

TO ALL ASSESSORS

I must thank all of you for the magnificent effort that was made to make our Easter Expeditions go so well despite the weather. It is only by the continued efforts of all of you that this can happen, and I am very grateful. I did however make a few observations that may help to raise our standards of training and safety. While I must accept the responsibility for many of the omissions and errors, they can only be prevented from happening again by the efforts of us all. I leave these comments for your careful attention, and action as necessary.

1. On the whole assessors appear not to want a great deal of free time, but would prefer to be working all the time. I can try to arrange things slightly differently next year, but if we are to keep our petrol costs as low as possible, then you must be prepared to wait in an area, sometimes for a couple of hours, between checks in the same area. We cannot expect the Boys to pay for our impatience.
2. A few people were not phoning in regularly to receive messages and to say how groups are getting on. The lack of information this causes can waste a great deal of time, effort and money on the part of others.
3. Mileage logs were very successful indeed, and would be very much more so if everyone filled them in accurately and in detail for every single DEA trip. Your future cooperation will help considerably.
4. Groups left on expedition without their ID cards or the telephone number of the Capel Curig phone for emergency. Will those on base Camp duty please ensure that this cannot recur - it is too late to do very much when they are about to start walking.
5. While the Gold group were aware of the possibility of having to use bad weather routes, these were not prepared in detail beforehand. This led to a most unfortunate misunderstanding on the Sunday. It is doubtful whether there is enough time on the Sunday afternoon of the training weekend to plan these in sufficient detail. Therefore they must be prepared between the weekend and Easter, and the detailed plans submitted before Easter. Will future instructors of Gold Groups please note, and ensure that this important job is properly done.
6. Many of the Bronze groups seemed to be rather lacking in practical experience, sometimes to an alarming degree. Some Boys had never had the opportunity to try lighting a primus, and tried to cook only on gas. Some Boys had only ever pitched one sort of tent, and that only once: they were most confused when trying to pitch a different type. The standard of packing rucksacks was abysmally low on the whole. Many Boys didn't appear to have a clue about how to choose what equipment to take with them on expedition, and as a result tried to take far too much with them.

Thanks once again for a job well done, and I hope that if we can correct some of the omissions we appear to have made, our teaching standards will be that much higher.

Yours most sincerely,

*Colin Marshall*