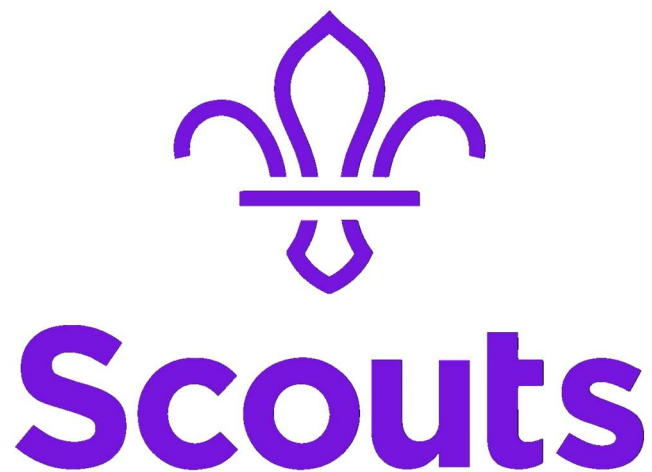


BLAKFOOT HIKE



Leaders Guide
2025

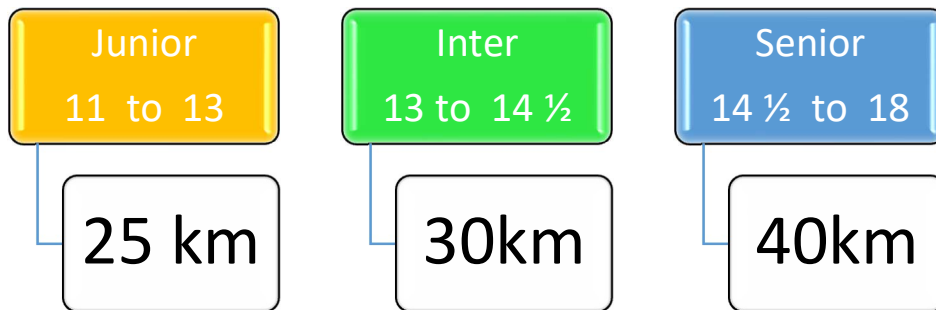


WHAT IS THE BLAKFOOT HIKE?

Blakfoot Hike was established in 1978 as a challenge to test a scout's navigational and camping skills.

Scouts complete a 2-day weekend hike as team of 2 in unfamiliar surroundings, navigating themselves from checkpoint to checkpoint. Scouts also camp overnight to demonstrate their skills of self-sufficiency – setting up their tent and cooking for themselves.

The Hike is open to Scouts and Explorers. It is split in to Junior, Inter and Senior levels.



WHAT IS THE FORMAT FOR THE EVENT?

- **SATURDAY MORNING** Scouts are to arrive at a designated time and check in.

Junior Age scouts will have their bags checked before they are allowed to start the hike. Junior Teams should bring their tent and sleeping bags in a separate holdall with team number on the bag, ready to be transported to the base camp. Parents of Junior team members must stay until kit has been checked.
Once Checked in, the Scouts will be given ID Tags which will have team number and emergency phone number.
- **SATURDAY BASE CAMP** On arrival, scouts will hand in their mobile phones, emergency rations and then be required to pitch tent and cook the evening meal. Once done then the evening is theirs although most get some much-needed rest.
- **SUNDAY** Scouts are to cook a warm breakfast, strike camp and then be ready to set off for the days walk. Good sound advice is for scouts to get sorted as soon as possible to give them as much time as possible to complete Sundays route.
- **FINISH** Scouts will arrive at finish and be collected by their parents. Control will call the parents when they have an eta of the team. Please ask parents to not interfere with the staff at finish.

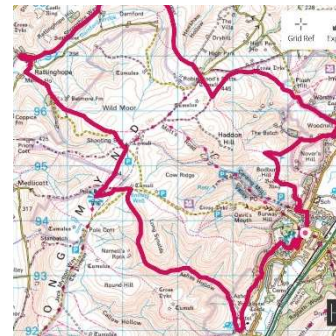
WHAT TRAINING DO SCOUTS NEED TO DO BEFORE THE BLAKFOOT HIKE?

Before the event, Scouts are expected to have trained with their leaders and be competent in the following essential skills :-

NAVIGATION

Each member of each team should be able to independently carry out the following:-

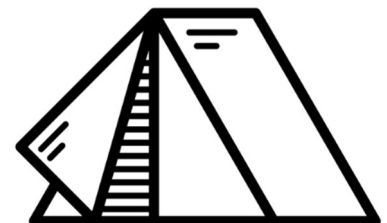
- Plot a 6 figure map reference on a 1:25000 OS Leisure map.
- Set a map
- Take a bearing
- Use a compass
- Read and understand a route card



CAMP SKILLS.

Each member of each team should be able to independently carry out the following:-

- Pack their own rucksack correctly.
- Pitch the Tent they are going to use on the hike.
- Correctly assemble the stove to be used on the hike.
- Safely use the stove and understand safety issues.
- Cook their own hot meals and drinks.
- Be able to pack their own sleeping bag back in its stuff sack
- Be able to correctly pack the tent away into its bag.



We would expect that each team has undertaken a practice hike with their troop/unit before entering the hike.

If you are not able or confident enough to train your scouts/explorers to take part then please speak to the committee or other leaders as there may be opportunity to get help with training and organising practise hikes. Please Ask!

WHAT ARE THE RULES?



TEAMS

1. Teams must be members of the Scout Movement.
2. Teams of 2, boys or girls or mixed, of the same age group but not necessarily from the same Troop.
3. Scouts of different ages can form a Team at the discretion of the Hike, however, the Team will usually complete the route of the eldest Scout – Please discuss this with the event organiser before completing entry.
4. Teams must work independently of other teams.
5. Teams must carry their own kit at all times.
6. Mixed gender teams will have their extra tent transported to Base Camp.
7. Entry forms must be completed by Scout leader **and** Parent/Carer.

ON THE HIKE

1. This is a hike NOT a race.
2. The objective is to complete the route passing through ALL map references some of which will be Check Points.
3. All persons on the hike must at all times observe the Scout Law and obey the Country and Highway Codes.
4. Team members must keep together at all times. Failure to observe this rule will result in disqualification.
5. Each Scout must carry all items on the personal kit list. All items on the communal list must be carried between the team members.
6. Each rucksack must carry a label with the Troop and Team Number on it
7. Hikers of Junior age ONLY are advised that their carrying weight should be limited to 7kg (15lb) EXCLUDING their tent. This is the only item which will be transferred to the Base Camp/Finish. Parent will be required to take excess items home.

8. Intermediate and Seniors Rucksacks must not weigh more than 11.5kg (25lb).
There is no facility to transport excess gear. Teams will carry what they arrive with at the start.
9. If it becomes clear that a team will not finish within the set time on either day, they will be withdrawn at the checkpoint they are at before the set finish time and transported to the finish.
10. If a team member has to withdraw for any reason, then if the circumstances fit, Hike officials will try and make a team of 3 so that the remaining scout may continue on the hike. This will only happen if all parties are happy and that it is a compatible match. This is at the discretion of hike officials and is not a given.

WHAT KIT DOES A SCOUT NEED FOR THE HIKE?

PERSONAL KIT

			
Sleeping bag (with hood)	Hiking boots	Hiking socks	Waterproof coat
			
Waterproof trousers	Warm top with long sleeves and sweater or sweatshirt	Warm trousers. No denim!	Rucksack (to carry everything)
			
Watch	Whistle	Torch (head torch) and spare batteries	First aid kit inside a small plastic bag.
Underwear, socks and <u>lightweight</u> outdoor shoes or pumps. Hat and gloves Avoid heavy trainers. Soap, <u>small</u> towel, toothbrush, toothpaste. Eating utensils.			Survival Bag

TEAM KIT

			
Hike tent	Stove + spare fuel	Silva type compass	Half litre water container
Matches, cooking pots, plastic bag for disposal of waste, tea towel, <u>small</u> quantity of washing up liquid, toilet paper.			

WATERPROOFS AND BOOTS

The Blakfoot Hike happens each October. It could be in glorious sunshine; it could be windy and pouring down. A good quality waterproof is advised, suitable for any British October weather conditions. Choose a waterproof that is breathable, has tape seams and a hood. Waterproof trousers should ideally have zips up the side to help getting on and off over boots.

Please do not spend excessive amounts on a coat, but do be mindful that a pac-a-mac may not be suitable. A waterproof outer layer with taped seams is a must.



Scouts will be walking a minimum of 25k over the Hike weekend. A supportive, comfortable set of walking boots is a must! Look for walking boots that have ankle support and a sewn in tongue. Walking shoes or trainers are not allowed. Make sure that you have **worn your boots beforehand, with the socks you will be walking in** – brand new boots will give you blisters.



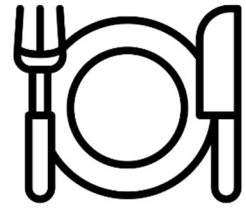
RUCKSACKS

Scouts will be carrying everything they need throughout the Blackfoot Hike in their Rucksack and will be carrying it on their back for hours at a time over hilly terrain.

Make sure the rucksack has plenty of support, especially the waist belt. When worn, the waist belt should sit on the hips so that the load is transferred properly. Rucksacks are not waterproof, so make sure that personal kit is in a waterproof inner bag. Scouts should be able to pack their own rucksack, and all kit (except tent) should fit inside. Scouts should also be able to carry their fully packed rucksack – so get practising!

WHAT FOOD DO SCOUTS NEED?

Teams need to carry food for Saturday lunch, Saturday tea, Sunday breakfast and Sunday lunch. A hot breakfast is advised on the Saturday morning before arriving to ensure a good start to the day.



When planning your teams menus, the key things to remember are to bring food that they like to eat, that is high in calories/energy, is lightweight and easy to make. Pre-made hike meals are OK, **but** are expensive and heavy to carry. Food that needs re-hydrating is much lighter to carry. We would advise that teams try cooking the food using the stove they will be taking and make sure that they like what they are going to eat.

Here's food for thought...

Saturday/ Sunday lunch

- Sandwiches that have been pre-made, with a hot drink and chocolate/cereal bar.
- A pasta pot, hot drink, biscuits.

Saturday tea

- Pasta and sauce, small pouch of tuna, cake bar, hot drink.
- Rice cooked with vegetables and meat, dried fruit, hot drink.

Sunday breakfast

- Instant porridge, cereal bar, hot drink.

Scouts must be able to cook the food they bring themselves. Tinned food is not acceptable.

Please stress to your scouts the importance of balancing the need for minimising weight but at the same time the calorie burn they will need to replace during the weekend. Food choices are important!

Leaders should ensure that the menu is suitable, the scouts know how to cook it and that they actually like what they have written down!

EMERGENCY RATIONS

These need to be minimal and something which will **give you energy in an emergency**; A Chocolate bar or Kendal Mint Cake or Mars bar, with Nuts and Raisins or high energy biscuit all in a separate bag clearly marked **'EMERGENCY RATIONS'** together **WITH YOUR TEAM NUMBER**.

Note; The emergency rations will be handed in to the base camp staff on arrival at the Saturday night Base Camp and the Finish on Sunday (unless consumed during an Emergency).



MOBILE PHONES

Scouts are requested to carry a mobile phone with credit on it. This enables the use of the OS Locate App and the ability to contact Hike Control in an emergency.

Scouts should not use their phones for games, music etc whilst on the Hike as there is no facility to charge them up overnight. A small charging pack is advisable.

What if there is an emergency?

Team members should be aware enough to make sure that they and their team mate are safe and in no immediate danger. If there is a casualty and there is no help available, administer first aid. Scouts should shout for help or use their emergency whistle. As soon as they can, they should contact Hike Control. Please stress to scouts that phoning home is the least helpful thing that they can do. Hike officials are always within a reasonable proximity and will get help to them as soon as possible.

If the situation is life threatening, call 999 and then Hike Control.

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Navigation issues

Firstly, Scouts should try to work out where they are using their map skills. If they are really lost, they should contact Hike Control. They may be asked to identify their position using OS Locate. This is a free app that should be installed before the Hike. When a Scout

opens OS Locate, it will give them a 6-figure reference of their position, which they can relay to Hike Control. Please try using the app before the event. If you are unsure then please see a hike official at Map check night and they will be happy to demonstrate its use.



OVERVIEW OF HIKE STRUCTURE.

HIKE CONTROL

This oversees and monitors the Hike and checks where Teams are up to, keeping an eye out for any teams that have gone astray.

MOBILE UNITS

Two vehicles, manned by Hike officials, ready to assist where needed.

CHECKPOINTS

There are designated checkpoints for Scouts to pass through. Each check point is manned by Hike officials. Checkpoints identify where the Scouts are up to and feed back to Control. Scouts should pass through a check point every 60-90 minutes. Checkpoints have water so that Scouts can replenish their supply while on their route.

FIRST AID

There are two dedicated First Aid vehicles ready to deal with any issues that should arise.

SWEEP TEAMS

Each Hike section (Junior, Inter, Senior) has a team of experienced walkers following the tail of the route, ready to assist any scouts in difficulty or find the ones who have gone astray!

AWARDS

Awards are presented on Merit and Achievement on the recommendation of the Hike Officials.

THE GOLD AWARD is presented to Scouts who complete the hike unassisted and visit all check points on both days within the time allowed on both days and display adequate camping skills

THE SILVER AWARD is presented to Scouts who complete both days unassisted within the time allowed but miss a maximum of three checkpoints.

THE BRONZE AWARD is presented to Scouts who walk for the full allowed time on both days and do not qualify for Gold or Silver Award

A commemorative **Belt Slide** is presented to all teams who take part.

SPECIAL AWARDS

These Awards are made for exceptional endeavour, therefore the criteria will be scrupulously followed.

THE JOHN BLEASDALE AWARD. Open to Scouts age 11 to 14 ½

Will be awarded to any Scout who has completed three hikes consecutively to at least two Silver and one Gold award standard.

THE AUSTIN MAGRATH ENDEAVOUR AWARD. Open to Explorer Scouts age 14 ½ to 18 ½

Will be awarded to any Explorer Scout who has completed three consecutive hikes in the Explorer section, to at least one Silver and one Gold award standard.

MAP CHECK NIGHT – 9TH OCTOBER 2024

This is a compulsory evening for teams to have their kit items checked, their route plotting assessed, and their menu discussed. Scouts will also be asked to demonstrate that they know how to use OS Locate but Leaders will demonstrate to those who don't know how to use it.

Please stress to Parents that scouts will take approx. 45 minutes to complete all tasks. We ask that parents wait in their vehicle until the scouts have finished. There is ample parking at both venues.

Scouts need to bring the following for checks: -

- Compass
- Ruck Sack
- Waterproof Coat
- Waterproof Trousers
- Stove
- Mobile Phone to demonstrate OS Locate.
- Menu of the food they will be eating that weekend.

Any issues will be emailed to troop or unit leaders.

This year we will be holding the map check in 2 venues. Teams will be allocated a venue once registration is complete. This is for Covid considerations.

Leaders are asked if they can let Andy Judson know if they are available to help with bases on the evening. As we are stretching over 2, we will require additional help.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MARSHALLS

If you are helping with this year's event, then please look at the options below.

1. All staff are welcome to stay at the appointed staff base. This year it will be a hall with floor space to sleep on so please bring own kit.
2. Marshalls can travel to and from the hike each day. Please note that it is approximately 1hr travel time from Warrington. The hike start time will be 7:30am so commuting adults will need to allow enough time to get to the control venue to collect their information for the day and to then be in position before the checkpoint is due to open. If taking this option, we will try to ensure that a late checkpoint is allocated but cannot be guaranteed. The committee will inform Marshalls of their opening times prior to the hike to enable adults to make their arrangements.
3. Adults can make their own accommodation arrangements locally. There are numerous B&B, caravan parks etc available.
4. Please note that Leaders are not permitted to bring their own children with them.

Please complete the online Leader / helper form so that we can plan checkpoints and please let us know who you will be traveling with. This will enable us to put adults together on checkpoints who are traveling together.

FRIDAY EVENING / SATURDAY MORNING

All Marshalls will need to arrive at the **Staff Venue** to collect their ID tags and Checkpoint information. Please arrive at the staff venue in plenty of time to ensure you are in position on your Checkpoints at the required opening time. Staff can arrive either Friday evening or Saturday morning.

CHECKPOINTS

Those manning checkpoints need to bring the following with them: -

- A large water container – this it to refill water bottles of scouts especially if you happen to be a lunchtime stop.
- Hand sanitiser
- Mobile Phone Charger.
- Boots and waterproofs in case the checkpoint is not at a road – All staff should be prepared to have to walk to a checkpoint. As much as possible we try to keep them at the roadside but occasionally the routes will require someone to be positioned on a footpath so be prepared!
- Its always a nice pick me up for Scouts if you have chocolate or sweets to give out, not compulsory but amazing what a treat can do!
- Pens – in case any notes are needed and to complete the checkpoint booking in.
- Blakfoot App – The App is new and improved and now works on iPhone as well as android. Instructions will be sent out separately.
- Flask or small stove – always a good idea to make a brew or even a bacon butty.

TEAMS

The Blakfoot App is now one of our main sources to track traffic at Checkpoints so please make sure you have the app and that you have means to charge you mobile. Control will still call checkpoints periodically for updates on the mobiles. This year we will have a WhatsApp group which will also be used for communications from control. Although this won't be an official tool for the hike and can be used to have a bit of banter across the marshals, please be mindful of others and don't put any updates about teams or individuals!

We have now instructed teams to use OS locate as a means of helping either themselves or control to locate them if they go wrong.

PRESENTATION

This year we will not be holding an awards Presentation at the end. Scouts can be collected by their parents once contacted by control but please stress to parents that the hike finish time is 4pm so no guarantee that their child will be finished when they get there.

The hike Chair will arrange a suitable time with each troop or unit to come to your meeting and present the awards.

FAQS

How do I enter my teams?

Online entry forms will have been issued to leaders. Payments to be made online. Both to be completed before 28th September 2025 This will be strictly adhered to and late entries will not be considered.

Where is the Hike?

It changes every year. Locations are released on Map Check night.

What map do my scouts need to bring?

Maps are provided by the Hike.

How hard is the Hike?

The Hike is a challenge for all sections. Scouts should have had training from their Troop Leaders in preparation and have practised carrying their full kit in hilly terrain.

What happens if the weather is really bad?

Hike Officials monitor weather up to and during the event. If the weather is extreme and poses a risk to Scouts, the Hike will be amended/curtailed.

Ringin' Home

Stress the importance of contacting Hike Control, or Base Camp officials if at the site. Scouts should not be ringin' home during the Hike.

What happens if my Scout's teammate drops out/is ill/ doesn't turn up?

If a Team member drops out or becomes ill, in certain circumstances the remaining team member may be paired up with another on the same route or with another team. If this is not possible or suitable then the remaining team member will be taken to the camp on Saturday or finish on Sunday with their teammate

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WHAT ARE THE COMMON PROBLEMS SEEN BY HIKE OFFICIALS?

- Blakfoot is their first hike. Ever. Adequate training has not been undertaken, or not enough practice has been had. **This is not a training weekend and should not be treated as such**
- Inappropriate rucksack – no shoulder or back support/no padding/thin straps.
- Rucksack is too heavy when fully packed for a Scout to carry.
- Scouts unable to put their own sleeping bags into stuff sacks.
- Tents without tents poles, or pegs! (Check the kit the night before they bring it!)
- Compass – what's a compass?
- Scouts giving menus on Map Check night and then turning up with completely different food.
- Scouts bringing tins.
- Scouts bringing excessive amounts of chocolate and sweets/ things that add unnecessary weight.
- Scouts bringing equipment they have never used before.
- Brand new, never worn boots! Blisters galore!
- Scouts walking with people they do not get on with.
- Scouts wearing inappropriate clothing or not bringing enough layers to wear.
- Inadequate waterproofs – a Scout's school coat will not keep them warm and dry.

If any leader has any queries or would like any advice on equipment, they should contact Andy Judson in the first instance.

USEFUL LINKS

Plotting 6 figure grid references

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zp6kbqt/revision/5>

<https://getoutside.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/guides/beginners-guide-to-grid-references/>