South East Explorer Expeditions 2024

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Hosts:

John Buchanan

- Asst Regional Commissioner – Explorer Scouts
- Regional Advisor - DofE

David Newton

- Regional Advisor – Activities – SEEE

The call is for all potential participants in our DofE Silver and Gold **biking expeditions** being planned for 2024 to help you choose which expedition to do and

- Know what is planned
- When it will happen
- Understand what you need to do
- Answer any questions you have

SEEE focusses on expeditions - your Unit Leader or DofE Leader will deal with getting you registered for DofE and supporting everything else in your Award.

The slides and a recording of this call will be available tomorrow on https://see-expeditions.org.uk/message-to-explorers-6-nov-2023/

For further questions contact us by email - expeditions@sesscouts.org.uk

LIFE CHANGING EXPEDITIONS

South East Explorer Expeditions 2024 Biking

Choosing your expedition

We have run all types with very positive feedback - each provides different experiences, challenges and skills, so do be open to trying something new!

Join as many of these sessions to find out more:

- **Hillwalking – Tuesday 21st Nov. 7.30 – 8.30pm**
- Join using **this link** (Meeting ID: 371 623 627 444 Passcode: 4RU5qq)
- **Offroad Biking – Wednesday 22nd Nov. 7.30-8.30pm**
- Join using **this link** (Meeting ID: 347 676 326 513 Passcode: XphaBv)
- **Canoeing** – a further email will be sent to everyone **who has chosen canoeing on the form** with details of an info session on the week beginning 3rd December.

IMPORTANT -complete the form with your choice by Saturday 26th November

As full info on canoeing won't be available until December, and you should choose a second preference in case you decide the canoeing options available are not for you so we can include backup options in our plan.

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South East Explorer Expeditions 2024 Biking

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What's different about biking?

Bike packing is quite a new type of cycling – so we find many Explorers think it will need very high levels of skill or experience and/or high-end bikes.

- Lightweight approach – travel further & faster than walking, the weight is on the bike.
- Routes are on forest roads, gravel tracks, bridleways, and where necessary minor roads.
- A basic level of cycling skill like riding a typical like on country roads will be ok. Both wheels of the bike stay on the ground at all times.
- There will be no "technical" mountain bike type of riding
- The only bike that isn't suitable is a specialist road racing bike – due to their very narrow tyres with no tread for non-tarmac roads
- We provide panniers, saddle bags, frame bags etc. to fit most bike frames
- No special clothing needed except a helmet

LIFE CHANGING EXPEDITIONS

South East Explorer Expeditions 2024 Biking

Here is some of the feedback from our first bikepacking style Silver expedition this year:

- ✓ *Greater distance covered and areas explored by bike.*
- ✓ The views were amazing and the downhills were very fun
- ✓ *The banter in our group was elite and the leaders were super chill. The dusty fire roads on the practice were class and the steep climb on the second day of qualifier was good fun.*
- ✓ day two - slogging it up the first hill of the day but then the amazing feeling of achievement as I turned the corner and there was at last a downhill.
- ✓ *The team worked well together and we had good fun. Although they were long days it was more interesting than my bronze walking expedition. We were able to cycle some stunning routes with some great descents*
- ✓ A piece of advice to anyone thinking about doing biking next year would be make sure to train with loaded panniers as I did this before my practice and it really helped. And do not forget your midge net!!
- ✓ *Group banter and sound leaders*
- ✓ There were also some really picturesque roads along lakesides and easy end of day woodland trails - I would say the area the leaders picked was very beautiful and definitely helped boost my mood. Lastly, I particularly enjoyed relaxing in my tent at the end of the day.

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South East Explorer Expeditions 2024 Biking

Biking – what's different?

Level	Duration	Practice	Hardsurface	Off road	Min. hours of planned activity /day
Silver	3 days 2 nights	Yes – 2days & 2 nights	177 km 110 miles	89 km 55 miles	7 hours during daytime ; 3 ½ hours journeying
Gold	4 days 3 nights	Yes – 2days & 2 nights	240 km 150 miles	120 km 75 miles	8 hours during daytime ; 4 hours journeying

- If you already have completed a practice expedition, you will need to attend some refresher training and can take part in the qualifying expedition without completing a practice this year.
- Most Explorers aim to complete Bronze in S3, Silver in S4 and Gold in S5 or S6. If you are a completing an expedition in a later year group than that, please do email us and we can discuss if there are any options to catch-up
- **Note – Biking and Canoeing expeditions are only available at Silver and Gold Levels**

Where

- Can use parts of long distance routes
- Isolated areas – minor roads, lanes, tracks, bridleways, off-road, bikepacking
- Avoiding major roads, towns - may pass through villages/hamlets but camp in more isolated areas

How far

- Speed of travel is key – a typical average is
  - 12-15 km/h or 7-9 mph on surfaced roads ; 6.5 – 8 km/h or 4-5 mph on tracks/trails
- Will be an appropriate level of challenge for the team

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Silver – Preparing for your expedition

- ✓ Basic Expedition Skills Training
  – only you are starting at Silver as a Direct Entrant
- ✓ Online & Outdoor training sessions to develop your skills further
- ✓ First Aid Training
- ✓ A practice expedition
  - ✓ 2 days and 2 nights camping out
  - ✓ In similar terrain to your Qualifying expedition
  - ✓ In the same group as your Qualifying expedition, or as close as practical.
- ✓ Planning and training – details will follow
  - ✓ Refresh expedition skills for more demanding expedition level
  - ✓ Your route, menu, and getting all your gear ready
  - ✓ Choose and plan your project
- ✓ The Qualifying Expedition
  - ✓ 3 days / 2 nights
  - ✓ Your presentation, about 2 weeks after the expedition

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Gold – Preparing for your expedition

- ✓ Basic Expedition Skills Training
  – only if this is you are starting at Gold as a Direct Entrant

- ✓ Online & Outdoor training sessions to develop your skills further

- ✓ First Aid Training (more later)
  - ✓ **At least two in each group to hold 2-Day First Aid qualification**
  - ✓ **Allows expeditions to be held in remote terrain.**

- ✓ A practice expedition
  - ✓ 2 days and 2 nights camping out
  - ✓ In similar terrain to your Qualifying expedition
  - ✓ In the same group as your Qualifying expedition, or as close as practical.

- ✓ Planning and training – details will follow
  - ✓ Refresh expedition skills for more demanding expedition level
  - ✓ Your route, menu, and getting all your gear ready
  - ✓ Choose and plan your project

- ✓ The Qualifying Expedition
  - ✓ **4 days / 3 nights in progressively more challenging terrain to Silver**
  - ✓ **You need to be in expedition area night before (so 4 nights away)**
  - ✓ Your presentation, about 2 weeks after the expedition

Red text – additional requirements for Gold expeditions in addition to Silver

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Expedition Plans

✓Likely to run more than one set of dates for levels due to high numbers.

✓Schools are typically happy to agree to one or two days of absence from school to complete one of the longer DofE expeditions – let them know as soon as you have your expedition dates confirmed..

Level of Award	Dates
Bronze / Silver Practice/ Gold Practice	• April – June (aware of SQA Nat 5, Higher and Adv. Higher windows)
Silver Assessed/ Gold Assessed	• Mid/late August (preference given to participants not returning to School) • September (incl. 13th- 15th Sept Autumn holiday weekend) • Early October

- All of our activities are run in line with Scouting rules for safety relevant for the type of expedition and location/route

- We will always try to have others from your Unit included in your Group, providing they have signed up as well, so you should know others in your expedition.

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How much does it cost?

Level Guideline total SEEE expedition costs	**Breakdown** Training, practice and assessed expeditions as required
Bronze £15-35 (District/Unit/SEEE)	• Training – £0-10 (2 training days) • Qualifying Expedition – £15-25 (2 days, Pentlands)
Silver £70-130	• Training – £10-20 (2 training days) • Practice Expedition (2 days/2 nights) – £50-70 • Qualifying Expedition (3 days/2 nights) – £65-85
Gold £90-180	• Training – £10-20 (2 training days) • Advanced First Aid – £30 (optional – 2 in each group need to hold) • Practice Expedition (2 days/2 nights) – £30-60 • Qualifying Expedition (4 days/4 nights) – £50-100

Parents are asked to arrange transport to/from the expedition area for their participants, and we encourage car sharing.

Visit these web pages to see more detailed information on:

- expected costs for expeditions in 2024
- how SEEE is funded and the use of these funds

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We understand that everyone's situation is unique, and it's completely okay to have concerns about joining an expedition. Worries about costs, having the right gear, or doubts about your fitness level, medical conditions, or disabilities are all valid. But guess what? We believe adventures are for everyone!

That's why we're committed to making expeditions accessible to all Explorers, regardless of your circumstances. We've helped many adventurers just like you to experience the thrill of an expedition, and we're excited to help you too.

Don't let anything hold you back from this amazing opportunity. Reach out to any of us confidentially, and let's work together to make your expedition dream a reality. We're here to support you every step of the way!

- John Buchanan (SE Scotland Assistant Regional Commissioner – Explorer Scouts)
  Email: explorers@sesscouts.org.uk
- David Newton (SE Scotland Regional Advisor – Activities / Craigalmond District Explorer Scout Commissioner)
  Email: david.newton@sesscouts.org.uk
- Cheryl Turpie (Borders District Explorer Scout Commissioner)
  Email: cheryl@borderscouts.org.uk
- Hellen Wootton (Braid – District Explorer Scout Administrator)
  Email: braid.desa@gmail.com
- David Siddle (Pentland – DofE Co-Ordinator)
  Email: dave.siddle@pentlandscouts.org.uk

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What to do after this call…

- Make up your mind about taking part in an expedition:
  - Use the information we have shared tonight, and on our website.
  - Email us if you have any questions expeditions@sesscouts.org.uk

- Use our form to ask for your decision by 26 November:
  - Please let us know if you want to take part.
  - We will also ask for some information so we can work out final numbers for training, practice and qualifier expeditions.

- We will then complete plans and confirm dates and costs for the expeditions and send you an invitation to book your place and pay a small deposit.

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Contacting us

- ✓ We can't see you at the end of a weekly Explorer meeting to catch-up!
- ✓ We are here to help, and want you all to complete your expeditions successfully, so:
  - ✓ Please do contact us at any time by email for any questions – we can arrange a follow-up call if that will help.
  - ✓ Please reply promptly to all messages.
  - ✓ If you aren't receiving emails, check your Spam/Junk folder first, and then contact us to see if there is a problem.

If you have any questions, comments, concerns or feedback regarding expeditions please email us on:

expeditions@sesscouts.org.uk

- **Remember for general DofE questions (apart from expedition ones) contact your DofE Leader in your Unit/District.**
- **If you still need help, contact dofe@sesscouts.org.uk.**

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Join our team of enthusiastic volunteers!

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We're all about sharing our time and skills to guide Explorers through unforgettable expeditions. We believe in the power of teamwork – 'many hands make light work' – and provide flexible options to fit in with whatever time you wish to offer alongside your other commitments.

Volunteering here isn't just about giving back – there is fun, being part of a friendly team, the reward in helping young people discover adventure and develop essential life skills, and satisfaction in making a positive difference.

Please do contact us using this short form

We'll get in touch for a quick chat - we are flexible and will suggest options we hope are practical for you. Here are some possibilities…

- **Quartermasters** – managing and preparing equipment for groups to use
- **DofE Leader** – provide occasional guidance, support and encouragement to Explorers doing DofE at one of the Units
- **DofE Support** – behind the scenes there is communication, record keeping, signing off progress – all of which can be done by anyone with a computer and basic skills.
- **DofE Assessor** - training with DofE and registering with Scouts Scotland to confirm that the DofE standards have been met
- **Expedition Skills training** – help out at one or more training sessions with expedition skills such as map reading, navigation, basic first aid, camping
- **Expedition Supervision** – being part of the adult team supervising/supporting Explorers during the expedition
- **First Aid Training** - help train or validate First Aid Skills for expedition participants

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Open Forum Questions