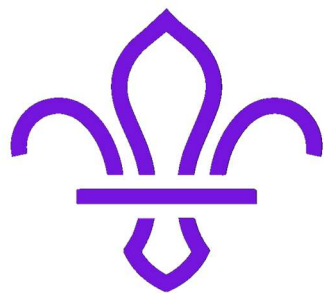


# BLAKFOOT HIKE



Scout & Parent's Guide  
2025



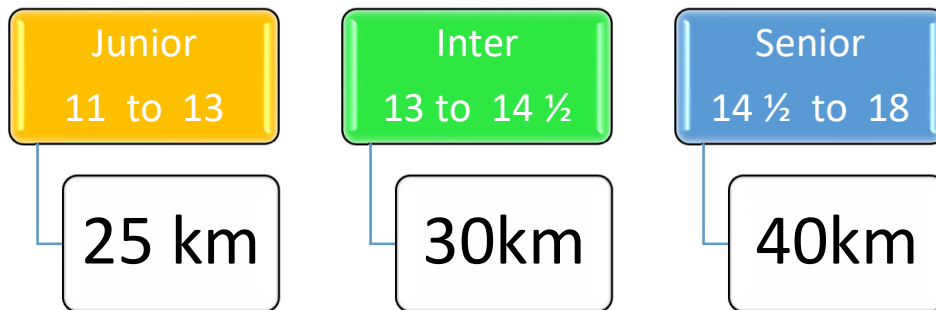
**Scouts**

# 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 into Junior, Inter and Senior levels.



# WHAT IS THE HIKE LIKE?

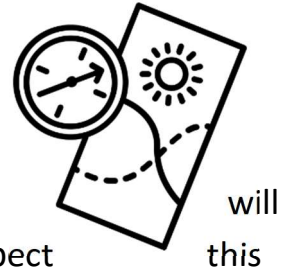
- **10 DAYS** before the Hike, a **MAPCHECK** night is held. **This is compulsory.** Here

Scouts find out where they are going and plot part of their route.

They have their menu and essential kit checked by Blakfoot Hike officials. This ensures that Scouts can demonstrate their map skills, have an understanding of the dietary requirements of

a 2 day hike and check that they have the correct gear. Teams

be told their arrival time for the start of the Hike. Parents can expect to take up to an hour – Scouts do this in their teams, not with any leader or parental help!



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- **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** Scouts check in, set up their tent and cook their tea.

Then it's time to relax!

- **SUNDAY** Get up, cook your own hot breakfast, strike camp and head off for day 2 of the hike!

- **FINISH** Pat yourself on the back for completing the hike!

- **AWARDS** The following week, Hike officials will arrange to visit troops / units to present well earned awards and certificates.

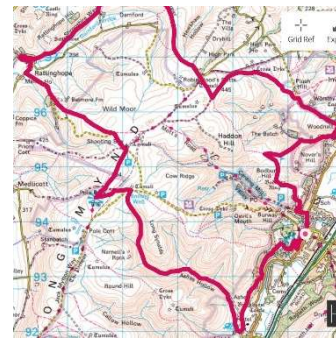
# WHAT TRAINING DO SCOUTS NEED TO DO BEFORE THE BLAKFOOT HIKE?

**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:-

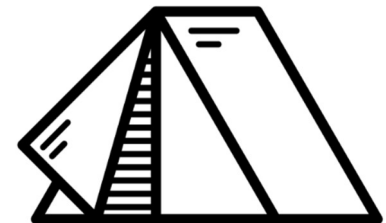
- Plot a 6 figure map reference on a 1:25000 OS Leisure map.
- Set a map
- Take a bearing
- Use a compass
- Read and understand a route card



## 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.**

# 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, this needs to be discussed with the leader in charge of the hike for confirmation of suitable entry level
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.

# WHAT KIT DOES A SCOUT NEED FOR THE HIKE?

## PERSONAL KIT

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

## TEAM KIT

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

# 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 Fully taped waterproof outer layer 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

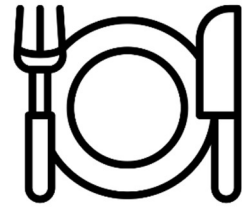
Scouts will be carrying everything they need throughout the Blackfoot Hike in their Rucksack and will be carrying it on their back for hours at a time over hilly terrain.

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 advisable before scouts arrive on the Saturday morning to ensure a good start to the day.



When planning your menu, the key things to remember are to bring food that you 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.

*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 advised.

# 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).

## WHAT ABOUT 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?**

Make sure that you are and any one else are safe and in no immediate danger. If there is a casualty and there is no help available, administer first aid. Shout for help if you need to. As soon as you or someone else is able, contact Hike Control.

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

We understand that a young person's first instinct is to ring their parents when they are tired, cold, wet or lost, however Hike Officials are best placed to assist immediately. If your Scout does ring home, please stress the importance of them contacting Hike Control.

### **What if a scout gets lost?**

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.



# HOW IS THE HIKE RUN?

## 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!

## IN-TOUCH PERSON

In the case of an emergency, we have an independent person, not part of the Hike, to make contact with parents/carers.

At all points during the Hike, Scouts are always within a reasonable distance of Hike officials. Systems are in place to safeguard Scouts.

# 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.

# FAQS

## **How do I enter?**

Entry forms are issued to Troop Leaders in July. Parents and leaders should complete the online forms and then submit entry fees to Blakfoot Hike Account number - 47467591, Sort code 05-09-67. Pay reference to be scouts surname and group number i.e. Jones 28th

## **Where is the Hike?**

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

## **What map do I 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 if I don't have the correct kit?**

Speak to your Troop Leader. Scout Groups often have spare items or can advise where to get them. Items such as stoves and tents should be provided by your own Troop.

## **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.

## **What should I do if my son/daughter rings home?**

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

## **What if my son/daughter gets injured or becomes ill?**

In the first instance, First Aid are on hand. If it is something more serious, then the relevant treatment will be sought, and parents will be contacted by the In-Touch person.

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

In the first instance, we will try and find a suitable partner. If a partner can't be found or this happens the week of the hike then unfortunately the remaining scout will not be able to start the hike.

# 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.
- 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 in to stuffsacks.
- Tents without tents poles, or pegs! (check the kit the night you 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.

# 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/>