



Information for **All** Ashdown District  
Scouts born before 29<sup>th</sup> March 1996  
(and slightly younger Scouts with determination!)



# the 2008

# Sussex 'OVERLAND' Hike

*Most Scouts in Sussex will have heard at least something about the legendary "Overland" Hike.* It is an event for the whole of East and West Sussex which takes place around the end of March each year, and has now been going for a remarkable 41 years. Of the 39 previous events, Ashdown District teams have won on no less than 11 occasions. In 2007, our best team finished in second place and are determined to go one better next time round.

In 2008 the competition will take place on the **29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup> March** and this note tells you something about what it involves, so that you, your leaders and other Scouts from your troop can decide if you would like to give it a go.

**The first thing you need to know is that it is not simply a hike!** - it is the '**Ultimate Challenge**' for both Scouts and Explorer Scouts across the whole of Sussex: a test in all of the things that Scouting is about, including navigation, outdoor skills, fitness, courtesy and, above all, teamwork. *Those who take part will never forget the experience* ... not simply because of what they have managed to achieve by the end of all the training, but also because of the fun and adventure involved along the way! .... **it really is that good!**

**...OK but the end of March is ages away: why do you need to know all this now?**

*That's because, in order to become part of a successful team, or even just to stand a realistic chance of completing the event, you will need to do lots of training!* To help you, experienced leaders from troops all around the District have put together a combined training programme that will make sure that ANY Ashdown District Scout who is old enough (12 or over by March next year\*) and who is prepared to put in the necessary effort and commitment to prove that they have what it takes, will have a chance to take part in next year's competition. By working together, we make sure that everyone is given a chance.

**In order to have a go you don't need to be in a team at this stage** - those will be sorted out much later on. For this reason, **there are no minimum (or maximum) numbers from any individual Troop for taking part in the training sessions.** Not everyone who starts the training will make it through to the end, but the training itself is half the fun if you enjoy outdoor adventures! If you are old enough and you think you'd like to have a crack at this, whether it's just for the experience or to really have a go at winning, read on....

## be prepared . . .

\*Scouts who are slightly younger than this but who prove themselves capable through the training sessions may also be able to take part



# What's it all about?



The Overland is an 'incident' hike over two days which takes place somewhere on the South Downs (a different location every year). It has been described as **"one of those events that is harder than you ever imagined"**. .... *But don't let this put you off*, because other comments heard from just about every Ashdown District Scout that has ever taken part, include: **'brilliant fun'**; **'tremendous achievement'**; and **'when's the next one?'**

The competition involves hiking, in teams of four, over a distance of around 15 miles on the first day and a further 10 miles on the second day, carrying with you everything that you need for the overnight camp, including tents, sleeping bags, food, cooking equipment and fuel, plus spare clothes etc. - a total weight of up to 10Kg per person. *The training programme makes sure you are capable of doing this, and of working well with other members of your team, by the date of the event.*

The route is kept secret until just one week before the competition, so your team has to be confident in finding its way **anywhere on the South Downs**. *If you have done this before you may already have this confidence but the training programme will improve your skills and make sure that all of the Ashdown teams reach this standard in time for the event.*

En route, your team will have to complete a series of 'incidents' designed to test your combined skills in things like first aid, pioneering, camp craft, cooking, map work, observation and, of course, teamwork. *Again, the training programme will cover some of these things but the basic skills need to be covered in your normal troop evenings between now and the competition: **make sure you ask your leader to do this!***

Completing the event is a major achievement in itself and finishing in the top six is regarded by the organisers as 'outstanding'. Ashdown District nearly always has two or more teams in the top six: In 2007 it was 4<sup>th</sup> Uckfield Alpha in 2<sup>nd</sup> place and 1<sup>st</sup> Groombridge in 6<sup>th</sup> place. The year before it was 1<sup>st</sup> Crowborough in first place and 1<sup>st</sup> Buxted in 4<sup>th</sup> place.

## This year's "Overland" Training Programme for Scouts in Ashdown District

The training begins in the New Year on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> January with a fun hike across the **Seven Sisters**. This is open to all Scouts who are 11 or more years old (whether or not they want to do the Overland) and is designed to follow on from the treasure hunt hike in November, moving up a gear to discover the exhilaration of hiking across the South Downs.

Those who think they might like to have a go at the Overland then continue with a vitally important map reading skills session on Ashdown Forest on **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> January**. Thereafter, training is available every weekend up until the event, generally alternating between Saturdays and Sundays at different locations on the South Downs each week. The alternation is designed to ensure that people with other weekend commitments such as rugby, football, church etc. can still get to about half of the training sessions (which is the minimum necessary for most Scouts to become successful 'Overlanders').

**If you are interested in having a go, and would like to see the full training booklet to find out more, please get the form below completed and returned to your Scout Leader before Christmas.**



My son (s) / daughter(s) ..... would like to have a go at training for the 2008 Overland Hike. Please could you let me have a copy of the training booklet. I will/will not\* be able to help occasionally with the training sessions by driving\* and / or walking\* with the Scouts, under the overall supervision of warranted Scout Leaders.

Signed ..... (parent or guardian of the above-named Scout(s)) Date .....

(\* please delete as appropriate: all parents involved with giving lifts or with hiking will need to have submitted a Scout Association CRB form. If you have not yet done so, please ask your leader for a copy of the form)