

**AS BOWOOD REOPENS, THE POPULAR FAMILY ATTRACTION
SALUTES CAMILLA HEMPLEMAN-ADAMS'S ADVENTUROUS SPIRIT
AHEAD OF THE SCHOOLGIRL'S UPCOMING POLAR QUEST**

14 March 2008: As Bowood House & Gardens re-opens its Adventure Playground for its 2008 season and introduces another generation of youngsters to the thrills, spills and benefits of adventurous outdoor play, the popular family attraction (between Calne and Chippenham) will also be sending out the very best of wishes to one of its playground 'graduates' – Camilla Hempleman-Adams - as she sets off on a challenging polar quest.

Aiming to become the youngest British woman ever to ski to the North Pole, Camilla (15) will embark on the extremely challenging and testing polar expedition on 3rd April as part of a team of 12. The group will include Norwegian polar expert, Rune Gjeldnes and be led by her father, David, who was the first person to complete the explorer's 'Grand Slam' - by scaling the highest mountain on every continent and reaching the North and South Geographic and Magnetic poles – and is widely regarded as one of the world's greatest living polar explorers.

While a sense of adventure clearly courses through Hempleman-Adams family members, Camilla's father credits Bowood's Adventure Playground as having played its part in kick-starting his three daughters' outward bound spirits. "Camilla and her sisters were virtually brought up in Bowood's Adventure Playground," explains David Hempleman-Adams. "Living nearby, I brought them along here for some spirited outdoor play that has helped them test their boundaries and confront some thrilling challenges.

"As soon as they arrived at the playground, they would head straight for Bowood's famous 'death slide' – I've scaled some heights but you'd be hard pushed to get me going down that myself! This pulse-racing slide, that starts with a shocking 19-foot vertical drop before levelling out for a sleek, smooth and triumphant landing, clearly helped to set Camilla's adrenalin pumping at an early age. It also helped her to learn how to evaluate and manage her sense of risk."

Camilla, who has already climbed Mount Fuji with her father and loves the thrill of fast downhill skiing, is all too aware of the very real dangers she will face on her 80 mile trek to the pole as she swaps home comforts for temperatures as low as minus 45 degrees centigrade. However, a

motivation behind the expedition for Camilla and her team mates is to highlight the effects of global warming on the fast disappearing arctic sea ice. Camilla fears if her generation doesn't act now to reverse the effects of global warming, the arctic ice won't be around for much longer. "Time is running out for our planet and it's most noticeable at the poles. The world's last great frozen wildernesses are disappearing fast - my father has told me how beautiful the arctic is, I'd like to see it for myself.... while I still can," says Camilla.

Yesterday, Camilla visited Buckingham Palace for a private audience with HRH the Duke of Edinburgh to tell him more about the expedition's objectives as he wished her well in her venture that is expected to conclude on 20 April. She then took part in a press photo call in front of Big Ben alongside a giant melting ice clock, as she spelt out an urgent environmental message to all of her generation: "Lose the Ice....lose the Planet".

Bowood's owner, Lord Lansdowne, in sending out his best wishes to Camilla comments, "It seems like no time at all since Camilla and her sisters were conquering the challenges of our Adventure Playground and the prospect of her now tackling the North Pole and highlighting the importance of protecting her environment is to be highly applauded. I wish her, David and the whole team every single success in their venture - which is bound to be the most exhilarating and marvellous experience - and I look forward to their safe return.

"Camilla is the perfect example of someone who's benefited considerably from energetic and active outdoor play from an early age. I would encourage more of today's children to tear themselves away from the computer screen in favour of some good old-fashioned rough-and-tumble that undoubtedly is hugely rewarding for body and soul while also boosting self-confidence," adds Lord Lansdowne who opened the Adventure Playground at Bowood in 1976.

Following the Hempleman-Adams duo's return, however, will Camilla finally be able to persuade her father to go down Bowood's 'death slide'? She'll have the chance to do so on Father's Day (Sunday 15 June) when for a pre-designated hour playtime in the Adventure Playground will be restricted purely for dads!

Bowood House & Gardens will be open to the public from Wednesday 19 March – Tuesday 4 November 2008, from 11am-6pm daily – with last admissions at 5pm (closing one hour earlier after the autumn clocks go back).

Individual entrance tickets start at £4.50 per head for children aged 2-4 and go up to £8 per adult. Special rates for groups and senior citizens are also available, as are Family and Season Tickets.

Entrance tickets for the Rhododendron Walks are priced separately at £5.25 per adult (with children up to 15 being admitted free of charge) and £4.75 per senior citizen. If visiting Bowood House, on the same day too, then entrance to the Rhododendron Walks is reduced by £1 per person.

For further details, log on to www.bowood.org or call 01249 812102.

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Note for Editors

Among the many highlights of Bowood's **Adventure Playground**, it's the full size pirate galleon (complete with rigging and a crow's nest), high-up walkways and the much talked about 'Space Dive' that are the most daring. In tempting children away from the TV screen and computer games, Bowood urges children to run about, let off steam and discover their own boundaries rather than fight shy of them. With safety precautions well in place, many other attractions for gentler play and a special Soft Play area for very young ones, it is still the 'sheer height and danger of it all' that children appreciate most, as was confirmed by the results of a survey conducted by Bowood last April into what today's children seek from their leisure time.

This year their parents will be surveyed as Bowood enquires into their attitudes about how children should spend their leisure time, alongside the freedoms and boundaries they're given.

Bowood House & Gardens is set in 2,000 acres of Grade I listed parkland mapped out by the fashionable 18th century garden designer, Capability Brown in the 1760s. The descendants of the 1st Earl of Shelburne and the 1st Marquess of Lansdowne have lived here since 1754, with the present Marquis of Lansdowne opening Bowood House & Gardens to the public in 1975. Other attractions - appealing to various age groups and interests - include the Arboretum with its 11 championship trees, a woodland garden of rhododendrons covering 60 acres (open to the public from late April for six weeks) and a championship 18-hole golf course located in the western corner of the Great Park. Building work has just commenced on a new 43 bedroom hotel and health club scheduled to open in 2009. www.bowood.org