



TGO Challenge 2024 – Final Details

Please read this document carefully as it contains further information to help prepare you for this year's TGO Challenge, including details of Challenge Control, the phone numbers you will need, your Challenge number and an updated list of participants. Recent wet weather serves to reiterate the possibility of rivers in spate necessitating long detours and in some cases a wait for water levels to go down. Hard frosts, and indeed snow, are not unheard of in May and, hopefully this year, we might see a bit of sun.

CHALLENGE CONTROL
VOICE CALLS – 07562 083 996 TEXTS AND WHATSAPP MESSAGES – 07593 185 124

If the voice call number is busy you may also use the text number for a short call but please **do not** text the voice call number.

We no longer use a landline number at Challenge Control. If you have this in your phone from previous crossings, please delete it.

BEFORE YOU START

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY FORM

If you have not done so already, please complete this [online form](#) by 7th April. **Completion of this form is a requirement for participating in TGO24.** Should you need to make any changes before the start of TGO24 contact the Coordinator. Please **DO NOT** submit a second form.

We will not pass any comment or judgement on your fitness. It is up to you to ensure you have a suitable level of fitness to participate and we encourage you to get out and test your capabilities. If you have any long-term health problems or other concerns about your health, we strongly advise you to seek advice from your health professional, making sure they are fully aware of the nature of the Event.

We also require details of your emergency contact(s). It is important that they:

- are not participating in TGO24
- give their consent to Challenge Control holding their details
- know you are participating in and understand the nature of the Event
- understand that Challenge Control (and the Police, if Mountain Rescue are involved) may contact them if you have missed a phone-in or there is concern for your welfare

- have access to your GPS tracker beacons/map if you are using one.

Information given will be held securely, treated confidentially and deleted immediately after the Event. Only the Coordinators, Challenge Control staff and, if relevant, the emergency services will have access to it. Please note, due to data protection regulations we can no longer hold emergency contact details on your route sheet – any information given there has been deleted.

GPS TRACKERS

If you are planning to use a GPS tracker, also known as personal locator beacons (PLB) or satellite messengers, please give a link to your personal map when completing the In Case of Emergency Form. **You must still phone in as planned even if we have access to your beacons.**

Your tracker will not be checked by Challenge Control unless you have missed a phone-in or we are concerned about your welfare. Please **DO NOT** use the Coordinators' or Challenge Control's email address or phone numbers as one of your regular contacts.

We have had several instances of devices failing, causing anxiety to family and friends whilst the Challenger has been, thankfully, fine. Therefore, we will not initiate a search just because your



Photo: Hein Hogenhuis

tracker is not moving – we need some other indicator, such as a missed phone-in, that you may be in trouble. You should discuss with your emergency contact what they will do if your tracker stops transmitting. Challenge Control will, of course, be happy to talk to your emergency contact(s) about your welfare.

ACCOMMODATION DETAILS

If you haven't already done so, please send us the name and phone number of any accommodation you have pre-booked. This helps us greatly when trying to locate overdue challengers and may prevent a distressing call to your emergency contact. Please add the information to your route sheet in the overnight halt column and send it to us.

SETTING OFF

SIGN-OUT REGISTERS

You can sign out at any time from your start point establishment on your allocated start day. Contact details for start points can be found in the [Event Details](#) and at www.tgochallenge.com. The registers are normally held at reception, the exception being Glenelg where the register hangs in the porch of Mrs Davidson's house, Taobh na Mara, which is close to the War Memorial.

Please be patient. Remember that we must fit in with the normal business hours of the establishments that kindly agree to hold the registers, so please don't get upset if there is a delay. If there are any issues with access to sign-out registers at any start point, then you may text Challenge Control instead, but you must wait for your text to be acknowledged before setting out. Someone at Challenge Control will be available to acknowledge any texts which arrive before 9am during the start days.

Lochailort starters – please note that the Lochailort Inn has re-opened and the TGOC register will be held in reception.

If you are looking for accommodation or a meal, including breakfast, please contact Barry at hello@thelochailortinn.co.uk.

If for any reason you are unable to start, you must inform the Coordinators as soon as possible and cancel any accommodation you have booked.

ALONG THE WAY

CHALLENGE CONTROL

This is your point of contact during the Event for regular phone-ins, weather forecasts, to notify us of a change in your route or if you need to retire from the Event.

VOICE CALLS – 07562 083 996

TEXTS or WHATSAPP – 07593 185 124

- Please add both numbers to your phone before you set off.
- Open 9am-9pm daily from Thursday 9th May to Friday 24th May. If you have enough signal and charge, please ring rather than text as we prefer to talk to you when possible. Overnight please send a text or, in an emergency, phone the voice call line.
- If the voice call number is busy you may also use the text number for a short call but please do not text the voice call number. If both lines are busy, please send a text. Please do not send a text to the voice call line.
- Give your name(s), Challenge number(s) and location and date/time each time you phone or text.
- A friendly and confidential ear available if you need help, advice or encouragement, feel unsafe or uncomfortable or need to report any concerns.
- Staffed by experienced Challengers – Mick Blackburn, Gayle Faulkner, Pauline Marshall and Ali Ogden.

We will be based in Newtonmore until Friday 17th May and will then move to The Park Hotel, Montrose, for the remainder of the Challenge.

PHONE-INS

These are the core of our safety system.

- You must contact Challenge Control from every phone-in point on your route sheet. Failure to do so may result in the emergency services being contacted unnecessarily. Why not put reminders in your phone now?
- If you have enough signal and charge, please ring rather than text/WhatsApp as we prefer to talk to you when possible.
- Please phone **as soon as you arrive at your phone-in point** – send a text/WhatsApp if after 9pm. Do not wait until the morning – it is all too easy to forget!
- Texts can go astray or be delayed, occasionally arriving after a subsequent one. To avoid confusion **please include the time and date in the body of the message. Do not assume a text has been received until you have had a reply.**



Photo: Peter Moss

- ❑ **Do not** send important or time sensitive messages on Facebook, Messenger, Twitter or Instagram, by email or the Coordinators usual contact phone numbers (07714329917 / 07769952085/ 07786628105) after 8th May as these may not be regularly monitored during the Event.
- ❑ If you are behind schedule, **please phone on the designated day**, or as soon as you have a mobile signal. Do not wait until you reach your official phone-in point. Equally, if you are early, please contact Control to let them know you are ahead of schedule.
- ❑ We're happy to hear from you, especially solo participants and those on higher routes, in between planned phone-ins. If you have a signal, pass a payphone, or can use a landline, make the most of it and let Challenge Control know where you are.
- ❑ If you decide to change your route, or are delayed, let us know personally, and **not by a message through a third party**, at the first opportunity.
- ❑ If you have to retire from the Event, let Challenge Control know as soon as possible and definitely within 24 hours.
- ❑ Overseas participants – if you intend to buy a new SIM card on arrival in the UK please let Challenge Control know your new number as soon as possible, and definitely before you set off from the West Coast.
- ❑ Please ensure that you cancel any booked accommodation if you retire, have to re-route, or are in any way unable to keep your booking.

ACCESS

Please see the [Event Details](#) for general information and check the [Access](#) page on the Challenge website before you leave for specific information, including missing bridges. In particular, we ask

you to respect the reasonable estate requests in areas such as Glen Muick and Glen Mazeran.

FORESTRY AND STORM DAMAGE

There were several problems with access and facilities following a series of winter storms and the amount of trees blown down as a result. This year, most tracks/paths are open or at least, obstacles can be circumnavigated.

- ❑ **Glen Doll** still has a diversion in place for the lower part of Jock's Road via the Dounalt Way on the south side of the White Water, accessed by a footbridge at NO247767.
- ❑ The path through **Glen Feshie** is currently open, however, care needs to be taken in those areas that were damaged and experienced some landslips.
- ❑ The bridge across the **River North Esk in Edzell** remains closed and is unlikely to re-open in time for TGOC24, so Challengers will have to re-route, probably to go via the bridge at Gannochy (NO 600 709).
- ❑ The campsites at **North Water Bridge** and **Brechin** were badly damaged by storms in 2023; however, work continues on them and they both hope to be open in time for TGOC24.
- ❑ **The Cowal Way in Glenbranter** has been washed out by the Allt Robuic burn at NS 105 967. The path is closed as there is currently no official diversion. There is severe damage from landslides affecting the tracks to the north of the burn so these are also impassable. A possible, but unofficial, 8km long diversion has been emailed to all Portavadie starters. Due to the severity of the damage this may also be a problem for TGOC25.

We're Waiting for your Call!

It can be wonderful hearing of Challengers' adventures but at Challenge Control it is the phone calls that we don't get which make the job stressful. The tale below from 2018 illustrates just how important it is to phone in on time, or as soon as possible if you are delayed.

Day 2 – 9pm

The phone line is officially closed for the night but at Control we still have work to do. A review of the Challenge ledger gives a list of 15 individuals or groups who have failed to phone in as scheduled. A risk analysis is done on each bearing in mind their experience, type of route, age, confirmed sightings, whether solo or a group and any other risk factors. After careful consideration we text reminders and plan to re-evaluate in the morning.

Day 3 – 9am

Several apologetic messages account for most of the "naughty list". Time for the detective work to start. For those that have given names of B&Bs or campsites we phone the establishments. This takes more off the list, but concern crystallises around one Challenger who was never booked at the remote hotel on his sheet. As other Challengers phone in we start asking about sightings of our missing few and this one in particular.

Noon

A few more have phoned in and we have confirmed sighting of others – most simply forgot but a few have been delayed by slow progress or injury. Another attempt to contact the Challengers directly and one answers. Just two left now – a pair of first timers and an experienced solo Challenger. We know how much a phone call to an emergency contact can cause distress and worry so it's a last resort. We risk assess the two cases again – call log, ledger and route sheets are double checked – and decide to wait another few hours.

3pm

Still nothing. Time to phone the contacts. The pair are quickly accounted for so just our solo Challenger left. Surprisingly his emergency contact had not heard from him for many months and was unaware of his participation on the Challenge – not helpful from our point of view and worrying for his family. We search the start lists and route sheets for those on similar routes looking for late starters who will, in effect, sweep the route and send texts asking for any sightings.

4pm

We have a sighting! Reports of him travelling very slowly on his first day under a huge pack and camping 10km short of his planned destination. He had declined offers of help and advice to send unnecessary gear home. We now know he is behind schedule rather than having walked through his phone-in point which narrows down a potential search area. We are minded to give him another night until . . .

5pm

A report comes in saying our missing Challenger left camp before several quicker Challengers but none of them passed him again. So, where is he? Lying injured out of sight of the track? Now we have serious concerns about his welfare.

Please ring us as soon as you arrive at your phone-in point. To us it is the day you are due to phone, rather than the place, which is most important. If you are behind schedule or struggling, check your phone for a signal and please, as soon as you can, ring and let us know.

We have a big decision to make. Phone calls are diverted to the Park reception. We have speculated much – theories he has travelled fast and gone through early were replaced with speculation he is moving slowly or has even gone home and not told us. Now we must draw together the facts: an experienced Challenger but no recent crossings, no direct contact from him, now nearly a day overdue, the phone-in point doesn't recognise his description and reports from other Challengers that he is struggling and/or injured. Yes, most likely he is just moving very slowly but there is a significant risk he isn't moving at all . . . We dial 999 and ask for the police.

6pm

After a frantic hour emailing route sheets to Mountain Rescue and defining the area he is likely to be in, we are now serving tea to two Montrose Police officers being reassured we have done the right thing – to have waited longer would have lost valuable hours of daylight. Mountain Rescue are walking the relevant section of his route from both ends and police are visiting his home address to check he hasn't returned home. Two more reported sighting of him "being in a bad way" heighten our concerns.

10pm

The search has been called off as the light fades. There have been several difficult phone calls to his family who are understandably distressed, but we can offer no reassurance. We now start preparing the next "naughty list". A bed is set up by the phone in the Control room but not much sleep is had amid nightmares of losing our first-ever Challenger.

Day 4 – 5am

Mountain Rescue resume search.

9am

A text from one of the late starters tells us he walked with him for a day but left him camping a few miles short of his phone-in point. We inform the police just as they contact us on another line to say he has been found. The cheer at Challenge Control is probably audible throughout Montrose. We can now focus on the next overdue list.

Noon

We finally speak to the Challenger. He is unaware of the anxiety caused and plans to continue but after a frank discussion we advise him to stop and retired him from the Event. It has taken four days to walk two days of his route, he is unwilling to lighten his load and seems unconcerned at the level of concern caused.

Our elation is now tinged with frustration. This whole episode was preventable. There was a good signal where the Challenger camped on his first night. A phone call to Control telling us he was behind schedule would have prevented his family's distress, our anxiety and many hours of Police and Mountain Rescue time . . .



LOCH NESS FERRY

Gordon Menzies has confirmed he, or one of his colleagues, will sail from Temple Pier (NH 528 300), a mile or so North and East on the A82 out of Drumnadrochit, at approximately 8am and 4-5pm – please note times may vary. We have informed Gordon of everyone who has the ferry on their route sheet and will disseminate how to confirm your place once we have the relevant information. Everyone planning to use the ferry should have received an email from us recently. **If you did not receive this email please contact the Coordinators.**

At busy times Gordon may need to cross several times, but he will endeavour to get everyone across to Inverfarigaig (NH 517 237) as soon as he can. The pier here has seen better days – please follow Gordon’s instructions when disembarking.

Please note you will need cash to pay for your ferry ride.

ACCOMMODATION AND REFRESHMENTS

The popularity of the Highlands and the closure of some businesses during the last few years means it may be difficult to find accommodation on the day. You are strongly advised to book prior to the Event. If you do not have a booking in a town or village where you intend to stay, be prepared to walk on and wild camp if necessary.

Many Highland communities have had bad experiences with “fly-camping” by roads and at beauty spots in recent years. We cannot risk the TGO Challenge’s good name by any association with this so let us set a good example to less experienced visitors. We ask you camp at least 1km outside of villages/towns, are not visible from any road or occupied property, and of course leave no trace when you depart.

- ❑ Spey Bridge Campsite at Newtonmore is closed.
- ❑ Laggan – accommodation is available in the village hall– contact Cathy Slimon cathyslimon@hotmail.co.uk
- ❑ Braemar Campsite – please **phone** to make a booking as spaces are reserved for Challengers.
- ❑ Ballater campsite – please **phone** or **email** for their Challenger’s discount.

A few notes on those places that make a special effort for the Challenge:

Ault na Goire, Errogie – Janet and Alex Sutherland offer camping and meals and will also hold parcels. Please contact them in advance (janet.sutherland@talk21.com or 01456 486 711) if you want one of Janet’s excellent meals.

Cougie Lodge – is open again for food, accommodation and camping (melaniejstrang@hotmail.com or 07773 491 262).

Callater Lodge – Bill Duncan and Mike Glass will once again welcome Challengers but please note:

- ❑ Numbers inside the Lodge, at any one time, will have to be limited for fire safety.
- ❑ They may provide an evening meal on some nights but please do not rely on this and **ensure you have sufficient food of your own.** Bacon rolls will be available in the mornings.
- ❑ Camping will be available as usual beside the lodge and the MBA bothy will be open.

Mar Lodge will be offering hot drinks and biscuits in the Stables from Wednesday 15th May to Sunday 19th May and will hold re-supply parcels but cannot take any responsibility for them. Please label clearly with your name, Challenge number and "TGO for collection" and send to: Rangers Office, Mar Lodge Estate, Braemar, Aberdeenshire, AB35 5YJ.

Newtonmore Hostel will be offering hot drinks and cakes to passing Challengers with donations for Cairngorm Mountain Rescue. The hostel itself will be open and there will also be limited camping spaces on the lawn, please book in advance if you can. We will hold parcels and can buy in gas canisters if requested prior to the Event. Please let us know in advance if sending a parcel.

Dalwhinnie – The Loch Erich Hotel usually allows camping in the grounds. Lee at the Dalwhinnie Old School Hostel will stock up with some basic supplies, including camping gas, for Challengers. Reservations can be made at dalwhinniehostel@gmail.com. The Apiary Café will be open for business and is very welcoming of Challengers.

Laggan – The Coffee Bothy is open (except Mondays) but please note it no longer has a shop. The Caoldair Pottery café at NM 620 936 will be open daily.

Glenesk Folk Museum (formerly The Retreat) are extending their cafe's opening hours to feed hungry Challengers from 8am to 8pm, including deliveries to Tarfside. Please note food needs to be pre-ordered and pre-paid. Click [here](#) for a menu and contact details.



Photo: Alan Sloman

St Drostan's, Tarfside will be open once again and run by Challenge volunteers Ann & Alvar Thorn and Gus & Rita McKinnon.

- Volunteers will be at St Drostan's hostel from late afternoon on Friday 17th to mid-morning on Thursday 23th May.
- The hostel will be open from 9am to 9pm. Outside of these hours it will be closed to everyone except residents.
- There will be drinks and light snacks such as cakes available but there will be no main meals or alcohol. **Please ensure you have sufficient food with you.**
- Hostel beds will be available on a first-come-first-served basis at a cost of £35 per night. Please note these cannot be prebooked and the hostel cannot hold resupply parcels.
- Camping will be available as usual on the playing field and has fresh water and toilet facilities available.
- You will be able to leave your name and Challenge number on a phone-in list at the hostel which will be passed to Control every evening.
- Please note: Cash payments only for both food and accommodation.**

Please note: the Coordinators do not have any control over the organisation of any formal or informal accommodation (other than St Drostan's), bothies or other gatherings so you use them at your own risk.

SUPPLIES

Where possible please use local shops – they will appreciate your custom. However, in many areas supply options are limited so you may need to post yourself resupply parcels. Most accommodation providers will be happy to hold a parcel for you but please ask permission in advance. Gas or other fuel for stoves cannot be posted so you need to think carefully about how you will access them.

A FEW RULES

Companions – dogs are not allowed on the Challenge. Anyone breaking this rule will be disqualified. Unofficial crossings are not permitted. The limit on numbers taking part in the Event have been set for sound reasons and with regard to visitor pressures. Anyone crossing with a non-Challenger will be disqualified, although friends or relatives may join you for a few days.

Walk Every Step – you may take transport away from your route for accommodation or supplies but you **MUST** return to the exact same spot before you continue. If you have a gap in your crossing due to injury, illness or fatigue, please let us know on Control. We appreciate this is your holiday and many people will have used valuable annual leave so you may of course continue if you wish but it will not count as a completed crossing.

Behaviour – we know the vast majority of Challengers do not need reminding of their responsibilities to others or that they are representing the Event as well as themselves. However, when the drinks flow in some of the towns and villages that welcome the Challenge every year, spirits can sometimes get a little high. Please be aware of how this may affect others.

Many communities, whilst welcoming the boost to their economies, remain anxious of the consequences of an influx of people, so the good reputation of the TGO Challenge is even more important than usual. The Event cannot be policed as such and neither do we want it to be. Its good name relies on the good behaviour, camaraderie, patience, helpfulness and tolerance of its participants. If you see, or are subjected to, any behaviour you feel is inappropriate please contact Challenge Control at the earliest opportunity.

For full Terms and Conditions click [here](#).

FINISHING YOUR CROSSING

FINISH CONTROL

When you reach the east coast, you need to make your way to **The Park Hotel, John Street, Montrose DD10 8RJ** to complete your Challenge. Motorised transport is now allowed! You must sign in at Challenge Control on or before 5pm on the 15th day of your crossing or 5pm on Friday 24th May, whichever is the earlier, so please ensure you allow enough time to get to Montrose.

You do not need to phone Challenge Control on your arrival at the east coast if you are travelling directly to the Park Hotel on the same day. If, however, you are staying overnight at your finish point, please send Control a text once you reach the East Coast.



Pin badges and TGOC24 mugs – if you have ordered either of these, they will be ready for collection in Montrose. If you have requested your mug is posted, please note, it will not be dispatched until the Challenge has finished. The deadline for ordering pin badges is 31st March but mugs will be available until mid-April. Click [here](#) to order and pay.

A WALK TO THE PARK

Reaching The Park Hotel from Montrose Station sometimes proves more difficult than navigating your way across Scotland!

From the train station, walk up to the roundabout with its swan sculpture. Keep right, crossing the road where the railing ends and go straight ahead up a small alley (Railway Close) to the High Street. Cross the High Street, turn left, then right down John Street. The Park Hotel is on the second corner.

CELEBRATING YOUR CROSSING

The smaller gatherings for the dinners are, due to positive feedback, being continued this year. The plan for 2024 is:

- Celebratory dinners held on Tuesday 21st, Wednesday 22nd, Thursday 23rd and Friday 24th May.
- 3 course meal, usually costing around £25, paid directly to The Park Hotel when arriving in Montrose.
- Maximum 100 people per evening.
- Plaques will be presented to those who have crossed 10, 20 or 30 times.
- There remains availability for Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. Thursday is currently over-subscribed and priority will be given to those who completed their Challenge on that Thursday.
- Confirmation will be requested during the second week of your crossing with flexibility to change the day if you get behind or ahead of schedule.

- Space is available for Challengers to bring a guest on most evenings, other than Thursday. Please request this via the Coordinators.

THE PARK HOTEL

We would like to say a very big thank-you to the Park Hotel. Throughout the forty-four year history of the TGO Challenge they have made its finish a wonderful event. They are a family-run business and have had a hard time, as have many hospitality businesses over the last few years. We very much want to support them as much as we can, so please consider attending one of the meals, having a drink at the bar or staying the night. Discounted rates are available to Challengers. Please ring 01674 663 400 or email reservations@parkmontrose.co.uk. Please note the discount is not available for online bookings. They also allow a number of Challengers to camp in the garden with breakfast and access to a shower at a reasonable rate. This must be pre-booked by phone or email.

PARCELS

You can post clean clothing to Challenge Control to pick up on your arrival in Montrose.

- Label clearly with your name and Challenge number.
- Post to: TGO Challenge, The Park Hotel, John Street, Montrose, Angus, DD10 8RJ.
- Do not send parcels until shortly before the Event as the hotel cannot store them for long periods.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Reunions – the Scottish Reunion will be held on October 4th-6th at the Balavil Hotel, Newtonmore, organised by Kirsten Paterson (kirsten@blueyonder.co.uk or 07734 959 594). Click [here](#) for details.

The Spring Gathering is usually held in the Peak District in March.

Hill and Mountain Walking Club – founded by Challengers, this meets regularly throughout the year both in the UK and abroad. You are welcome to come to a meet before joining. Details can be found [here](#).

2025 TGO CHALLENGE

The dates for TGOC 2025 will be 8th – 23th May.

We wish you a safe and successful crossing.

SAFETY

Emergencies

If the situation is serious, dial **999** or **112** and ask the Police to contact Mountain Rescue.

North American participants: please note that 911 does NOT work in the UK. If you are in difficulty but don't need the emergency services call Challenge Control for help and advice.

If you only have enough signal for a text you can contact the emergency services if you have previously registered. Text "register" to 999 and follow the instructions.

Phone-ins

These are our main safety system. Please phone as soon as you arrive at your phone-in point or whenever you have a signal if you are behind schedule.

Route changes

If you need to modify your route before the start of the Challenge, please update your route sheet, highlighting the changes, and send it to the Coordinators. During the Event, if you change your route at any point, or adopt a multiday FWA, inform Challenge Control as soon as possible by phone or text.

Maps and navigation

Whether using physical maps or electronic devices you should have a backup. Devices may run out of battery or malfunction and paper maps can blow away. Only OS or Harvey maps are appropriate for the TGO Challenge. Whatever you use, you must have sufficient leeway either side of your route to allow for intentional or unintentional diversions. We suggest 10km or the next major glen or route to either side as a minimum.

All members of your team must be able to navigate independently and have their own maps. We ask that you follow the Mountaineering Scotland and Mountain Rescue services request to download the OS Locate app, which provides an accurate grid reference. This is preferred to the What3Words app.

GPS trackers

These devices are a useful additional safety measure. They are not compulsory but if injured and unable to move, the emergency function is invaluable, especially if you walk solo. Their capacity to send tracker beacons can be useful to Challenge Control and the emergency services if there is concern for your welfare, as well as being a comfort to relatives and friends at home.

Equipment and fitness

You should ensure both you and your equipment are tried, tested and fit for purpose. For some this will be the first long backpacking trip for several years and it will be difficult to know how the body will react to the demands of the Challenge. Please don't hesitate to simplify your route – remember FWAs can also be Feeling Weary Alternatives!

As Challengers are experienced backpackers, we do not provide an equipment list but please note, even if you are planning a B&B based route, you must carry a suitable shelter. Also, be sure the contents of your first aid kit are suitable and in date.

Roads

Many Highland main roads are blighted by fast traffic and large lorries. Please try to avoid roads and take care when there is no other option. Overseas Challengers – don't forget vehicles drive on the left in the UK!

Lyme disease

Ticks are easily picked up when walking through bracken, heather or high grass and can infect you with Lyme Disease. Have a tick remover in your First Aid Kit and, if you're not familiar with the risks associated with ticks and how to deal with them, see [here](#). Please be vigilant!

Bothies, shelters and non-commercial accommodation

You need to make your own assessment of risks including the behaviour of others present; e.g. we know of at least one occasion when a bothy inhabitant created a serious fire risk endangering others in the building.

Human waste

This must be buried at least 15cm deep and at least 30m from watercourses. Soiled toilet paper and sanitary products should be carried out and disposed of appropriately.

Personal safety

In general, most people feel less at risk from others in the hills than in urban settings and the camaraderie of the Challenge hopefully reduces this risk further. Please be mindful of others and if you witness, or are a victim of, inappropriate behaviour please speak in confidence to Challenge Control.

River crossings

Your vetter may have warned you of potentially difficult crossings. However, bridges may have been lost over the winter and in extreme conditions even small streams can become difficult or impossible to cross safely. Lindy Griffiths's experience (click [here](#)) is a sobering account of just how dangerous a normally minor burn can be.

Please ensure you have the relevant skills and experience, and carry out your own risk assessment prior to crossing any watercourse. If you are in any doubt, and certainly if the water comes above your knees, we advise looking for a plan B. Be prepared to divert substantial distances upstream or put up your tent and wait for the water to recede.

Extreme weather

You should be prepared for Scotland's unpredictable climate! As well as rivers in spate, snow is often still lying on hills in May and fresh snow to lower levels is not uncommon. Scotland is one of the world's windiest countries, making walking conditions difficult at times, especially on the tops but not infrequently in the glens too. In particular the Lairig Ghru is a wind funnel which is why it requires a FWA. Prolonged hot weather brings the risk of dehydration, heat exhaustion and wildfires. All of these factors may necessitate using your FWA or modifying your route.

The [Mountain Weather Information Service](#) (MWIS) provides detailed 3-day forecasts and the [Met Office](#) also gives specific forecasts for some summits. Whilst Challenge Control will check both sites daily and circulate extreme weather warnings by text, you should check the relevant forecasts.

Once a Challenger: Always a Challenger

There are many past Challengers, who can no longer participate but who would like to be involved in some way. Do you know any? If so, please put them in contact with us. So, don't be a stranger and keep in touch!



Photo: Graham Gledhill

2024 Facts and Figures

From the initial 428 applicants for TGO 2024, we have 347 Challengers who have made it into the Final Details Participants List. We have received, processed, reviewed and approved 259 Route Sheets.

This year 138 (40%) of Challengers will be aiming to complete their first crossing. First time Challengers are the lifeblood of the Event so a very warm welcome to all of you. Amongst them are our two youngest Challengers who are both 18. Joshua James from Southampton and Benjamin Jossinet from Canada. Our youngest women, both aged 26 are Coralie Neil from Keswick and Freya Edwards from London. This year's octogenarian club consists of senior Challenger 85 years young John Burt along with Jean Turner, Patrick Deane, Gordon Selley, Maggie Hems and Ian Wright. Gordon is also part of our senior couple along with his wife Jenny.

We have 9 Challengers hoping to complete their 10th crossing. Bert Hendrikse has been trying for his 20th crossing for 5 years, with injuries and Covid restrictions preventing him even getting to his start point and a retirement last year – this year, surely, Bert! Fellow vetter Barbara Sanders will, we hope, only need one attempt at her 20th crossing. Good luck also to Graham Brookes who will be attempting crossing number 31 – edging ever closer to the record of 33.

Challengers from 14 countries outside of the UK will make up 23% of 2024 Challengers – a slight drop from last year's 26%. We're delighted to welcome our first ever Challengers from Iceland and Mexico. Our North American contingent consists of 32 from the USA and 7 from Canada making their way across the Atlantic. Top of the European league is the Netherlands with 17; followed by Germany with 8; 2 Challengers each from Belgium, France, Hungary and Iceland; and solo participants from Austria, Denmark and Sweden. We hope our regular participant from Barbados will remember to pack some sunshine in his rucksack but maybe our participants from Australia and Mexico can bring a little too.

Our most northerly Challenger is Malcolm Holloway who lives in Reykjavik just 2km north

of our other Icelandic participant Hrólfur Vilhjálmsson. Our most southerly Challenger is Ben Phillips from Western Australia. We are impressed he is crossing the oceans again having broken his leg shortly after arriving in Scotland last year.

There has been quite a shake up in the popularity of start points this year. 71 are starting from Oban jumping it from third to first place. Mallaig has increased its numbers to 68 and remains in second while Shiel Bridge numbers have almost halved to 56 and it is now in third place. Midtable, we have Strathcarron (30), Acharacle with quite a resurgence doubling its number (26), Torridon (22), Lochailort (21) and Dornie (16) who have dropped from third position 5 years ago to eighth. Also in double figures are Kilchoan (13) and Portavadie (10). Bottom of the league are, as usual, Plockton (9) Morar (8), Glenelg (7) and Ardrishaig (7) though it is good to see these gaining popularity. No risk of them being relegated, as they all offer excellent routes. Why not try one for TGO25?

Montrose has regained top spot as a finishing place with 100 – but don't forget to go to the beach before heading to Challenge Control for your certificate! The Charlton Farm strawberry tarts have lured 69 to Kinnaber Links pushing it ahead of St Cyrus (29). Stonehaven is next with 27 finishers while another 25 are heading just down the coast to atmospheric Dunnottar Castle. The Deeside Way continues to pull increasing numbers towards Aberdeen, 16 this year. Despite the high number of southerly routes this year only 12 are heading for Arbroath and another 12 to Lunan Bay. Seventeen Challengers are heading to finish points north of Aberdeen with many following the coast to Fraserburgh. In total there are 38 different finish points nominated with 18 Challengers finding a unique place to end their Challenge. Congratulations should go to Jayme Morgan's group for finding, we think, the first new finish point in quite a few years: Skatie Shore. We look forward to hearing whether it should be revisited!

TGO CHALLENGE SUPPORTERS

Ultralight Outdoor Gear

Ultralight Outdoor Gear was founded to provide backpackers with real choice when it comes to their gear and to present more information than is available elsewhere about each piece of kit. We use as much of the gear as we can and tell our online visitors honestly what we think, the stuff we don't have time to use gets examined at our offices and we give our verdict on it all, product by product.

You'll also find articles about backpacking routes around the world, the latest gear technology, how to choose products from the wide ranges available and other useful articles on subjects like food, winter backpacking, essential kit etc.

We are passionate about backpacking, especially in wild places.



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Outdoor Map Navigator

Established as Anquet Maps in 2001, Outdoor Map Navigator has provided a digital mapping platform to outdoor enthusiasts for over twenty years.

The desktop and mobile apps provide access to the latest OS 1:25,000 and 1:50,000 maps. Routes can be created and edited on desktop or mobile devices, exported as GPX files, stored in Anquet's cloud and synced to other devices. Users can download maps for use without an internet connection. The mobile apps also show your current position, including a grid reference, and allow tracklogs to be recorded.



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The Great Outdoors is the UK's longest-established hiking magazine. We have been inspiring people to explore wild places for more than 40 years.

Through compelling writing, beautifully illustrated stories and eye-catching content, across a range of platforms, we seek to convey the joy of adventure, the thrill of mountainous and wild environments, and the wonder of the natural world. We're here to help you make the most of your time in the hills and mountains.

As well as stunning photography and top class writing, we are famous for the rigour of our gear reviews. Our reviewers are the country's most experienced team of testers – including world-renowned backpacking experts and long-distance walker, Chris Townsend – and we always ensure gear is put through its paces in challenging mountainous environments. Our essential skills advice is written by top outdoor instructors, guides and experts.

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