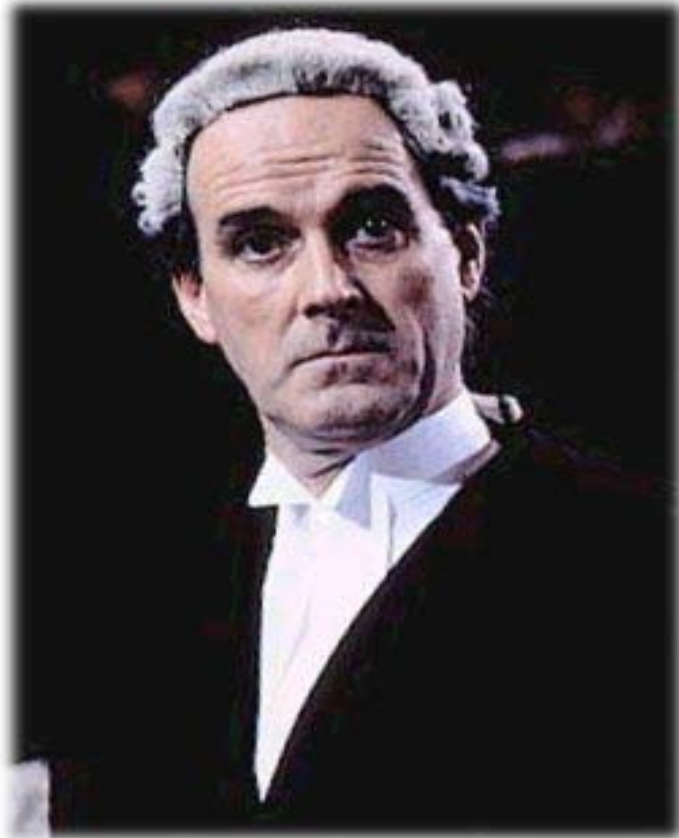




An alternative view on risk

Jerome Mayhew

Barrister



Jerome Mayhew

**Managing
Director**

Go Ape!



Background to Go Ape!



2002

The first course – A ropes course through the tree tops in Thetford Forest, Norfolk.



Training to use the equipment...



**Go
Ape!**

Taking responsibility...



Having fun.



**Go
Ape!**

Background to Go Ape!

2002: First course opened

2006: 7 courses - 211,000 participants

2007: 12 courses - 325,000 participants

2008: 17 courses – 435,000 participants

2009: 22 courses – 515,000 participants

2012: 40 courses





**Why exposure to risk
is a social good**

Risk is bad, isn't it?

Workplace health and safety saves lives:

- work practices
- equipment
- culture



Risk is bad, isn't it?

- **S2-3, Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 – originally designed for the factory:**

Now applied even to parks and playgrounds



The unintended consequences

- Risk aversion has entered the national psyche
 - Children “must be safe”
 - Accidents must have been someone’s fault



The unintended consequences

- Risk aversion has entered the national psyche
 - Enforcement/litigation leading to fear and reduction of opportunity for adventure
 - Encouragement of litigation culture
 - “Where there’s blame, there’s a claim”
 - “Caution – contains milk”



The unintended consequences

- Risk aversion has entered the national psyche
 - Obsession with risk to the exclusion of other benefits
(Compensation Act 2006)



Dumbing down... and displacement





Bored?



The unintended consequences

The Result:

- **Passive, unhealthy children**
or
- **Play displaced to truly dangerous places!**

- **Passive, unhealthy adults**
 - a nation of watchers rather than doers
 - Truly dangerous adult “learning”



Other examples

- **Local riding schools – 750 closures in last three years**
- **One off Community events - fetes and fairs**
- **Scouting and other youth activities**
- **Traditional cultural events – eg barrel rolling in Ottery St Mary**
- **You can think of many more...**



The cure is worse than the disease

- An average of one death per year during adventure activities on school visits
- 700 school age young people who die every year in road traffic accidents
- 220 in accidents in the home
- 90 drownings
- 110 young suicides
- Future avoidable deaths from obesity and passive lifestyles?



Has anyone noticed?

“It would often appear that we would rather events not happen than for them to risk causing hurt, for volunteers not to be used, than to be exposed to any danger, and for opportunities to be missed rather than exploited.”

Better Regulation Task Force (BRTF) 2006



David Cameron – Yesterday

Calling for an end to the UK's "over-the-top" health and safety culture.

- The Health and Safety at Work Act will be amended to ensure the danger of prosecution does not put teachers off taking children for adventurous activities.
- He called for changes to the laws governing compensation claims, although he did not demand an end to "no-win, no-fee" arrangements.



Is he right?



Is he right?

**Is he seeking an easy headline in
opposition?**



Any Questions?



Go Ape!

Creating adventure, encouraging
others to live life more adventurously