



LOMOND & ARGYLL EXPEDITION AREA

Useful information from the Expedition Network

Welcome!

Green forms and requests for assessment should be submitted to the Scottish Network Co-ordinator, who can also assist with enquiries regarding landowners, routes, and campsites:

Eleanor Birch
DofE Scotland
Rosebery House
9 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 5EZ

T: 0131 343 0920

E: Scotland.Assessors@DofE.org

Eleanor works 9-5 Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.

Area advisor

The local area advisor is based in the area and can assist with enquiries regarding routes and campsites.

Bob Barr
22 Railies Avenue, Largs
Ayrshire
KA30 8QY

T: 01475 673307

E: bobhbarr@hotmail.co.uk

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- **Eastern:** From Glasgow (at Milngavie) northwards via Drymen to Glen Falloch [GR56/319188] following the route of the West Highland Way National Trail to Loch Tulla on the A82 [GR55/310430] NB: The E side of Loch Lomond is a common boundary with Trossachs & Crianlarich Expedition Area
- **Northern:** Blackmount Estate south of Glen Kinglass and Loch Etive. NB: The landward area north of the A85, the southern boundary for Lochaber & District Expedition area, is therefore 'mutual' territory.
- **Western:** Coastal fringes along west Scotland from the mouth of Loch Etive southwards to Tarbert (Loch Fyne) via West Loch Tarbert.
- **Southern:** Eastwards to Ardlamont Point [GR62/990640] including all waters of the inner/upper Firth of Clyde north of Latitude 55°50 based on Rothesay, Isle of Bute [GR63/090649] to Bowling [GR64/445736]

Maps of the area

Landranger Series 1:50 000

- Sheet 49 Oban and East Mull (part of)
- Sheet 50 Glen Orchy and the surrounding area
- Sheet 55 Lochgilphead and the surrounding area
- Sheet 56 Loch Lomond and Inveraray
- Sheet 62 North Kintyre (Knapdale) (part of)
- Sheet 63 Firth of Clyde (part of Argyll & Bute)
- Sheet 64 Glasgow and the surrounding area (part of)

Explorer Series 1:25,000

- Sheet 347 Loch Lomond (South)
- Sheet 355 Jura & Scarba
- Sheet 357 Kintyre (North) (part off)
- Sheet 358 Lochgilphead & Knapdale (North)
- Sheet 359 Oban, Kerrera & Loch Melfort
- Sheet 360 Loch Awe & Inveraray
- Sheet 362 Cowal (West) (part off)
- Sheet 363 Cowal (East)
- Sheet 376 Oban (part off)
- Sheet 377 Loch Etive & Glen Orchy

Route updates

- Groups using the south shore of Loch Etive should note that some of the burns (streams/ becks) are prone to flash floods and such crossings may require Supervisors to be present at certain times.
- Used to link Expedition Areas, the short section of the A82(T) - from just above the bridge at the entrance to Beinglass Farm when heading north towards the Glen Falloch track in the area of NN319190 - requires great caution. Some supervision may be necessary.
- Although perusal of OS Sheet 50 suggests a route following the pylon line between Strath of Orchy near Dalmally, south and east towards the head of Loch Lomond/Glen Falloch, this route is not recommended in any circumstances.
Access should be via Brackley (NN180266). Exercising caution while on the A85(T) - keeping west of the tree line. The track opposite Corryghoil (NN193276) towards Succoth Lodge offers an alternative choice.
- Glen Orchy-Catnish Bridge (NN232306) It should be noted this bridge is permanently locked and access is not normally permitted
- Old military roads - Although perusal of OS maps (any scale) would suggest otherwise, however attractive it may seem it is not practical to follow any apparent OMR adjacent to either the A82(T) or the A85(T).

Restricted and/or prohibited areas:

- NR880900 Lochgilphead MOD training area & rifle range environs
- NS260920 Garelochhead Firing Ranges & MOD Training Camp (Strone House) environs
- NS245885 Clyde Submarine Base (HMS Neptune) environs

- NS250905 Garelochhead MOD Training Camp (Greenfields) environs
- NS210875 MOD Base (Coulport) and environs
- NS238946 MOD Base (Finnart) and environs
- NS250960 MOD Base (Glenmallon) and environs
- NS418811 MOD Firing Range at Auchencarroch shown on OS Maps is no longer used as such and no restrictions are in force.

Using ferries

For some routes in this area using short ferries may help make practical routes, especially if cycling. The first of the 20 conditions of Expeditions is "All expeditions must be by the participants' own physical effort, without motorised or outside assistance." Therefore, approval would never be given for using a long ferry, such as from the mainland out to Islay during the expedition. Approval may be given for the use of small short ferries with few facilities to hop between neighbouring islands to facilitate sensible routes and aims. In these cases teams must not use time waiting for the ferry or on the ferry as part of their hours of planned activity, so they must expect a longer day.

Way marked and long distance paths

The DofE *Expedition Guide* says "long distance footpaths should not be used, particularly by Silver and Gold teams, except in small sections to link up other paths." (page 10, also see page 39). The quality of way-marked and long distance paths in Scotland varies considerably – some are concepts that don't exist on the ground (for example the Skye and Cape Wrath trails) while others are clearly signposted heavily used routes (for example, the West Highland Way).

In some areas there are no alternatives to some way-marked paths. Teams may use these, but should not plan an expedition with more than half a day continuously on the same route. Heavily used way-marked paths provide little navigational challenge, undermine the sense of isolation, and potentially have negative environmental impacts, and therefore should be avoided by DofE teams as much as possible. Use of the West Highland Way for the whole of a practice or qualifying venture is considered inappropriate, however, the WHW may be used in short sections as a link between other parts of the Expedition Area.

Scottish Hill Tracks

Scotways, the Scottish rights of way and access society, publishes ***Scottish Hill Tracks***, a book listing rights of way across Scotland's uplands. This is an excellent resource for ideas for routes as some paths are not shown connecting on a map where historic routes exist. Scotways are also interested to hear about any issues with paths and routes.

Core paths

Under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 every local authority and National Park authority (access authority) in Scotland was required to draw up a plan for a system of core paths that gives the public reasonable access throughout their area. Some of these paths do not yet appear on OS maps, and may help DofE teams link up routes. All core paths can be seen **on the SNH website**, with links to details from each council.

Campsites

Wild camping

Scottish access rights (see the **Outdoor access code section** for further information) extend to wild Camping for small groups (i.e. individual expedition teams), although the DofE still recommends that, as a courtesy to land owners concerned and to maintain existing good relations, expedition teams inform them of their intentions. It is reasonable for owners to react by saying why a particular site might be unsuitable and to suggest alternatives.

If multiple teams from the same DofE centre intend to camp at the same location, this falls outside the definition of 'Wild camping' permitted under access rights. Therefore, centres planning to camp with multiple teams in the same location should always seek permission from the landowner.

Teams should consult the advice on camping in the *Expedition Guide* (page 101), there are also lots of useful information resources about wild camping;

- **Mountaineering Scotland** has lots of good advice, with links to their minimal impact and 'where to go in the outdoors' leaflets
- **The Outdoor Access Code website** has advice on responsible wild camping, including various information downloads.

West Lomond and Trossachs new camping By-laws

From 1st March 2017 new byelaws governing camping in areas around east and west Loch Lomond and the north edge of Loch Long will come into force. These byelaws will restrict camping within the area covered every year between 1st March – 30th September (the majority of the DofE expedition season). Most of the area covered by the byelaws is close to roads or the West Highland Way, so analysis by DofE Scotland suggests only small numbers of DofE teams are likely to be affected.

A general map of the area covered can be downloaded from the [National Park website](#), and detailed 1:25k maps of the areas covered can be found in [the full byelaws document](#), and GPX's of the areas are available below.. Camping outwith the narrow areas covered by the byelaws remains covered by the usual Scottish laws.

For teams planning to camp within the area covered by the byelaws the National Park recommends that groups plan to apply through the '[Group camping permit exemption](#)' process. This will have several advantages over the online permit system for the public;

- It will be free
- Groups will be able to apply for camping on sites outwith the publically permitted sites
- Groups will be able to apply to camp with larger groups than public permits are available for

Such applications will need to be submitted at least 4 weeks before the expedition. For DofE teams there is a shortened version of the application form (either an editable word version or a PDF version) which can be submitted along with green forms and route maps for the teams concerned. Submission details are in the form.

updated 27/2/16

Other modes of travel

Horseriding expeditions

Endowed with large areas of open, wild, often remote countryside and large areas of Forestry lands, there is good potential for the development of all types of equestrian expeditions. However it is essential that riders hold relevant qualification, are competent with, and use horses accustomed to journeying. Riding is considered 'high risk' therefore, once again, Operating Authority approval would be appropriate.

Leasing is worthy of consideration and permits may be required for some areas.

We are fortunate in being able to identify external expertise familiar with this type of trekking and able to facilitate access for anything up to ten days journeying. Simultaneously an Assessor would oversee adherence to DofE conditions.

Much information is contained in BHS and other related publications and we would be pleased to advise accordingly on local detail to meet your requirements. Early contact would be very much appreciated.

Water-based expeditions

The Expedition area - N of latitude 55°50N (GR63/6510] at Rothesay, Isle of Bute, encompasses the estuary and upper Firth of Clyde, associated sea lochs and passages, inland lochs together with related rivers, offers a unique combination of interesting, beautiful, varied and relatively safe, yet challenging, opportunity for a broad spectrum of water activities in expedition format with adequate shelter in the event of adverse weather. Loch Etive constitutes the northern boundary.

The western seaboard, between (and including) Loch Sween and West Loch Tarbert together with associated waters, could also be included for appropriate projects although it should be noted that the inshore waters from the Sound of Jura to the N end of the Sound of Luing, while generally sheltered, are subject to strong tides with eddies and overfalls. Similar conditions exist at the mouth of Loch Etive and, in general, ventures should keep clear of the Falls of Lora. Sections of the Rivers Awe/Orchy - between Grades 1 to 3 - are sometimes part of Gold expeditions.

There are relatively few artificial navigation marks in some of these areas. Elsewhere, with one or two exceptions, tidal streams are weak and tidal rise does not exceed 3.4m springs and 2.9m neaps.

Some areas within the Firth are under control of either the Clyde Port Authority or the Queen's Harbourmaster (Naval Dockyard Port area) and, at some times, may be subject to temporary restrictions.

The area also offers an excellent opportunity for sports diving in sea and inland waters, both of which are rich in expedition subject matter. Such expeditions would only be considered for Gold participants over 18 years of age with the specific approval of an Operating Authority.

It should be noted that a good portion of appropriate routes - particularly at Gold level - go into fairly remote areas and all groups should be practically capable of tackling most conditions without external assistance.

Sturdy, well-maintained craft are necessary in addition to good preparation and a fair degree of both physical and mental fitness. Technical advice is readily available, however, to facilitate water-based expeditions we have produced a guide, containing much additional local and riparian data of value and Groups should contact us at an early stage.

Excellent information can also be obtained from RYA, BCU/SCA, Marine & Coastguard Agency publications.

All waters are, in general, sheltered but may be subject to sudden squalls and must be considered as 'sea state' - often within a short period of time and usually short lived.

It should also be noted that some parts of inland and sea lochs are considered 'remote' from conventional external assistance and groups using such areas are expected to make specific arrangements for 'self rescue' and any access routes in conjunction with us.

Cycling expeditions

This area provides a unique opportunity for cycle ventures at all levels. There are large tracts using minor roads, forest or other 'off-road' tracks covering something in the region of 200 miles and, if required, this can be easily extended by travelling into Lochaber & District Expedition Area. It should be noted, however, that a good portion of these routes - particularly at Gold level - go into fairly remote areas and all groups must be capable of tackling mechanical problems without external assistance.

Sturdy well-maintained bikes are necessary in addition to good preparation and a fair degree of both physical and mental fitness.

Cross country cycling requires careful attention towards land access and in addition to the advice contained in DofE publications, the Scottish Sports Council publish a useful guide to 'Off-Road' conduct.

It must be emphasised that main roads within the panel area are quite hazardous and therefore not appropriate for DofE expeditions. Technical advice is readily available and groups are requested to Contact our Adviser, at an early stage for information.

Travel and transport to the area

General:

Supported by a good motorway network via Glasgow/Perth/Stirling and the A74 from the south there is good, regular public transport by rail, road and ferry to all areas. Glasgow Airports (Abbotsinch & Prestwick) are close to the area. Many operators may introduce fare reduction for 'bona-fide' groups of young people, details of which are available from the respective companies.

Road works

Road closures and works in the area can have a serious impact on the ability of team's and leaders to get to and from expeditions, and for supervisors and assessors getting around due to the lack of quick alternative routes. Information about current or planned noticed road works in Scotland is available at [the Scottish Road Works Register](#)

Ferry operators: Clyde Estuary

- Caledonian MacBrayne Ltd (CALMAC) (01475) 650100 www.calmac.co.uk Gourock-Dunoon; Tarbert (Loch Fyne)-Portavadie (seasonal); Arran (Lochranza)-Claonaig (seasonal) [via Ardrossan]; Bute (Rhubodach)-Colintraive [via Wemyss Bay]
- Western Ferries (01369) 704452 www.western-ferries.co.uk Gourock (McInroy's Point/Cloch)-Dunoon (Hunter's Quay)

Ferry operators: Northern Ireland-Clyde

- Belfast-Troon Seacat (0990)/(08705) 5235232 www.seacat.co.uk
- Ballycastle-Campbeltown (Kintyre Peninsula)

Ferry operators: Loch Lomond

- Arden-Inchmurrin 01389 850245
- Inveruglas-Inversnaid 01877 386223
- Inverbeg-Rowardennan 01360 870273
- Balmaha-Inchcailloch 01360 870214
- Ardlui-Ardleish 01301 704244 [On E shore - by signal N of Doune]

On both inland and estuary waters there are other local operators who, although not running conventional 'ferries', may be able to provide additional services by arrangement.

Public transport information

www.traveline.org.uk 0870 608 2608

Citylink: 08705 505050 www.citylink.co.uk

Linking with national networks there are good, regular, frequent limited-stop express coach and suburban routes via Glasgow. However, it should be borne in mind that there may be some restriction on baggage allowance dependent on the time/route of travel.

www.nationalrail.co.uk

ScotRail: 08457 484950 www.scotrail.co.uk

Linking with 'Inter-City' services at Glasgow Central and Queen Street Stations (a cross-town transfer) there is a good, regular, frequent suburban and long distance service including the famous 'West Highland Line'. Again, it should be borne in mind that there could be some restrictions on baggage and cycles could be subject to space availability.

Expedition aim ideas

There is a very wide range of expedition topics/studies:

- a great variety of natural, 'man-made' and secular features
- an area of, sometimes vivid, 'living landscapes'
- a varied geology associated with the Highland Boundary Fault, glacial action and volcanic activity
- deep, (remote), long fjord-like sea and inland lochs
- broad climatic variation (temperate, humid Atlantic to Continental and Arctic)
- the warming influence of the Gulf Stream
- a myriad of inshore aquatic marine wildlife and organisms.

Scottish Wild land areas

- The Scottish Government has [defined 42 Wild land areas around Scotland](#). The discussions around defining these areas and the implications of this may be of interest for teams considering aims around landuse and wildness.

Hazards

Ticks

Ticks are small, blood sucking creatures found across the uplands of Scotland, especially in areas with lots of deer and sheep. Some ticks carry Lyme disease, which is treatable but can be tricky to diagnose. Teams should be made aware of the risks of Lyme disease and how to reduce the risk of being bitten. All teams should carry a tick remover and check themselves daily.

There are several useful information resources about ticks;

- The organisation Lyme Disease Action has useful downloadable [leaflets about ticks and Lyme disease](#).
- [Stop the tick](#) has lots of infographics (some a bit graphic, but informational)
- Lyme disease UK has posters and leaflets as part of their [Wake up to Lyme campaign](#), as well as detailed information about the disease

Midges

The biting midge is particularly prolific in parts of Scotland, and worst in late Spring through to early Autumn. The detrimental effect midges can have on an expedition is not proportionate to their tiny size, and should not be underestimated, especially with teams unused to them. During this summer period teams should carry midge nets, insect repellent and clothes to provide full coverage (including gloves and long sleeved tops) and first aid kits should include antihistamines to reduce discomfort. Teams should also be aware of how to reduce their impact including:

- choice of campsite (in direct sunlight and breezy, ideally in both morning and evening)
- choice of clothing (pale, bright, and smooth rather than dark, wooly, or fleecy)
- campcraft (menu planning, positioning of tents, keeping tent doors closed)

Snakes

There are Adders (the UK's only venomous snake) in the area. They are not aggressive or commonly seen, but they will bite if stood on, sat on, or picked up. Because of this teams who are wild camping should always wear shoes (which the snakes cannot bite through) and not walk around bare foot, in socks, or in sandals such as flip-flops. If anyone has the unusual misfortune to be bitten, then medical assistance must be sought urgently.

Drinking water

Watercourses across Scotland can contain a variety of waterborne infections. Therefore, when wild camping it should not be assumed that streams and rivers are clean sources of drinking water, especially due to the high density of livestock and deer across large areas. Leaders should refer to the DofE *Expedition Guide* advice on taking water from streams (pg 122). Other good sources of information about health and hygiene outdoors (including issues around drinking water) are the NHS advice about **avoiding bugs and germs outdoors**, and the Mountaineering Scotland advice on **health and hygiene**.

River crossings

Rivers and streams throughout the area rise quickly after rain, or during snow melt, and careful consideration should be given to any route which involves river crossings. Even small streams can quickly become completely impassable and larger rivers can become very dangerous even if the rain has not been falling in the immediate vicinity of the planned crossing.

All teams should understand what to do in case of streams rising – stream levels will fall as fast as they rise and often waiting overnight is all that is needed. In case of snow melt, peak levels are often late afternoon/evening, and the lowest levels in the morning. Teams planning river crossings must have an alternative plan in the event of continued wet weather.

Hours of daylight

All visitors, especially those from the south, need to be aware of the shortness of daylight hours in the expedition shoulder season; March has 11 hours of daylight and the October half term a little over 9 hours.

Emergencies and Incidents

Mountain rescue

In Scotland, responsibility for the provision of rescue facilities rests with the Police Force - who will call out/co-ordinate mountain rescue as appropriate. Teams must be clear that if they need to call for help they must ask for the police, and then ask for mountain rescue. Teams may not be connected to the nearest police control room to their location, so should be clear on the general area they are in, and their exact location. **Scottish mountain rescue** has advice about the process of calling for help, and the information that should be supplied.

Teams must be trained to supply the control room with a six-figure grid-reference for their location, including the two-letter prefix code e.g. NX 345 678 not 345 678. 'GR' is not the correct prefix for any location; it is a commonly used shorthand for 'grid refence'. There is information about six figure grid references **the Ordnance Survey website**. Correct provision of a full six figure grid-reference is essential as the police computer system will not be able to interpret a grid reference without this two-letter prefix. Also, some Network Areas in Scotland have intersections of the letter labelled 100 km² grid squares in their centre, so a mistake may lead to significant delays in support from Mountain Rescue. DofE Scotland strongly recommend that all DofE route cards are prepared including two letter prefixes to avoid delays or uncertainty in emergency situations.

The teams that cover the expedition area are **Arrochar MRT**, **Oban MRT**, and **Lomond MRT**.

Remember that in case of an incident both the team's Licenced Organisation and the **Scottish Expedition Network Coordinator** should be notified using the DofE Incident Report Form (available through the resources zone in eDofE).

Mobile signal

It should be noted that in many parts of the area telephone boxes are rare and the mobile phone network reception is limited/non-existent away from centres of population and cannot be relied upon for getting assistance. Therefore, teams must know how to deal with an emergency in a location without mobile phone signal.

Teams should be encouraged to **sign up for the 999 text service** in advance of their expedition to give them the best chance of contacting emergency services in an emergency.

Outdoor access code

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 has been implemented through the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. This provides access rights for the purposes of recreation or education across most of the land and inland water in Scotland. This includes mountains, moorland, woods and forests, grassland, margins of arable crop fields, paths/tracks, rivers and lochs, and the coast. These access rights are balanced with responsibilities towards the environment and the interests of those who make a living from the land.

Three key principles of access

- Take responsibility for your own actions
- Respect the interests of other people
- Care for the environment.
-

For further information (including a downloadable e-book) visit www.outdooraccess-scotland.com

Any access issues should be reported to the [Scottish Expedition Network Coordinator](#) who will investigate.

Landuse

The **Countryside Calendar - Year** gives a month by month snapshot of typical activities and happenings in the farming and wildlife year in Scotland, any may be helpful in planning expeditions and thinking about appropriate aims.

Landowners

To identify the borders of estates see www.whoownsscotland.org.uk. There is a subscription option which gives access to see contact details.

Lambing

Sheep and lambing season cans start as early as February and can continue until the end of May and lambing ewes must not be disturbed. If an apparently 'lost' lamb is seen - do not touch or intervene, as the mother will not be far away. At all other times it is advised that teams should pass through sheep quietly and if possible at a distance in an effort not to disturb and stress them.

Traps

Teams may observe traps on the high moorland. These should not be touched or disturbed as they have been set by the game keepers to catch predators to the ground nesting birds, typically the Hooded Crow.

Scottish game seasons

During the deer stalking season teams should utilise the ['Heading for the Scottish Hills website'](#) in addition to contacting landowners to find out where and when shooting will be taking place. Teams should stay on recognised footpaths whilst in these areas for safety reasons.

| Game | Season Opens | Season Closes |
|----------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Salmon/Sea Trout | Jan/Feb | October (dates vary) |
| Trout | 15th March | 6th October |
| Roe Deer (bucks) | 1st April | 20th October |
| Red & Sika Deer (stags) | 1st July | 20th October |
| Fallow Deer (bucks) | 1st August | 30th April |
| Grouse & Ptarmigan | 12th August | 10th December |
| Snipe | 12th August | 30th January |
| Black Grouse | 20th August | 10th December |
| Wild Fowl | 1st September | 30th January |
| Partridge | 1st September | 31st January |
| Capercaillie & Woodcock | 1st October | 30th January |
| Pheasant | 1st October | 31st January |
| Roe Deer (does) | 21st October | 31st March |
| Red, Sika, & Fallow Deer (hinds) | 21st October | 15th February |

Bothies

Bothies are basic shelters in the hills. Many are open to the public for use and managed by the **Mountain Bothies Association (MBA)**. If teams plan to use a bothy for lunch or shelter they should be aware of the **MBA's bothy code**.

DofE teams are generally advised not to camp within close proximity to a bothy without permission from the owner because of problems that come with the pressure of numbers. This often leads to issues with pollution from human waste, so risk assessment would suggest these sites are not appropriate as a campsite. You can find more information about use of Bothies, via the DofE **'Use of Bothies information sheet'**

Weather forecasts

- The Met Office provides:
 - **Forecasts with summaries for the region and 7 day detailed forecasts for the chosen town/village.**
 - **Surface pressure charts**
 - **Mountain area forecasts for the Southwest Highlands.** This included a forecast for the region, with forecasts for individual summits available. These summit forecasts are for the summit height of the mountain, which should be considered when teams interpret them.
- **The Mountain Weather Information Service (MWIS)** provides 72 hour forecasts for 5 Scottish regions. These forecasts are for the summits of the mountains which must be considered when interpreting them for DofE use. They provide some interpretation which can assist participant understanding. The forecast that covers the area is **the West Highlands**.
- Outdoor conditions forecasts are available on BBC Radio Scotland (FM: 92.8-94.7, MW: 810) at 18:25 Monday-Friday, and on Saturday and Sunday at 07:00 and 19:00.

The prevailing wind in the area is between south and west and weather patterns, strongly influenced by the passage of Atlantic depressions, tend to be less predictable, and it is not unusual to experience a variation from the sub-arctic to the almost sub-tropical. Woodland/glen temperatures can be deceptive and often drop dramatically at night notwithstanding any height gain.

Generally fog is rare and visibility less than two miles unlikely, however, low cloud, mist and rain may be encountered around the 300 - 450 metre (1000' - 1500') level and can greatly reduce visibility for a time; compass navigation competence will therefore become appropriate.

The months of May and June produce the best weather and it should be noted that the period during the late summer months (mid June-late August) coincides with the climax of the midge population.

Groups should make adequate provision for the possible effects of extremes of natural phenomena, heat as well as cold, and the role of Supervisors can be invaluable. Conditions in some glens and on inland lochs tend to be very deceptive in relation to both temperature and wind velocity. In the latter case attention and caution should be paid to the possibility of localised, and sometimes violent, katabatic or convective wind effects.

DofE resources

The current DofE expedition kit list can be downloaded from:

www.dofeshopping.org/expedition-kit

A range of expedition downloads, such as the Green Form and spare expedition safety cards, can be downloaded from: **www.dofe.org/leaders/resources-and-downloads/expedition-downloads/**.

Further information of the Expedition section can be found at: **www.dofe.org/doing-your-dofe/activities-sections/expedition/**