

Words Charlotte Griffiths Pictures Jamie Buchanan-Dunlop

The Big Freeze

The Olympus Tough line of compacts are designed to stand up to extreme situations, so when Jamie Buchanan-Dunlop went on an expedition to Antarctica, he took the μ 790 SW "Tough" along for the ride. We got in touch to find out more:

Can you tell me some more about the expedition to Antarctica?

The expedition to Antarctica was with the Antarctic preservation organization called 2041 (so named because in 2041 the law that protects the Antarctic from drilling and mining could potentially be modified). We were based on King George Island, just off the tip of the Antarctic Peninsula. Our objective was to set up wind turbines to power an educational base called the E-Base. Perhaps more importantly, we had the opportunity to engage an international schools' audience and inspire them to think about how they consume energy, how energy is produced and how we can all work together to tackle the issue of climate change.



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How vital is it that you come back with decent images and video footage?

It's incredibly important to have a record of the expedition. If you are not sharing your expedition and using video and images to engage a wider audience, then expeditions can become a little self-indulgent. With the development in communications technologies, it's now possible to interact with an international audience in real-time. We were putting up video, photo galleries and blog posts online via satellite on a daily basis.

What made you decide to take the Tough camera along with you?

I have to be able to rely on the equipment I take on expedition. There's no repair shop to pop into if something goes wrong, and I learnt this the hard way on a previous expedition when a piece of grit became lodged in my camera lens.

I ended up with a piece of kit that acted like an angry alarm clock and I was five days travel from the nearest big town.

How did the camera stand up to the extreme temperature – did you do anything to it, like keep it in a warm bag or pocket in between shots, to help it survive?

In cold conditions, it's the battery performance you need to worry about, so I always popped the camera back into my pocket between shots. I had no problems, but in really cold conditions the buttons weren't quite large enough to use with very thick gloves.

Did it have any scrapes that a normal camera wouldn't survive?

It came everywhere – walking on glaciers, sliding down snowfields, operating satellite communications in driving sleet – and didn't



complain once. I wouldn't trust any other camera for the job.

What did you think about the quality of the images and video?

The first thing to note is that this is a digital compact camera, not an SLR – so while it might not deliver full-on pro quality you're going to get decent images and OK video, and it was perfect for what we wanted to do online. It struggled a little in low light conditions, especially as I was slipping and sliding on a mixture of snow and penguin guano, but the camera worked well and I was pleased with the quality of the images. A tip for using the video function is to keep the camera close to the subject or to make sure that the person you are filming is speaking quite loudly to ensure you get decent audio.

How close could you get to the wildlife in the location that you were working?

You're not allowed to get too close to the wildlife in Antarctica and have to be aware of alarming or disturbing any animals. The lack of visitors and absence of hunting means that often the wildlife is curious rather than afraid. So, often if you are sitting still, then you might end up pretty close to a penguin. It's an enormous privilege to be surrounded by such

abundant wildlife and this makes the preservation of Antarctica all the more important.

What is the next expedition that you are planning to travel on? Will you be taking the Tough on that one as well?

My next expedition is to Pakistan in 2010. We will be taking a group of British pupils as part of a two year education programme to build better understanding between young people in the UK and Pakistan and to promote community cohesion and diversity. We'll be making educational content on a daily basis and it will be great having the pupils involved in the process as well. As in Antarctica, we'll be posting video, photos and blog posts online via satellite on a daily basis. The Tough will be coming along to help capture this amazing country and some of the most beautiful scenery in the world up in the Northern Areas. **END**

DISCOVERING THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The E-Base Expedition

Demonstrating Antarctica's unique and fragile beauty

The E-Base broadcasts a year-round educational message about climate change to schools and organizations around the world. By showcasing the Antarctic's unique beauty and proving that sustainability is possible every day of the year in the harshest environment on earth, 'E-Base Live 365' will serve as an inspiration to a global audience. With the support and vision of nPower, the UK-based utilities company, the E-Base is now run entirely off renewable energy, 365 days a year.

Learn more: <http://ebase.2041.com>

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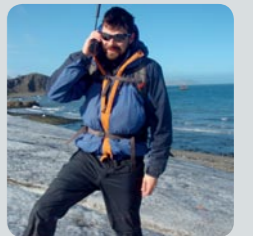


MEET THE EXPLORER

Jamie Buchanan-Dunlop

Jamie is the founder of Digital Explorer and an expedition leader and educator. Graduating from Oxford, he joined Shell International's management programme and worked in Human Resources and Communications. He left to pursue his passion for expeditions and education, first running an orphanage in India and then founding iNOMAD, an organization dedicated to communicating discovery - where he ran his first youth expedition.

Jamie returned to the classroom as part of the government's Fast Track Teacher programme after



receiving his PGCE from Durham University. He was appointed Head of Citizenship at Eastbury Comprehensive before leading on multimedia learning at London's largest comprehensive, Crown Woods. Digital Explorer was born out of Jamie's drive for bringing the world to the classroom.

Learn more: <http://digitalexplorer.com>