

## SCHOOLS HEBRIDEAN SOCIETY

### MEMORANDUM TO LEADERS

A leader of an expedition must have a clear idea of the object of his expedition and the responsibilities that his position carries, and he must also communicate these to his team of officers. He must anticipate and decide the course of action in situations where "both may conflict. The • success of the expedition depends to a large extent on his consideration of these problems in the months before the practical work of preparing the actual expedition begins. He must be concerned about the expedition as an entity in itself and totally committed to it. A sense of responsibility must permeate the hundreds. of detailed tasks entailed in the planning? execution and proper conclusion of the expedition. It should be borne in mind that acceptance of leadership commits the leader for approximately 12 months, at least 3 of these after the expedition has taken place.

S.H.S. expeditions are distinguished from other organisations' trips by their theme of spontaneity and freedom for their members to choose what they wish to do within a minimum of rules consistent with the safety of -individuals and the reputation of the Society. The primary purpose for the expedition members is to enjoy themselves, often by gaining experience of a different way of life from that which they are used to. Preferably this enjoyment should arise from activities growing out of the members' own interests and initiatives, encouraged and- helped by the leader and officers if required.

It should be the aim of the leader to provide as wide a range of opportunities as, possible, within the confines of the equipment available and of his officers' talents. If possible, the following possibilities should be provided - hill walking, climbing, canoeing, sailing, swimming, sketching, writing, music, singing and various more academic project work. It is also considered advisable to hold a quiet session each evening, perhaps religious in nature; the actual organisation of this should be decided by the leader and his officers.

A member may opt out of any or all of these activities if he wishes-, and may lie in the sun all day and every day. The most effective way of countering this would be to highlight the missed opportunities that are occurring. Encouragement rather than compulsion is the most preferable basis for an expedition. In order to allow such spontaneity and freedom, all positive and valuable aspects of life relevant to an expedition must be planned in advance, bearing in mind that you should cater for the whole personality of each member. Enthusiasm by a leader and his officers is extremely important, and is the more easily achieved because it is infectious.

The dealings of a leader .with his officers are of extreme importance. From the moment that you receive notice of a confirmation of an officer appointment he is your responsibility. Although you can recruit officers yourself it is important to realise that the ultimate decision regarding the appointment of officers is taken by the Director in charge-of officers. You can recruit and recommend but not appoint. It is vital that you try to meet your officers before the expedition, preferably individually and as a group. A circular specifically to officers is also recommended.

As soon as you receive the application form and references of your expedition members, they are also your sole responsibility. No-one else will contact them unless you specifically ask them to do so, with the exception of the Directors of travel and finance, and it is your business to know of these contacts anyway. Keep in close contact with your expedition and also with the parents. They in many cases are providing the finance and are interested and concerned about the plans for the expedition. Try to encourage the expedition members to think about and plan for the summer before the expedition.

The society has been re-organised in such a way that leaders now deal directly with the Director of Expeditions who chairs a 'Management Committee' which meets five or six times before the expedition leaves London. Sitting on this committee are the Directors and Executive Officers who are directly concerned with the aspects of your expedition; i.e. food,- equipment, boats, travel, finance etc. and it is imperative that a leader attends these meetings

during his term of office and uses them to discuss doubts and queries.

Leaders are however responsible to the Board of Directors and are invited to attend Board Meetings held three times a year usually on the same weekend as Management Committee meetings.

The Board will give a leader a number of directives, both in this memorandum and during personal discussion. They are anxious however, to preserve your freedom and independence as a leader. An expedition and its objectives can be moulded by the leader and he can give it his own specific bias and personality, with the general principles and objects of the Society always in view. This does imply that the leader does acquire a proportionate responsibility, which extends to the happiness and safety of all personnel, and to the reputation of the Society and its hundreds of members.

This responsibility is a very serious one and should not be underestimated. It is easy to allow an accident to happen and impossible to rectify it afterwards. It is easy to lose a good reputation, and often impossible to win it back. Please find enclosed the following articles:

1. Check list
2. Safety regulations for sailing
3. Safety regulations for climbing and walking
4. Details of expense claims

The appended check list is intended to be an aid to your planning, and in no sense is it a set of instructions on how to plan and run an expedition. How you do that is up to you, but do not forget the responsibility that this implies.

Schools Hebridean Society

. November 1974