



Useful information from the Expedition Network

Welcome!

For more information, please contact the Expedition Area Co-ordinator.

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Welcome to the Snowdonia Expedition Network

The DofE in Wales is pleased to announce that a partnership with the Mountain Training Trust has led to Plas y Brenin the National Mountain Centre taking over the provision of an Expedition Assessment Service for Snowdonia and the surrounding areas.

With immediate effect all Green Notification forms and requests for assessments in the Snowdonia area should be sent to the above address.

Please ensure that forms are submitted with the required amount of lead in time. If you have any enquiries regarding pending assessments please contact your Assessor, if you have been allocated one already or call PYB for advice.

Submitting routes

To ease the process of route approval PYB welcomes electronic versions of the Green notification forms and routes on Memory Map software. If information is to be sent by post, can green forms be accompanied by 2 copies of the route on a photocopy of the OS map with routes clearly highlighted and all camp sites marked.

Please note that due to a very high level of demand in late July and August, the service may not be able to supply assessors for some teams. You will be notified as soon as possible before your expedition if we are unable to supply you with an Assessor.

Introduction

Since 1st June 2008, Plas Y Brenin and the Mountain Training Trust have extended their support to The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and are now co-ordinating all expeditions in Snowdonia and the surrounding area. The Snowdonia Expedition Assessment service is managed on behalf of DofE Wales, by Plas y Brenin. Helen Barnard, the DofE Co-ordinator for Plas y Brenin, and the Administration Team, Lissie Smith, Judith Schneider and Bernadette Redmond are available to advise and support group Leaders in their planning for unaccompanied expeditions in Snowdonia.

The service is available during office hours 9am to 5pm with a message only service outside these hours. If you have any queries or suggestions please feel free to contact us.

The Snowdonia Expedition Assessment Service is co-ordinated via a combination of the Administration Team at Plas Y Brenin (Lissie Smith, Bernadette Redmond, Judith Schneider, Gaynor Lewis and Vicky Martin) and Helen Barnard, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award coordinator at Plas y Brenin.

The service is available during office hours 9am to 5pm, a message only service will operate outside these hours.

Plas y Brenin has the latest edition of Memory Map and therefore can instantly see the routes selected for your groups.

About the Expedition Area

Snowdonia National Park covers 823 square miles of the most beautiful and unspoilt countryside in North Wales. Snowdonia offers mountains, lakes, woodlands and valleys. History and culture is everywhere and the Welsh language is the mother tongue of 65% of the population. The landscape illustrates the history of the area through Stone Age burial chambers, Roman forts, churches, castles, slate quarries and other industrial works. Snowdonia is famous for its most spectacular mountain scenery with Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon) in the North and Cadair Idris in the South. In all there are more than 90 summits over 2000 ft and 15 over 3000.

The expedition service covers Cadair Idris and Rhinogs to the South, Snowdon, Glyderau, Carneddau and Moelwyns to the North and the Berwyns to the East.

The weather

The weather in Snowdonia can sometimes be very fickle. Even in summer, the rain and wind can sweep across the mountains in a similar force you would expect in winter. Due to its location on the western side of the UK, the area is influenced by the moist air masses coming from the Atlantic. The saturated air is forced up and over the mountains, cooling and condensing to form rain. Snowdonia often experiences heavy rainfall and groups travelling to Snowdonia need to be prepared.

Unexpected snowfall in October and late March will cause problems for groups.

Previous experience, fitness and good quality equipment is a necessity when considering an expedition in the mountains. Travelling through the mountains rather than over is the safest option. Any high level walks need to always be accompanied by bad weather alternatives.

Routes and access

Mountain walkers have very good access in Snowdonia thanks to the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 and 'good will' on behalf of landowners. Snowdonia benefits from having an extensive footpath network in the form of permissive paths, public rights of ways and bridleways. Much of the land in Snowdonia is owned by private landowners (farmers) who make their living from 'working the mountains', extensively sheep farming.

When planning routes in Snowdonia, please take into consideration non-access land i.e. land that is not part of the CROW Act. In some circumstances, land owners do not permit the right of access through their land unless there is a designated public right of way path. It is therefore not advisable to plan a route from Beddgelert through Wernlas-deg to join the public right of way path to the west of Craig Wen. Please use alternative paths in the area.

Other areas of Snowdonia are owned by the National Trust, Forestry Commission, Forestry Enterprise, First Hydro and Welsh Water (to name but a few!). To ensure that the good will of the land owners is maintained it is important that groups adopt a minimal impact approach and

follow the Country Code when walking in the mountains. This is particularly important when considering Wild Camping in the National Park. It is important that groups need to seek permission of the land owner.

Visit the Snowdonia National Parks Authority website: www.eryri-npa.co.uk

Difficult ground

Due to the nature of the terrain in Snowdonia, it is unadvisable to use areas that are exposed and require techniques of scrambling. Additionally, terrain that is heavily eroded or scree, and is difficult in poor weather should also be avoided.

In the northern Snowdonia area, Crib Goch and the Watkin Path on Snowdon are not acceptable routes. Similarly, in the southern part, the Foxes path and the permissive path leading directly to Llyn Cau on Cadair Idris are also not suitable routes. The Minfordd path should be only used by experienced walkers.

Camping

Please note that Supervisors/Leaders/groups are responsible for gaining permission to use camp sites. Please respect all our camp sites and other users of the camp sites. It is important to seek permission of the land owner when considering wild camping. Some land owners will charge for wild camping.

A list of camp sites in the area is available. Please contact the Network for an up-to-date list. Many of the camp sites request that groups are supervised overnight by a responsible adult – please check.

Wild camping

Wild camping in England and Wales is currently not permitted. The CRoW (Countryside and Rights of Way) Act 2000 forbids camping unless you have express permission of the land owner. In contrast, the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (1 July 2004) does permit wild camping as long as this is not close to roads, houses or in other circumstances that could be considered an invasion of privacy. In reality, wild camping is tolerated in England and Wales provided good practice is followed. The British Mountaineering Council BMC has produced good practical advice for walkers, climbers and mountaineers in the upland environment. Section 8 deals specifically with wild camping issues and section 9 with sanitation. Visit: www.thebmc.co.uk/greenguides

Lyme disease

Lyme Disease is a bacterial infection that is spread to humans by infected ticks. Ticks are small, spider-shaped insects that feed on the blood of mammals (commonly sheep and deer), including humans.

The ticks that cause Lyme disease are commonly found in woodland and heathland areas. Due to their breeding patterns, the tick population is at its highest during late spring and early summer.

The best way to prevent Lyme disease is to take sensible precautions when you are in areas known to have a high tick population, such as wearing long-sleeved shirts, long trousers and using insect repellent. At the end of each day walking, inspect your skin for ticks, including head, neck and skin folds (armpits, groin and waist band).

If you find a tick on your skin, gently remove it by gripping it as close to the skin as possible, preferably using a fine-toothed tweezer and pull steadily away from the skin. For more information visit www.nhs.uk/conditions/lyme-disease

Planning your route

- All expeditions must have a clearly defined aim.
- Spread out your route equally over the duration of the expedition.
- Avoid travelling over difficult ground late in the day. Try as far as possible to make steep ascents early in the morning.
- Groups should not use motorised transport and should take the form of a journey through the mountains and not over them.
- Avoid camp sites that are remote. It will greatly help Assessors if campsites are chosen which are easily accessible by road.
- It is time consuming and expensive for Assessors to visit groups whose routes straddle the whole of Snowdonia.
- Avoid 'peak bogging!' – It can be just as rewarding to travel through wild country rather than attempting every mountain in sight!
- Avoid steep ground and exposed ridges – remember they are carrying heavy rucksacks.
- Safety of the groups is the responsibility of the Supervisor. The Supervisor should be based in the assessment area and adequate arrangements should be made to keep in contact with the Assessor with regards to a change of plan.
- Alternative bad weather routes and escape routes should be clearly marked on the maps – these should be properly timed and distances measured.
- Routes should be clearly marked on either a photocopy of a map with the route, camp sites, and escape routes highlighted or clearly marked via memory map.
- Any expeditions planned (unaccompanied practice and qualifying ventures) in Snowdonia, the Snowdonia Expedition Service has to be notified. This includes all Bronze, Silver and Gold expeditions in wild country.

Expedition assessments

- The Snowdonia Expedition Service can only assess Gold expeditions. This is due to the large numbers of groups coming to Snowdonia requesting an Assessor.
- All expeditions, including practice journeys, are to be supervised by an experienced adult who must accept responsibility for the safety of the group. He or she must be satisfied that the participants are fully trained and properly equipped to undertake the expedition planned.
- Please send/email your notification forms and a copy of the routes (2 copies of each), to us as early as possible.
- Assessors are all volunteers who give up their free time to assess groups; therefore it is not possible to guarantee an Assessor for your group. However, it is more likely that an Assessor will be available if:
 - Notification forms and tracings are submitted at least six weeks prior to the expedition.
 - Routes etc are clearly marked on either Memory map or highlighted on a photocopy of a 1:50 000 map.
 - Routes follow the guidance mentioned in the Planning the Route section.
- We require two good quality copies of the routes and two copies of the notification form with either a SAE or an email address. No further information is necessary at this stage. Once the assessor has been allocated and approved the route then route cards, equipment lists, menus etc should be sent to the assessor directly.
- We will then provide you with an Assessor.

Notification only groups

For groups who are coming to Snowdonia for practice expeditions or are bringing their own assessors, two copies of their intended route and two copies of their notification form should be sent at least four weeks prior to the expedition.

Groups will then receive an expedition notification number from us (please include either a SAE or an email address).

DofE resources

The current DofE expedition kit list can be downloaded from: www.DofE.org/go/expeditionkit

A range of expedition downloads, such as the Green Form and spare expedition safety cards, can be downloaded from: www.DofE.org/go/downloads

Further information of the Expedition section can be found at: www.DofE.org/expedition