

# **The Buckden Challenge**

***A Leaders' Guide***

# **The Buckden Challenge –** **A Leader's Guide**

The Buckden Challenge is a series of simple tasks, generally of a problem solving or team working nature, spread over a course of approximately 4.5 kilometers. The course begins and ends in the grounds of Buckden House, so generally no transport is required.

There is a route which needs to be followed with some precision, as the tasks must be located and completed in a particular order. This navigation, which the group is expected to complete with the minimum of aid, is an integral part of the challenge.

The navigation takes the form of a series of directives, which are generally provided by the group leader in exchange for a successfully completed task. Each directive provides clues and directions to the next activity, but no further; the children do not know the overall route taken by the Buckden Challenge. Clearly, telling the group where the challenge goes at the outset rather defeats the object, but this must be balanced against the anxiety produced when confronted by a task of unknown duration. The activities themselves require leader input, in the form of safety supervision and briefings – the tasks often have specific aims and rules.

The route is not remote; 80% is on quiet country roads with generally good visibility. The greatest altitude gained is 270metres. An average adult could reach Buckden House in half an hour from any point on the challenge, and the navigation is that of a level to read a simple road map. Nonetheless, the weather can be harsh, and a slow moving group can easily become cold. Therefore, at least one group leader must fulfill the criteria set out in the risk assessment.

This activity is created for the use of children in Years 4 to 7. The required standard of navigation, and ability to solve problems creatively, is based upon the capabilities of an average group of upper primary age. It is expected that most groups will require a bare minimum of 'steering' in respect of both navigation and carrying out the tasks safely, successfully and without cheating.

## **Equipment for Group and Leader**

See the risk assessment, and talk to an instructor at the morning meeting, for clothing suggestions for various conditions. A flask of warm juice is pleasant for stops over the cold months, while in hot weather the children should be encouraged to carry their own water (and not drink it in the first

ten minutes). A compass and a minimum of two maps (marked 'Buckden Challenge') are required if the group are to be responsible for their own fate. These are kept in the Instructors' Office next to the Lounge, please look after them and return them to their place after you have finished. A watch, and pencil and paper, are invaluable for timing tasks and recording the points awarded. The Buckden House safety sack is mandatory, please be sure that you have it and know what it contains.

### The Route

This is best determined in conjunction with the map. This is for the benefit of the leader, so that if a group goes the wrong way or misreads a clue, at least you know where you all should be heading.

- At the main gate by the cattle grid, turn right along the road. Pass the village green and the shop to reach the big car park. By the nearest entrance is an information board (task 1).
- From the car park follow the road (not the Rakes track, roman road, going steeply up the hill!) northwards towards Cray. After a kilometer a small roadside quarry will be seen on the right (task 2).
- From the quarry head south for roughly 100metres (back where you have come from). Take the next road turning down to the right (it was on the left when you passed it on the way up). Immediately beyond a road junction at the bottom of the hill is Stubbing Bridge. Over the bridge and on the right is a gate and a stile (signposted); through here and upstream for 100metres (task 3).
- From the bridge once more, head west along the road for 800metres. The river Wharfe will be seen to the left just before the village of Hubberholme. On the right before the impressive stone road bridge is the entrance to the churchyard (task 4).
- Cross the bridge with The George public house ahead. Left along the road for 700metres to a gate and signpost on the left. Leave the road here and take the obvious track around the side of the meadow, with the river on the left. After roughly 250metres a stand of young trees is passed on the left, where Cray Beck joins the river on the far bank (task 5).
- Continue along the riverside path over a stile to where the road is reached once more. To the left is Buckden bridge; over this the village will be seen ahead. Back at the main gate, go into the grounds and follow the boundary wall to the right for a few metres (task 6).

A final, fundamental point; lavatories are to be found in Buckden car park (public) Those by The George in Hubberholme may only be used if you buy drinks at the pub first!.

## **Safety**

**There is no mobile phone coverage in this area. There are radios which may be taken out, and farms and pubs will have telephones to use in an emergency.**

**The best form of accident procedure is avoidance – know the route, keep the risk assessment in mind, and get into the habit of wondering “what if...”. Forethought and good control of the group will remove 95% of problems immediately. If you are not sure that a group member will respond to your instructions – do not take them.**

**It is generally considered that with the non-remote nature of the activity, first aid knowledge, rather than a full qualification, is an appropriate standard to reach as a leader. If you are unsure whether you have sufficient knowledge, consider:**

- i) treatment of a broken arm (slips and trips)**
- ii) treatment of an unconscious casualty (banged head, faint)**
- iii) choking (on food, chewing gum)**
- iv) cuts (barbed wire, broken glass)**

**If in doubt, the school nurse should be able to help – or why not consider a first aid course?**

**Good practice suggests a ratio of one leader to twelve young people be observed, as a minimum. Any leader alone with a party must be very confident of the route, and their ability to cope with any situations which might arise. However, it is not recommended that groups combine to gain the security of two leaders.**

## **Buckden Challenge Risk Assessment**

To lead this activity unaccompanied you must have

- i) read and understood this document and
- ii) have experience with groups, and have a grasp of First Aid and
- iii) have the approval of the Head of Centre or designated other

### **Hazard**

### **Risk**

### **Control**

Near water at task 3.  
Hypothermia, drowning.

Consequences fatal in high flood, but very low probability of mishap under most conditions.

Good supervision, staff nearby if in doubt. Day cancelled if too wet. To be decided by centre staff.

Falls and rope burn at task 5.

Moderate probability, consequences moderate also.

Ropes to be tied no more than 2m above ground. Good group discipline, cover up bare skin against rope burns in hot weather.

Run over by road traffic, especially around Buckden bridge and Hubberholme.

Low probability, with potentially fatal consequences.

Good alertness, group practice in avoiding traffic e.g. single file, off road if necessary. Torches available, reflective vests kept in top of safety sack in case of poor visibility.

Environmental injury, both cold and heat related; sunburn, dehydration, hypothermia.

Moderate probability of uncomfortable, not dangerous, consequences.

Consult centre staff for best clothing and equipment options

## An Accident Procedure

This document is *not* an excuse for not thinking.

Think before acting, always.

On this activity you are never far from assistance. Be realistic about your capabilities, unaided. There is a fine balance between admirable and effective self-sufficiency and the Hippocratic injunction, 'first, do no harm'.

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Consider</u>	<u>Suggestions</u>
Lost	If you are on a road then you are probably not too lost!	Backtrack to a place of certainty, e.g. the last task.
Child too hot	What is the state of the other children? Is there much drinking water available for the rest?	Give fluids, rest in shade. Stream water can cool the head, neck and wrists. Hubberholme church is a cool haven.
Child too cold	What is the state of the other children?	Add clothing, especially hats and waterproofs. Re-warm at Hubberholme church, or reduce time spent on subsequent tasks.
Injured child	Is there danger to anyone else? Can you treat the casualty effectively? Is the casualty mobile? Where is the nearest instructor?	Remove from source of danger if possible. Use first aid kit in safety sack. Return to Buckden or telephone 01756 760254.

## **Tasks**

It is strongly recommended that the Buckden Challenge is run as an inter group competition. The centre can normally award a small prize at the end of the week. Each task can earn ten points at the leader's discretion, five for a successfully completed task (with the minimum of aid) and the further five points for style, good teamwork, good company and so on. Remember to record the number of points awarded!

The following describes the tasks, and the briefings for them which must be given by the group leader. The clues which must be given by the leader when a task is completed are also here. Those written clues which may be found inside some of the task equipment are also described, in case the clues are lost, equipment stolen, etc.

- Go to the cattle grid by the main gate. Make available a map and compass. Read out: "Head north along the road for around 200metres. At the entrance to the big car park, name one of Buckden's dances".
- Task 1; the visitors' information board provided by the National Park has other interesting facts, also. When a dance has been named, read out: "Go to the quarry north of here, on Buckden Wood Lane. Your map will help you find the task there."
- Task 2 consists of an exclusion zone, inside which will be a large container or barrel. Inside this, in its turn, is a smaller pot containing a clue; the smaller pot has a handle. Outside the exclusion zone is a pipe and a piece of string with hooks on the end. By placing the string through the pipe, a simple fishing rod can be created, and the clue pot 'hooked'. Once the clue has been read, it is returned to its place and all is left as you found it. Read out: "Your task is to gain your next clue, which will tell you where to go. It is inside the no-go area, in a container with a handle. The only objects which may go into the area are the pipe, the string, and the hooks. You have ten minutes to complete the task." The clue should read – retrace your steps, then turn to find Stubbing bridge. Leave the road and head upstream to locate your next task by a crooked tree.
- Task 3 consists of a pipe, hanging from a tree. The pipe is sealed watertight at the bottom, but with pierced sides; inside the pipe is a plastic container with the next clue inside. Nearby is a water container secured with a length of string. The aim is for the children to seal the holes, fill the pipe with water, and float the clue pot to where it can be easily reached. When the clue has been read, things must be returned to their original condition. On reaching the task, read out: "Your task is to gain your next clue. It is inside this pipe, which must not be moved or tipped, in a waterproof container. The pipe can be touched, but in no way moved. There is equipment

- nearby to help you.” The clue should read – Go toward the setting sun. You will be given your next task at the church door.
- **Task 4** takes place in the rather fine church of St. Michael’s in Hubberholme. Stop at the church door – this is almost always unlocked, but the handle can sometimes require a bit of effort – and read out: “The pews in this church are hand-carved by a famous woodcutter called Thomson. He was so proud of his workmanship that he carved a little mouse on it to mark it as his. Your task is to count the mice in the church”. As the present Warden claims that there are upwards of seventy in there, accept no offer of fewer than ten, and ask to be shown them! Please encourage the children to respect the place, which has had a church on the site for over eight hundred years. When a reasonable answer has been given, read out the next clue: “Take the quickest road back to Buckden House, then follow the river track. Your next task will be on the left, in the trees, and is marked by rope”.
  - **Task 5** is the classic Flash Flood. Available equipment will be ropes, and the trees in the task area. Read out: “In ten minutes a flood will rush through this area, and will wash away anything less than half a metre off the ground. Save the entire team by getting everyone more than half a metre off the ground, using the ropes provided. The team must stay off the ground for a minute, and people are not allowed more than two metres up”. Some help may be needed with tying knots, although one example should suffice. After the flood has passed, read out: “Now go home. Inside the gate, walk along the wall to the right to find the equipment for the last challenge”.
  - **Task 6**, the last, requires full team effort. Using the mountain rescue stretcher, a solid member of the group, (or the leader) is to be carried to the front door of Buckden House, and arrive intact. They must be strapped in as far as possible, and all are to help carry. Please return all equipment to its proper place. Read out: “Your last task involves carrying an individual to the front door as safely as possible, using the equipment provided. The individual is to be secured in place.” When this task is completed and all equipment replaced, congratulate the team on completing the task, and work out the score!

## **Clue Sheet**

**Task 2 clue: retrace your steps, then turn to find Stubbing Bridge. Leave the road and head upstream to locate your next task by a crooked tree.**

**Task 3 clue: Go toward the setting sun. You will be given your next task at the church door.**