

ASHDOWN DISTRICT SCOUTS



“Overland 2007”



- THE BOOK -

The booklet needs to be read by all Scouts taking part in the training for the 2007 Overland Hike, and by their parents and leaders, so that everyone knows exactly what they are letting themselves in for! It will be a useful source of information throughout the training programme

You should already have seen the initial leaflet explaining what the Overland Hike is all about and how good it is. If you have, you will know that the Overland is not simply a 2-day hike, it is the **'Ultimate Challenge'** for Scouts across the whole of Sussex. It is also a fantastic experience, and (of course) great fun!

This booklet provides more detailed information that will help you prepare for (and get the best out of) all the training that you will have to do. It includes details of where and when each training session takes place, what the training involves, what equipment you will need, and how to prepare for the challenge.



The whole thing will sound very daunting at first to those of you who haven't taken part in previous years, but **don't worry!** - You will be surprised at what you can achieve with a bit of determination, and don't forget, everyone who has ever completed the Overland started out as a young Scout with little or no previous hiking experience and of course you can only gain the experience by having a go!



Hopefully, an Ashdown team will be able to lift the trophy again, as 1st Crowborough did last year, and as 4th Uckfield did the year before, but our main ambition is to get as many of you as possible to take part in the event.

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to have a go!

The Overland Hike takes place on 24th/25th March 2007. Training begins on Saturday 6th January with a fun hike across the Seven Sisters. Those who think they might like to go to the next stage then continue with a vitally important map reading skills session on Ashdown Forest. Thereafter, training is available every weekend up until the event, generally alternating between Saturdays and Sundays at different locations each week - **see next page for the full programme**. The alternation is designed to ensure that people with other weekend commitments such as rugby, church etc., can still get to at least half of the training sessions *or, (if they want to do better in the Overland) that they only have to miss a few of their other commitments.*

Unlike some events, where the emphasis is on giving everyone a chance to take part, the standards of the Overland are such that only those who are adequately prepared and prove themselves capable will be selected for the final teams. This applies whether you are aiming to be in an experienced older team or one made up of 'first timers' to gain that experience. **The first secret of success for the Overland (as with most things) is to ...**

be prepared . . .



By the end of the training, prospective hikers must prove themselves fit enough to complete the distance, but they must also have a good knowledge of scouting skills and, most importantly, **all four members of each team need to get on well together, so that they develop the second secret of success:**

. . . team spirit!

Having a team that works well together is generally far more important than the individual skills of any individual member, however good they are. **Good teamwork only comes with lots of practice:** as the weeks go by, we experiment with different combinations of Scouts to see which ones work best.

Each team is built around two **map readers**, each of which must be confident enough to challenge the other in situations where they don't agree on which way to go. They then need to work out the right solution by sensible discussion rather than arguing! *This ability only comes with lots of practice (hence the need for all the training!)*

Each team also needs a **'pace-maker'**: someone with the stamina and 'right mental attitude' to push the team on when the going gets tough and, if necessary, to carry additional weight. *Any one of you might need to take on this role, so you all need to train as hard as possible!*

Finally, each team needs at least one **'thinker'**: generally an experienced Scout with good problem-solving skills who can take charge of the team when doing the incidents. *However, a younger Scout who happens to be an expert in a particular subject may need to take charge if they come across an incident on that particular subject at one of the checkpoints.*

The final teams are not chosen until about two weeks before the event, so everyone is still in with a chance until then. This gives 'late developers' the opportunity to come through at the last minute (as often happens with those who need to build up their fitness at the start). It does NOT mean, however, that anyone can afford to miss the first half of the programme - those who do will find it incredibly hard to catch up later.

ASHDOWN DISTRICT "OVERLAND" TRAINING PROGRAMME, 2007

The training programme is a progressive one, starting off with short hikes and light packs, gradually building up to longer and more difficult hikes with heavier weights and greater speed, in a variety of different locations, mostly on the South Downs. By doing this, and by training in all weather conditions, our teams should be able to cope with whatever is thrown at them in the event itself. Details of the intended dates, locations, distances and pack weights required are set out below.

Date	Start & Finish*	Details
Saturday 6 th Jan 2007	Meet 9:30am Return approx 3:30pm	Fun Hike, South Downs - Severn Sisters area, E. Sussex: 11km, 3kg pack
Sunday 14 th Jan 2007	Meet @ Friends' Clump, 10:00 am; Collect approx 3:00pm	Map & Compass Training on Ashdown Forest 5km, 4kg pack (<i>Essential for those wanting to become team map readers</i>)
Saturday 20 th Jan 2007	Meet 8:00am Return approx 2:30pm	Hike Training, Ditchling Beacon area. E. Sussex: 12km, 5kg pack
Sunday 28 th Jan 2007	Meet 8:00am Return approx 3:00pm	Hike Training, Devil's Dyke - Mile Oak area, W. Sussex: 14km, 6kg pack
Saturday 3 rd February 2007	Meet 8:00am Return approx 3:30pm	Hike Training, Kingston - Peacehaven - Southease area E. Sussex: 16km, 7kg pack
<i>Friday 9th Feb 2007</i>	Meet Cliffe Church, 7:00pm. Finish there approx 9:00pm	Night Hike: "Assault on Mount Caburn", nr Lewes 7km, 8kg pack. <u>One adult needed per 6 Scouts</u> <i>(some non-Overlanders also taking part from Troops who meet on Fridays)</i>
Sunday 11 th February 2007	Meet 8:00am Return approx 4:00pm	Hike Training, Washington - Findon - Lancing area, W.Sussex. 20km, 8kg pack
Saturday 17 th AND/OR** Sunday 18 th February 2007	Meet 8:00am Return approx 4:30pm	Hike Training, Truleigh Hill- Devil's Dyke, W. Sussex ("The Bumps") Approx 1km (of ascent!) 7kg pack
<i>(**This <u>essential</u> training session will run be run twice so everyone has a chance to do it. Individual Scouts only need to do it once, but can do both days if they are mad enough!)</i>		
Saturday 24 th Feb 2007	Meet 8:00am Return approx 5:00pm	Hike Training, Graffham - East Dean - Bignor area, W. Sussex 22km, 9kg pack
Saturday 3 rd March 2007	Meet 8:00am Return approx 5:30pm	Hike Training, Patching - Storrington - Amberley area, W. Sussex. 25km, 10kg pack
Saturday 10 th March 2007	Very early start!	Training expedition in South Harting - West Dean area (?), including camping & cooking under "Overland" conditions. 35km over 2 days, 10kg pack (<i>including tents</i>)
Sunday 11 th March 2007	<i>Details to be announced</i>	
Saturday 17 th March 2007	Meet 8:00am as usual, Collect from Uckfield 5:00pm	<u>Essential</u> visits to Overland Start & Finish locations, then <u>Incident Training</u> at Uckfield Scout HQ
Saturday 24th March	Begins very early Saturday morning, hiking both days and camping overnight Details to be confirmed	The OVERLAND HIKE Total 40km over 2 days, 10kg average pack weight <i>(Increased by 1kg per person from last year because each team now has to carry its own lightweight hike tents - supplied by the Groups)</i>
Sunday 25th March 2007		

(* Except for the session on Ashdown Forest on 14th January, **Start time** means when you meet up, usually at your own HQ, before driving to the actual Start of the hike training location. **Finish time** means the approximate time when the Scouts will be returned home by the parents who have offered to help with transport. Please allow at least an hour after this time before contacting the leaders for information, as Scouts do have a habit of taking longer than expected until their navigation improves! We will endeavour to contact you first if there is likely to be a longer delay. Please also allow for the possibility of an earlier return (due to good map reading or injury!)

Scouts (and parents): please put all of these training programme dates on your calendar now and plan your weekends over this period to make sure you attend as many training sessions as possible. We realise that you have to do other things as well but, if you want to get the full benefit of the Overland programme, you can't afford to miss more than three or four training events, at the very most. The events in February and March will be especially important. If you have problems with any of these dates, please let your leader know NOW, so that they can advise you on whether or not this is likely to affect your chances of being selected).

PLEASE NOTE that, other than in the most exceptional circumstances, the training will be 'on' whatever the weather! It is vital that you experience the range of conditions that you might have to deal with during the event itself: everything from snow, freezing rain, showers, thick fog and heatwaves!



The hike training will normally involve the Scouts walking in teams of four without supervision (that way they become far more self reliant and confident), whilst the leaders will travel between checkpoints by car. For the first few hikes in January, however, leaders will be walking with the teams to offer additional guidance and training.

Thereafter, for the hikes on 3rd, 9th and 11th February, we would like one or two parent volunteers each week to 'shadow' the hikers, walking 100 metres or so behind them and to notify the leaders (BUT NOT THE SCOUTS!) by mobile phone if the scouts take a wrong turning between checkpoints. This won't prevent the teams getting lost from time to time - only good map reading can do that - but it will enable the leaders to know where to find them! From 17th February onwards the Scouts will be on their own between checkpoints:- by then they should be more confident and the parents will find it difficult to keep up!

In accordance with Scout Association Policy, any parents that are asked to help in this way **MUST** have at least completed and submitted a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) form to be checked out. If you've not already done this and would like to help, please ask your Troop Leader for a copy NOW, and advise which sessions you could help with, if needed.

Please also note that, in line with the Scout Association's Child Protection Policy, no adult leaders or parent helpers can be on their own with an individual Scout (other than their own son or daughter) at any time. For this reason, we need a rota of parents of those taking part to do the transporting to and from each session, so that their own child is the last one in the car. Similarly, if a Scout drops out half way through the day, e.g. with a twisted ankle or other medical condition, we will need to contact the parent of that child to collect them from wherever we are at the time - so please be prepared for this!

In addition to the hike training sessions and practice events, your troop nights during this period should aim to include training in all of the key skills that you will need, such as map symbols, grid references, first aid (including hypothermia, hyperthermia and CPR), knots, lashings, pioneering, teamwork challenges, knives & axes, tree recognition, firelighting, lamps & stoves, cooking, etc. etc.). **If you are a Patrol Leader or an APL - make sure you programme these things in for the first quarter of next year at your next PLC. If you are not - make sure your Patrol Leader does so!!**

And of course make sure you don't miss anything important at your troop nights once it's on the programme!

ADVICE ON EQUIPMENT

All those taking part in the Overland and in the training sessions need adequate, reliable and reasonably lightweight kit. The organisers are, quite rightly, very strict on the equipment that each Scout needs to have with them, and any team that fails the kit check will be disqualified before they even start.



Your troop should be able to provide things like hike tents, lightweight cookers, maps, compasses, map cases, survival bags, first aid kits, whistles and fluorescent jackets, but the Scouts need to provide their own personal kit¹. Some of the main requirements are detailed below and a full checklist is given on the next page. Most of this is needed for training as well as for the event itself.

Whilst the requirements may look daunting, they are there for a very good reason. The scouts will be out in all weathers and will need to guard against the risk of hypothermia (a very serious condition in which core body temperature drops just a few degrees before normal - check it out in a medical encyclopaedia so that you can recognise the symptoms and learn how to treat it). The best remedy is to avoid the problem in the first place by keeping warm and dry. Keeping warm is best achieved by wearing several thin **layers** (rather than just a thick jumper) together with a woollen hat and gloves (both of these are essential). An ideal combination is to wear one or two t-shirts under a long sleeved shirt, plus a zipped fleece jacket and additional thin layers carried in the rucksack. Layers can then be added or removed as required during the day. It can be very warm slogging up the steep north side of the Downs, but then immediately very cold when you reach the top and become exposed to the wind.

One of the sure ways of getting hypothermia is to get cold and wet at the same time - wet clothing dries in the wind but takes heat away from your body and can be very dangerous. Keeping dry requires substantial (not flimsy) **waterproofs** of the correct size, preferably made from breathable fabric, to prevent getting soaked from condensation on the inside. These can be expensive but they need not be (it is not necessary to go for the top brands!), and it is worth hunting for bargains before Christmas or in the January Sales!

Hiking boots are another essential requirement. These should be of reasonably good quality, preferably leather, and should provide good ankle support. Again, there is no need to spend a fortune on the top brands, because Scouts have a habit of growing out of things. You should aim to get the best pair you can afford, however, taking advice from a specialist supplier who is prepared to spend an hour or so making sure you get boots that will do the job and fit correctly.

If you need to get new boots, the sooner you do so the better, so that they will become 'worn in' and comfortable before you get to the really hard training sessions. **NO ONE SHOULD ATTEMPT TO TAKE PART IN THE EVENT ITSELF IN BRAND NEW BOOTS!** We strongly recommend that, if you need new boots in January or February next year, you should consider buying them from Peglers in Arundel: Peglers have several shops in the town and their specialist branch dealing with boots (called "Peglers Below the Knee") really is the best in Sussex in terms of both range and expertise (= customer care !) They also happen to be the main sponsor of the Overland Hike and will be happy to give you a good discount if you explain that's what the boots are for. If you can't run to a pair of new boots just now, most Troops maintain a small stock of boots that older Scouts have grown out of. Anyone wishing to try these can do so. If you find a pair that suit, you are welcome to borrow them for a month or three, but make sure they fit (otherwise you'll be certain to get blisters!). Contributions to the boot collection are always welcome, if you have a pair that no longer fit.

Finally, for the event itself, and for at least the latter half of the training period, each Scout will need a **rucksack** capable of carrying up to 10Kg weight, with a capacity of around 50 Litres, and preferably with a waist belt and padded shoulder straps. Again, your troop may be able to help by loaning suitable equipment, but this will usually be on a first-come first-served basis.

¹ The general policy of Ashdown District is that no one who is keen to take part in the Overland should be prevented from doing so simply because they can't afford the right equipment. Some equipment can be provided on loan, subject to a returnable deposit. If you need to use this service, please contact one of the leaders as soon as possible, in complete confidence.

PERSONAL KIT CHECKLIST

This summarises the things each Scout will need for each training session, and should be used to guide the packing of rucksacks each week. A more definitive list for the event itself will be issued nearer the time.

- hiking boots,
- woollen or cotton (never nylon!) socks (2 pairs, to prevent blisters, plus one or two spare pairs)
- substantial (not flimsy) waterproofs (cagoule and overtrousers) - ask a leader for advice,
- warm clothes in 'layers':
 - one or more t-shirts (Polyester fabric is ideal, as it helps to 'wick' perspiration away to the outer layers, whereas cotton stays wet for longer);
 - long sleeved shirt;
 - warm sweater or (preferably) a zipped fleece jacket;
 - long, loose-fitting, quick-drying, cotton or polyester trousers - **NOT JEANS**
- spare warm clothes,
- woolly hat
- warm and preferably waterproof gloves,
- packed lunch
- drink(s) (plus optional hot drink/soup in a non-breakable flask - for training sessions only)
- emergency chocolate (**NOT** to be eaten until back in the car, except in a real emergency)
- emergency water (in a screw top plastic bottle, **NOT** to be opened except in emergency)
- a lightweight torch and spare batteries (for emergency use)
- **Personal I.D. Card**, detailing your name, address, date of birth and essential medical information, together with the name and telephone number of parents/guardians, and your troop leader, **PLUS** the emergency contact numbers for the training coordinator, Alan Thompson (Mobile **07952 170 180**; Home - **01825 764989**).
- a decent ('3 season'), lightweight sleeping bag within a compression stuff-sack.
*(not needed for most of the training, but needed in time for the training expedition on 10th March and, of course for the Overland itself!. Your sleeping bag **MUST** be able to fit into the bottom section of your rucksack, leaving plenty of space above it for the rest of your kit ... so don't buy one that doesn't pack down to that size!!!)*
- all contained in a rucksack with two shoulder straps.
(For the first few training sessions, a robust school bag will do, but a good, 50 litre rucksack will be needed for later training sessions and for the event itself)
- In addition, those who have them should bring a fully charged mobile 'phone, switched on and sealed in a waterproof plastic bag. These must **ONLY** be used in emergency and cannot be relied upon because of variable signal strength on the Downs.

Good, practical and professional advice on all of these things can be obtained from **Global Adventurer** in Forest Row (probably the best local shop for outdoor equipment) or from **Peglers** in Arundel (Official sponsors of the Overland Hike - they have several, extremely good, specialist shops in the town, and their 'below the knee' branch is probably the best place in Sussex to get boots, including some second hand pairs). Other sources include **Millets** (in various places, including Uckfield). Tell the assistants that you are looking for equipment for the Scout's Overland Hike and those in *Global Adventurer* and *Peglers*, at least, should know precisely what you need (if they don't, ask for someone else!).

Once all of this is packed, you may need to add extra items to bring your pack weight up to the level indicated in the table on page 3. On the event itself this will comprise your share of the team equipment (tents, cookers etc) but, for now, it can be tins of beans etc.

And finally ...

...a few hints & tips on Overland success, from those who have been there, done it and got the certificates!

1. **Complete as many training sessions as you possibly can.** You may think you are already fit because of regular football, rugby, swimming etc., but hiking fitness is different and needs to be worked at. Training also gives you the chance to learn and improve your map reading and teamwork skills. Without these, you will have little chance of being selected! *(Even if you don't make it all the way through to the end, completing at least some of the training will improve your fitness and stand you in good stead for taking part in the less challenging ASHDOWN HIKE competition, later in the year).*
2. **Look after your feet!** This means:
 - a. Wear suitable hiking boots (see page 5)
 - b. Look after your boots by applying 'Nikwax' (or similar) before each hike to keep them waterproof, and by cleaning them (quickly) and drying them (slowly) as soon as you get back.
 - c. Wear 2 pairs of suitable hiking socks with wool or cotton next to the skin (never nylon!) to reduce the chance of blisters. Alternatively, use specially designed double-layered hiking socks which achieve the same thing, available from most good outdoor shops.
 - d. If you are susceptible to blisters when hiking (and you probably will be!) treat your feet at least once a day with surgical spirit. This may sting at first but it soon hardens the skin up so that you don't get blisters at all. Continue this treatment until the day of the hike so as to keep the skin hard. Special blister plasters can be used to provide some comfort in emergency, but they tend to soften the skin and are not the best solution in the long term. Avoid using ordinary plasters, which can move around whilst hiking and cause blisters elsewhere.
3. **Don't assume you are not good enough!** Although these notes make the whole thing seem rather daunting, and although the training will certainly be hard work, don't be tempted to dip out without talking to the leaders first. We may have a higher opinion of your abilities and your potential than you do yourself, and we may well prefer to select you for the team rather than someone else who is over-confident. We realise that not everyone will have the stamina to stay the course, but all of those who do will earn the admiration of the entire District, and you may well prove invaluable to your friends (whether from your own troop or another one) as a last minute substitute if someone else falls ill. *(Teams are often made up of Scouts from two or more different Troops within the District who have proved through the training sessions that they can work well together).*
4. **Don't be dismayed if you are not selected** ... it doesn't mean you are no good!! We will do our best to make sure that everyone who makes the grade gets a place in the event, whether in single Troop or mixed teams, but sometimes there are one or two scouts 'left over'. If this happens to you, don't be too upset ... look forward to putting the experience you have gained to good use, both in next year's Overland and in other events such as the Ashdown Hike.
5. **If you are selected** ... Well done! ... but be careful - over-confidence and a cocky attitude can seriously damage your chances of success! You must take the event seriously and be prepared for anything that the competition, the judges and the weather may throw at you.
 - Make sure you understand all of the Rules of the Overland Hike (to be given out nearer the time)
 - Pay careful attention to what you are told by your leaders and by the organisers
 - Concentrate on your map reading and on working as a TEAM!
 - Be courteous and responsible at all times and remember, whatever team you are in ...
 - ...you are representing **your troop** in the premier scouting competition in the County.