

A man with a beard and a headband, wearing a light-colored shirt and dark trousers, is walking across a log over a river. He has a backpack and is using trekking poles. The background shows a river, tall grass, and mountains in the distance.

## School Talks with Explorer, Leon McCarron

To date, Leon McCarron has given almost **500** lectures in schools. Using his extensive experience in classrooms and with young people, Leon presents **an inspirational and educational talk for schools**. Drawing on stories and images from his travels around the world, **he encourages students to think broadly about life and to get motivated to find a passion and purpose.**

Illustrated using high definition pictures, this talk inspires young people to persevere with tasks of great difficulty, to reflect on problem solving and risk taking, and above all to aim high, take opportunities and **give everything to their endeavours both in and out of school.**

Leon is currently offering a number of lectures. Previous talks have included: '***On Foot Across China***' which covers his six month walk from Mongolia to Hong Kong - crossing the Gobi Desert in temperatures of -30C, following the frozen Yellow River, camping in the shadow of the Great Wall and surviving and thriving in wild and wonderful China. Additionally: '***The Land Beyond: A Thousand Miles on Foot Through the Heart of the Middle East***' which is the story of Leon's expedition through the West Bank, Jordan and across the Sinai peninsula; Leon uses the stories from his journey to show a cross-section of a country that is so-often misunderstood in the West.

All of his lectures include stories and lessons from Leon's other journeys around the world. The expeditions as a thread to take pupils through a new and unknown landscape, and also a jumping off point for a wide variety of other lessons and thoughts on life and purpose.



Leon's presentations for pupils are a fantastic and complete educational experience - they combines exciting stories of adventure with a strong message about all the possibilities that are out there for us, whatever our interests, and the importance of giving 100% to our endeavours. They are a thoroughly entertaining session for the pupils and helps them to absorb the lessons while still having fun!

The lectures are suitable for all school age children from 4-18, and will usually take the form of a 45 minute lecture with time for questions afterwards, or can be booked for half and full days of speaking.

***To make a booking,  
email [info@leonmccarron.com](mailto:info@leonmccarron.com)***





## ***References***

### **Eton College**

*The boys, parents and staff at the Pilgrims' School were delighted to enjoy an hour of adventure, philosophy and enthusiasm with Mr Leon McCarron. His story was good enough and well told enough to bind to silence and wonder wriggly eight year olds and ancient creaking grandparents. We were lucky to have him visit.*

### **Pilgrims' School Winchester**

*Leon McCarron is an inspiration to us all, he generates enthusiasm to attempt the unknown. His lecture is very professionally given in a relaxed but hard hitting way. I would recommend him as audiences of all ages will be gripped and educated by his talk.*

### **Pinewood School**

*Leon was inspirational. He spoke eloquently about his travels, whilst showing some extraordinary photos from his expedition. His natural persona and sense of humour came across and he had the whole theatre eating out of his hands. Many of the children loved hearing of his adventures as did the staff! Leon is a modest, insightful and a real life adventurer and well worth every penny!*

### **Hazlegrove Prep School**

*Leon gave two thoroughly inspiring and thought-provoking lectures on both his Iranian and Chinese journeys. Nearly 500 pupils enjoyed these lectures, the feedback has been excellent and many have remarked on the encounters and insights involving local people and culture. Leon has a story telling gift and was able to capture the intrigue and spontaneity at the heart of these journeys. His film*

*clips and images are art forms and far from the routine tourist snap shots. Leon encouraged our pupils to discover and follow their own passions'*

### **Marlborough College**

*The stories of Leon's journeys enthralled our pupils and the message running through each narrative for each to embrace the spirit of adventure, discover hidden talents and resources and in particular to celebrate the kindness of strangers resonated in the hosts of hands in the air each eager to know more.*

### **Dragon school**

*Leon gave a lecture to Year 12 students on their induction day. He spoke of his journey and how perseverance, determination and courage were required to achieve his goals. He made his experiences relevant to the students and helped them to see that they are responsible for their own destinies. Leon's talk was interesting, appropriate and inspirational. We will be asking him to come back next year.*

### **Stamford Endowed Schools**

*Leon obviously has a wonderful range of experiences and the students loved his pictures and video clips, however, the great value in his presentation was using these experiences to help the students believe they are each capable of achieving success in the face of great challenges.*

### **Riverside International School, Prague**

*Mr Leon McCarron is a captivating and thought-provoking speaker. The audience, both young and old, were left fascinated, impressed and inspired. We will be asking him back, of that I am certain!*

### **Forest School**

*Leon visited our school and spoke to the boys and girls from Year 5 to 8. They listened with fascination to Leon's wonderful recounting of his adventures, learning a huge amount about the human spirit and their own potential. A superbly professional and eloquent speaker. We will certainly be inviting him back.*

### **Marlborough House School Kent**

*The Duke of Edinburgh's Award were thrilled to have Leon McCarron present Gold Awards on behalf of HRH the Duke of Edinburgh at St James's Palace. He was very engaging and we enjoyed his humorous tales of his many adventures. We look forward to having Leon back!*

### **Events Manager, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award**

*Leon was quite superb – brilliantly pitched speech which kept adults and children alike engaged. Really good at engaging with the audience. Speech very interesting and just the right length. Afterwards there were more than a few parents / staff who wanted to chat with him and even when I was trying to bundle him into a taxi in the car park we had parents pulling up in their own cars to congratulate him!*

**Danes Hill School**

*Leon's speech at our Annual Prize Giving was both entertaining and inspirational. The easy way in which he painted the picture of his life adventures made his message accessible to all members of the audience from our six year olds to the grandparents in the audience. We will definitely ask Leon back; I thoroughly recommend him.*

**Woodlands Hutton Manor**

*Your talk was perfectly pitched for our audience, captivating and inspiring. You managed to pick out key aspects of your expeditions that relate directly to them which will help them put their experience in context.*

**Wellington College**

*Leon came to speak at Worth School in September 2015 about his adventures in China. He was highly engaging and inspirational, telling an amazing story and the dangers he faced in walking the length of China. The Sixth Formers were motivated after his talk, and it was important for them to see someone so normal completing something so extraordinary.*

**Worth School**

*Leon came to our school to talk about his 3,000 mile walk across China from Mongolia; although we had expected an inspirational presentation, we had not expected his talk to align so well with our own emphasis on mind set. The strategies Leon discussed with reference to mental toughness and achieving aspirational goals were exactly those we try to encourage our students to use with reference to their learning and their lives; as an IB school we found that Leon's talk perfectly supported our emphases on the IB Learner Profile and internationalism. Not only that, but our students were riveted by Leon's stories, and were perhaps inspired to set their own goals higher than they might have before his presentation. It was a fascinating talk by a remarkable person who managed to make us all feel we could accomplish anything we set out to accomplish through sheer determination. Highly recommended!*

**Marymount International School**

*I thought that Leon was one of the best speakers we have had for our weekly U6 lecture programme: he had a lively delivery, spoke on a fascinating topic (I could have listened to him all day and did not check my watch once), gave us plenty of detail which really brought the epic journey to life and struck me as a thoroughly decent bloke to go adventuring with. We will have him back again next year and I'd recommend him to any school looking for an engaging speaker.*

**Bedford School**

*We were delighted to spend an afternoon joining Leon on a worldwide adventure, he was able to weave a wide range of life lessons and moral sentiments in to his talk. The audience was gripped and left feeling capable of taking on any challenge. A truly wonderful and inspiring event.*

**Sidcot School**

*Not only did Leon's talk about his travels across China inspire the audience, it was perfectly pitched, hugely engaging and entertaining. We look forward to hearing more about his future ventures!*

**Bryanston School**

*Engaging, thought provoking, funny – students were interested from the moment Leon began to speak. The talk was pitched perfectly – and the fact that Leon's anecdotes covered 4+ journeys was great. Fantastic that he finished on his journey through the Empty Quarter, finishing in Dubai – brings it all right to our students' doorsteps. In all of my years hosting authors, Leon is up there with the absolute best. We would love to have him back to tell us all about his newest adventures.*

**Wellington International School, Dubai**

*The feedback I have had so far has been wholeheartedly positive which is unsurprising considering the inspiring and informative talk you delivered. The visual images were so impressive too and just confirmed how challenging the expedition was and what an incredible experience it must have been.*

**Alleyn's School**

*Leon captivated and inspired our student community with his humble approach and relatable reflection on some incredible achievements. The talk was an extremely valuable addition to our co-curricular program of events*

**Queens College**

*Immediately personable and engaging, Leon grabbed the attention of our audience and retained it through out, children as young as 6 through the ages and generations to parents and grandparents. Speaking for just under 30mins with audio-visual support Leon was informative, amusing and inspiring providing a sense of the possible. We were delighted that Leon stayed on after to mix with pupils and parents. Strongly recommend Leon for any school.*

**St. Nicholas Preparatory School**

*Thanks for coming into school and inspiring the pupils with your talk. I have received very positive feedback from them saying that they really enjoyed the talk, especially your stories of extreme conditions and the opportunity they had to share their own ideas about the subject of adventure travel.*

**Millfield School**

*Thank you for coming in to speak to our lower sixth pupils last Friday. Your talk was inspirational and extremely interesting and I know from pupil feedback that they enjoyed the talk immensely.*

**Mill Hill School**

*The children absolutely loved the talk from Leon and have really been inspired to think about what types of adventures they would like to do. It has also given them the idea that to achieve something*

*great they will have to battle through the tough times and develop the persistence required to achieve their dreams. It was a roaring success.*

#### **Chesham Preparatory School**

*Thank you so very much for coming to talk at Studium. A number of boys have told me how much they enjoyed your talk. We are delighted.*

#### **Winchester College**

*Leon's talk touches upon so many areas of education that they are impossible to list. He speaks well and at length about cultural and environmental issues, but also about mindset, rising to and overcoming challenges, and about motivation. I would thoroughly and wholeheartedly recommend Leon's educational presentations and we will certainly be getting him back in the future.*

#### **Epsom College**

*Leon was an engaging speaker and used his excellent photography to show us both the stunning beauty of the natural worlds in which he travelled as well as the basic realities of it all...Leon gave us much to think about how we really can shape our futures and not compromise in any way on our humanity*

#### **Student from Priors Field School**

*Leon is an inspiration to young people in general, not just young cyclists. He encourages us to persevere to achieve goals; to go out and embrace the world; and to have a good time while we do it. To celebrate Bike Week 2011, seven 'Bike It' schools in Belfast received a visit from Leon McCarron. Special assemblies were held for pupils, and Leon talked about his extraordinary journey along with a slideshow of photographs. Pupils and teachers at both primary and secondary schools enthusiastically reported back to me how much they all enjoyed his presentation. I would highly recommend Leon's inspiring tales on two wheels to any school!*

#### **Sustrans**

*The pupils at Caterham School were fascinated by Leon's description of his remarkable expeditions. His engaging talk was delivered with compassion and humour and his audience – comprising students aged 13-15 years – enjoyed it very much indeed. I would certainly recommend Leon as a speaker at school events.*

#### **Caterham School**

*The staff and children were captivated to hear your adventures and inspired to set themselves challenges .... one step at a time. There were also relevant links from your talk On Foot Across China that link so well with the Geography curriculum. Your humility in presenting and engaging with the children was fantastic.*

#### **Hilden Grange School**

*Leon spoke at our Prize Giving evening about his exciting adventures across the USA and China. He spoke with passion and enthusiasm and was a real inspiration to the pupils. Parents and pupils appreciated his humour and I received many positive reports.*

#### **Dagfa School Nottingham**

*I would wholeheartedly recommend this brilliant and inspiring talk by Leon McCarron. The students came out of the hall buzzing with excitement and ideas, inspired immediately to start planning trips or challenges for themselves. The talk was engaging and amusing, thought-provoking and inspiring but most of all a real pleasure to listen to.*

#### **South Devon Geographical Association**

*This was a riveting story, sensitively told and easily accessible for the students. There were many transferable messages about dreaming big and persevering which struck a chord with the students.*

#### **Giggleswick School**

*Even at the end of a long day, Leon's talk on his adventures in Mongolia and China, crossing the Gobi Desert, captivated our Year 8 boys. His skilled story-telling, combined with excellent visuals, made the whole journey come alive in our corner of North London. I've rarely seen so many boys bursting with questions after a talk. Highly recommended!*

#### **The Hall School, Hampstead**

*Leon gave an outstanding talk about his fascinating adventures, which would have been interesting enough. However, he also gave a number of very explicit inspirational life lessons to the pupils and spoke with a great blend of confidence, humility and humour. The following day the feedback from all of our pupils was really positive and they said how much they enjoyed the talk.*

#### **The Elms School**

We loved having Leon back – he has a very natural way of presenting. One of our Year 8 pupils said to me afterwards that he really enjoyed it and thought that it wasn't just about Leon and his trip, but he made it apply to the audience and gave them a good message that they could relate to!

#### **The Elms School**

*Thank you so much for visiting us last week and giving such a fascinating talk to the Top Form. They all commented on how interesting it was as well as inspirational. ( you have inspired the deputy to follow his dreams cycling to Jerusalem!)*

*You have a lovely manner with that age and quickly built up a rapport with them.*

#### **Beechwood Park**

*Leon came to speak to our pupils about his adventures but, in the process, he taught some very valuable life lessons:*

- *If you only do what is safe, and guaranteed to be successful, you risk existing and not living.*



- *Anything worth having is hard and involves overcoming failure.*
- *Success has to do with what you do and not what you buy.*

*We very much enjoyed Leon's visit and we would welcome him back at any time.*

#### **George Watson's College, Edinburgh**

*The children are still talking about it and you really captured their imaginations and reinforced some key messages that we are always trying to impress on them!*

#### **Sutton Valence Prep School**

*Your talk was a great way to start the term, and has set a high benchmark for other speakers to follow. The feedback from both pupils and colleagues has been extremely positive.*

#### **Clifton College**

*Many thanks for speaking to us, the initial feedback is very positive and inspirational, and you were a hard act to follow for the next speaker of the day!*

#### **Prior Park College**

*Inspirational, motivational and a great way to start a new school year*

#### **New student to Prior Park College, 6th Form**

*Made me raise my goals and strive to achieve all that I can*

#### **L6th Pupil**

*The pupils found Leon's talk on his travels from New York to Hong Kong both inspiring and something they could relate to. His unassuming, easy manner had them all silent for 45 minutes and we had to eventually stop the 'question time' due to time constraints. Many of the pupils approached me afterwards to say how much they enjoyed it. I will certainly look at having him back again to tell us about his walk in China. Highly Recommended!*

#### **Cranmore Preparatory School**

*You spoke with conviction, humility and authenticity about your experience and boys got a clear message. I would happily recommend you!*

#### **Sherborne School**

*Thank you again for coming to visit us and sharing your wealth of knowledge about travel and adventure. The pupils were inspired to hold on to the goodness in humanity and embrace the adventures of life.*

#### **Dolphin School**

*Thank you for coming to speak to our children about your amazing adventures, both the highs and lows. The children were totally engaged throughout the presentation (as were the adults), quite an*

*accomplishment as some of our children were only 6 years old. I was particularly pleased to discover the constant underlying message of; setting large goals and then breaking that into manageable steps; using effort to overcome challenge; and using failure positively. The pictures were fantastic and really gave a sense of all you had been through.*

*I would recommend any school that has an opportunity to listen to your adventures to do so.*

### **Alleyn Court Prep School**

*We all hugely valued your talk and discuss elements of it often - a wonderful presentation.*

### **St Mary's Shaftesbury**

*Leon delivered a highly professional, engaging presentation to my Year 6 students on his global travels: this inspired some thoughtful responses from the class, which he answered with warmth and humour.*

*He then went on to guide those students into considering what makes excellent travel writing, getting them to analyse some of his own work. Spurred on, they then enthusiastically began to produce their own writing.*

*Leon interacted confidently with this very mixed ability group with both SEN and G and T needs and differentiated well, and I was delighted to see their effervescence and renewed interest in writing. It was an excellent follow up to previous class work on non-fiction and travel writing, and I've been able to draw on this session in subsequent sessions. He was an inspiration to writers and non writers alike!*

### **Clifton Lodge**

*The students very much enjoying Leon's sense of humour and the effective use of the supporting photographs. They really liked the sense of an ordinary schoolboy achieving his dreams! I would recommend this talk whole-heartedly.*

### **Lord Wandsworth College**

*We thank Leon for coming. He went down a storm, pitching to the young audience (but with adults present as well) perfectly. The boys were inspired, and some even came out of the theatre stating that they will 'start planning a big adventure tonight' for when they are older.*

### **QEH Bristol**

*He demonstrated that you don't be particularly skilled or athletic to go on a first adventure, it was amazing to see how he faced difficulties travelling abroad, but carried on, simply knowing that the experience would be worth it.*

### **Tilly, the Speaker Captain – SHHS**

*Leon spoke of his fascinating life. I found it very inspiring. His message was really interesting as well; how ignorance is what's holding people back in their relationship with foreign cultures.*

**By Matty B. (yr13), More House School**

*I found Leon's travels very moving and an amazing experience. He showed such courage and his motivation inspired me to want to explore the world around me.*

**Maria P. (yr13), More House School**

*Very insightful and interesting that Iran has different tribes and that, previously, tourists have been warned away from. Leon has taught us from his experiences, that this is prejudiced and ignorant. In reality, the people so welcoming and kind, to complete strangers.*

**By Mille C-B (yr13), More House School**

*We very much enjoyed the talk last week and the girls were buzzing with energy afterwards. I particularly liked the fact that you had such a strong attention of the girls from China and Hong Kong. Also, I enjoyed that it was not just you telling a story about your journey across the landscape, that there was a deeper point of not having to know what you want to do and how you can use your passions to motivate and that it is ok to make mistakes.*

**Headington School**

*Thank you so very much for coming into Ashford School and sharing your adventures with our Sixth Form. They really enjoyed it and you certainly grasped their attention, which is no easy feat with 17 year olds!*

**Ashford School**

*It was very much our pleasure and good fortune to have you as our guest last Friday.*

**Reading Blue Coat School**

*Leon came to our school and gave an excellent inspirational talk to all our pupils ranging from Year 3 to Year 6. They were all riveted by the stories of his travels and things that happened along the way as well as seeing such interesting photographs.*

**Perse School**

*Leon presented his information to our whole primary school in a friendly, humorous and interesting manner and had a wonderful rapport with the children. He used an interactive whiteboard to display the magnificent photographs which captured the drama of the many tales he told.*

*Our pupils were enthralled by Leon's experience and it has sparked an interest in many of our pupils to cycle. Leon's visit covered many areas of the curriculum, in particular geographically, artistically and culturally. I would strongly encourage other schools to avail of this fabulous and unique presentation.*

### **Dalriada School**

*I would like to express my personal thanks and the appreciation of the school for all you did for us on our Cycle to School day.*

*The fact that it was such a great success is in no small measure because of you!! Both staff and pupils alike found you inspirational, genuine and such a role model for children and young people. Your photography and motivational quotes helped set the tone not just for the morning but helped set the tone for a tremendous finish to our school year. We really do appreciate all you did and wish you well over the coming months.*

*I know we will be having you visit again!!*

### **Gilnahirk Primary School**

*I wanted to thank you for your visit to Strandtown Primary School. This was a wonderful time for the students and staff of our school to learn about your travels. The talk and show were pitched just right for our P 6 and 7 children. Your blend of fantastic slides and witty banter combined with interesting facts and stories was great. Ever since your visit we have been buzzing with the story of your amazing journey.*

*It was a motivational talk that worked well at our primary school. The 45 minutes were inspirational and I haven't stopped telling all and sundry about it! Thanks again Leon and good luck with your future adventures.*

### **Strandtown Primary School**

*The explorer was amazing this year. He pitched his talk perfectly for the age of his audience and kept their attention throughout. They loved having the opportunity to ask questions at the end. Here are a few of their favourite bits nearly two weeks later! He has clearly made a lasting impression.*

### **Willington Prep School**

*I thought the speaker last week was really refreshing from our usual talks on university options. Personally I am really interested in expeditions and trips and Leon had confirmed that it is something I will definitely do after finishing school.*

*The bit I most enjoyed from the talk would have to be the question time after, I felt this was when we found out the most about how he felt during the trip. He was a really interesting guy and I really enjoyed having the opportunity to find out more about his other adventures over lunch.*

### **Sixth Form Student, Headington School**

*I enjoyed hearing about his walk around China – **Matthew Aged 6***

*I liked it when he travelled to the desert – **Thomas Aged 5***

*I liked it when he threw the chocolate into the woods – **Daniel Aged 6***

*I liked when he ran away from the snake!- **Adam - aged 5***

*I liked it when he was scared that the bear was coming! – **Harry Aged 5***

*It was funny when he kept getting caught by the police in China! – **Alexandre Aged 6***

**Year 1 Class**

**Willington Prep School**