of new opportunities at Tarmac, and set myself up for the future. A big highlight of the trip was getting to meet other young people at Tarmac. I'm quite a confident bloke anyway – as my

Sevenoaks colleagues will tell you! – so I made friends quickly. We now have a messenger group to stay in touch, too.

**Raft-building was great fun – and got pretty competitive!** We split into teams and had to float our DIY rafts out to a buoy in the middle of the lake. The canoeing was a challenge to start with – it was the coldest day and the water was freezing! But it was a lot of fun.

**I can see I have a great future here.** Tarmac is really investing in its young people, and giving us a brilliant way to develop valuable skills for business, like team-working, leadership, time management and communication. My advice to other colleagues thinking about the Award is to go for it. It's a great way to get involved, learn more from others and do things you never thought possible.