Ten Tors Managers Handbook

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Remove advice – this opens some liabilities and all staff should be prepared via quals and CPD

1: A MESSAGE FROM THE EXERCISE DIRECTOR

COLONEL J M BIRD
Commander - Headquarters South West

I'm writing this having just finished the Ten Tors 2026 final planning conference and rehearsals. I can assure you that excitement and anticipation is building from a organisers' perspective – I assume the same is true from all team managers and participants. From my perspective it is an absolute honour and pleasure to lead the Joint Military Command - South West Ten Tors team.

Prepare to be challenged

Having completed Ten Tors 2017 as part of a serving soldier team, I was fortunate enough to experience the event first-hand. At the time, I could not have imagined that I would later be responsible for leading it. In preparation for the rehearsals, I therefore took the opportunity to run across several Tors to reacquaint myself with Dartmoor. True to form, it delivered gusting winds, showers, a touch of sleet, and yet moments of sunshine. It was a timely reminder of just how demanding the terrain and environment can be upon the Moor. Those of you training regularly on the Moor will already know how punishing, yet at the same time enjoyable, Dartmoor can be.

A military effort supporting our Region's youth

Joint Military Command – South West conducts the majority of its operations across four pillars: UK Homeland operations and resilience; Firm Base (a secure environment that sustains the force, enables operations and ensures public consent); Cadets; and Engagement. In one way or another, Ten Tors — or Exercise Wyvern Tor 26 as we know it — intersects all four. This allows us to derive military benefit across a broad spectrum of outputs while delivering a safe, challenging, and enjoyable event for participants across the region — it's a win-win.

An extraordinary collective effort

For many at Headquarters South West, Ten Tors is the highlight of the year. Rightly, it is also the annual high point and goal for many a participant and team manager. The scale and complexity of the event is staggering. Over the course of the weekend, we can expect almost 10,000 people to be directly involved or spectating. Then there is literally an army of enablers drawn from across the Ministry of Defence, emergency services, civilian authorities and volunteer organisations that come together making this multi-agency event possible. My sincere thanks and appreciation goes to all those who make the event a reality for the 2,400 young people taking part in the Ten Tors Challenge, the 450 in the Jubilee Challenge, and the 50 in the Granite Challenge.

Good luck to all participants

Finally, I wish everyone contributing to the event the very best of luck. I'm really looking forward to seeing your hard work, determination, and commitment rewarded over the course of the weekend.

Jim

2: The Ten Tors Charter

Ten Tors is a Youth Development event that aims to encourage young people from the South West:

a. To take part in a planned challenge within the Dartmoor National Park, which is designated to conserve the natural and cultural environments whilst promoting opportunities for people to enjoy and understand the area.

b. To enhance their self-confidence and aspirations through the development of leadership, problem solving, team work and hillwalking/camping skills in a wild country context.

1. Ten Tors comprises three annual Challenges:

a. The Ten Tors Challenge is a two day expedition for teams of 6 young people aged between 14 and 19. Each team must visit 10 specified checkpoints requiring a walk of 35, 45 or 55 miles over the rugged terrain of Dartmoor depending on the ages of the team. A team must be self-sufficient; camp on the moor overnight and complete the distance between Saturday 0700hrs and Sunday 1700hrs.

b. The Jubilee Challenge is a one day expedition for young people who have a disability or have special educational needs. As individuals or as members of teams, they must cover, on foot or by wheelchair, one of four specified routes with a distance of up to 15 miles.

c. The Dartmoor Granite Challenge is aimed at young adults with SEND[1] (i.e. SEMH, ASD, SpLD, etc.) who are capable of an overnight stay, but may find the Ten Tors Challenge too inaccessible due to their respective SEND. It provides an appropriately arduous Challenge across difficult terrain and in very changeable weather over at least 18kms, including an overnight camp.

All Challenges are adventures that demand careful planning, determination, endurance, training, skilful navigation and teamwork by the participants. They are expeditions to be completed as a team not as a race.

For the participants, the Challenges are the climax of a structured and sustained training programme requiring commitment, responsibility and teamwork. The primary objectives throughout are:

a. To help young people to appreciate the benefits of personal fitness through healthy outdoor activity.

b. To foster an ability to walk and camp safely in wild country and to navigate effectively with only map and compass.

c. To teach how to cope with adversity and how to strive to achieve.

d. To contribute to a growth of self-reliance and personal responsibility, and to stimulate leadership qualities.

e. To engender team spirit, adventure and recognition of the contribution made by each team member.

f. To instil an appreciation and respect for the landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Dartmoor National Park and other areas of natural beauty, and the vital importance of conserving and enhancing their special qualities.

g. To encourage a yearning for further challenge through new found confidence, motivation and success and to act as ambassadors to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

h. To help young people to understand the contribution made by landowners, statutory and voluntary bodies, commoners and local communities and to encourage young people to support conservation efforts.

For the Adult Volunteers, training for the Challenges and taking part in the Event provides an opportunity to demonstrate the value of helping others through preparing young people to play a more active and positive role in society, encourages volunteering and assisting the development of local responsibility.

For the National Park Authority, Ten Tors provides an opportunity for young people to enjoy and experience Dartmoor's wildness and remoteness. However, it is vital that any large scale recreational event using this living landscape does not compromise conservation of its special qualities. The Authority works closely with the Ten Tors Policy Committee and seeks active support and engagement from all involved to ensure that Dartmoor's precious environment is protected and access opportunities are promoted.

For Local Communities, Ten Tors brings socio-economic benefits; through the purchase of accommodation, kit and supplies; by participants acting as ambassadors for responsible walking on Dartmoor; while communities gain from participants' more active, positive and responsible roles in society.

For the Armed Forces, the Challenges provide the opportunity to work closely with organisations and individuals in the South West in order to establish and maintain links with local communities for mutual benefit. The event requires a 'partnership' of many other organisations, particularly the voluntary medical services, St John's Ambulance, the Devon Air Ambulance Service, Dartmoor Search and Rescue Group and Devon and Cornwall 4x4. In particular, Ten Tors is run by the Army and enables the military to practise their vital resilience role supporting the civil authorities and communities in times of crisis. Ten Tors also allows the Army to demonstrate its contribution to the local community. This is particularly important at a time when Communities are being asked to offer greater support to the Armed Forces through the Community Covenant initiative.

Key Dates for Team Managers

Entries Submitted, via Team Mangers Dashboard	3 weeks from 01 September
Selection committee results published	1 week after entries close
Team Managers' Briefing, Okehampton Camp	2nd Saturday in October
Payments, via Team Managers Dashboard	First Monday to last Friday in January
Pre-Registration, via Team Managers Dashboard	01 Apr to Thursday before event
Routes published on website	Tuesday before event
Ten Tors Event, Okehampton Camp	Second weekend in May
Event Infringements published	By end of May
TM Response to infringements	By end of July

Establishment structure

Different establishments and organisations will have different management and command structures, but all entries must have a designated HoE and TM:

Head of Establishment (Rule 2)

Our expectation is that the Commanding Officer (Headteacher, CEO, District Scout leader, Organisation head) is clear on the undertaking the young people are about to undertake. The HoE appoints the Team Manager (TM), and Training Leader (TL) if the positions are separated.

This will usually require a discussion with the Team Manager and Training Lead (sometimes the same person) and, once the HoE is clear on the roles, responsibilities and expectation of all those involved, they will sign off the application to take part.

At this point the HoE is making a commitment to Ten Tors that sufficient training of staff and participants is planned and contingencies are in place for the training period. The HoE will have completed a quality assurance review of the delivery of training with respect to safety procedures, risk assessments, safeguarding, currency of training, administration procedures.

Team Manager (Rule 3)

A Team Manager can only manage one establishment, if a group of establishments are training together, each TM must be clear on their roles and responsibilities.

It is the role of the TM to ensure communications with Ten Tors are in good time and meet the Rules For Training on Dartmoor (Green Card). Of particular importance is registering training before 0800 Weds before the upcoming weekend.

The Team Manager is responsible for training and safety of all those involved in Ten Tors training. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Planning a progressive and developmental training programme
- All staff are briefed on current Ten Tors rules and expectations after the TM Briefing
- Ensuring adequate clothing and equipment is carried (Note: Annex B is for the event, it is inadequate for winter conditions on Dartmoor)
- Ensure safety monitoring of participants is planned
- Ensure all staff are adequately qualified and trained
- Ensure the establishment reduces its negative impact to the bare minimum, especially with respect to camping and parking rules
- Promotes a positive, supportive approach to local stakeholders
- Ensures participants behave is a safe and respectful manner at the campsite prior to and during the event

Training Lead

If this is a different person to the TM the HoE must be aware of the delegation of responsibilities between TM and TL.

The TL must be up to date with their qualifications and subsequent changes since qualification. This is usually via CPD from the award organisation.

Training for participants must comply with the Green Card rules (Rules for Training on Dartmoor).

During the Training Phase, the river state will not be advised by Ten Tors. The decision on training conditions lies with the TM/TL.

Training should be modified or adapted when the Met Office has given weather warnings and advisory information for the weekend.

Live Firing notices must be consulted during the planning of a training event. This should be checked in the week leading up to training as last-minute changes may occur.

Rules for participation

The rules for each group of challenges are to be followed in both training and event stages. Breaches of rules are logged and will be used as part of the decision-making process for Team Selection each September.

The full rules are on the Ten Tors website. Below are the main points, these "Ten Commandments" for are:

Pre-Event

1. Participants and staff agree to follow the Ten Tors Rules
2. Establishments from the South West Region (Bristol & NE Somerset, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Somerset, and Wiltshire) may enter teams. Teams may be accepted from elsewhere at the discretion of the Director.
3. **Team Staff Competence.** As a condition of entry TMs must certify that team staff are competent as detailed in **Annex C - Staff Qualifications**, noting that at all times safety in training remains the responsibility of the Establishment.
4. **Medical Conditions.** TMs will be required at pre-registration to disclose participants' pre-existing medical conditions (including allergies) and any medications being used, and to certify all participants' fitness to undertake their Challenge.
5. **Liability.** The Organisers accept no liability for safety in training nor do they accept liability for any injuries (including injuries resulting in death) arising from participation in the Event
6. **Age.** All participants must be between the ages of 14 and 19 (TTC) or 21 (JC,GC) as at 31 August of the year of the Challenge.
7. **Composition of Teams**. Teams may consist of 1 – 8 challengers of any mix of gender (JC, GC). 6 challengers for TTC.
8. **TMs' Briefing.** The TMs' Briefing is held in the October of the year preceding the Event at Okehampton Camp. Every establishment must attend.
9. **Training in the Dartmoor National Park (DNP).** The detailed rules for training in the DNP are contained in the **Green Card – Rules for Training on Dartmoor.**
10. **Incidents.** The TM is responsible for ensuring that the Organisers are informed within 24 hours of any Ten Tors related incident during training that:

    a. Involves the emergency services.

    b. Results in hospital treatment.

    c. May result in media coverage.

    d. May lead to complaint from a 3rd party.

The Event

1. **Routes.** All locations shown on a route must be visited in the sequence shown.
2. **Clothing and equipment.** The TM is responsible for ensuring that individuals are equipped to complete their Challenge. A list of items that must be carried or worn is at **Annex B – The Kit List** to these Rules.
3. **Participants' responsibilities**. Participants are to obey the **Pink Card – Rules for Participants** which details the relevant rules and procedures for their Challenge.
4. A team will be Directed Withdraw (DW), if it does not meet the DW time.
5. **In Camp Adult.** TMs are to nominate themselves or a Deputy TM as the In-Camp Adult, who is to remain available in Camp to receive a VW or DW.
6. **Individual training requirement.** Before the Event participants must complete a structured and progressive programme of training which includes as a minimum:
    a. 4 days of training on Dartmoor.
    b. 2 nights of wild camping on Dartmoor.
    c. **From the 1 Feb, no more than 4 days on North Moor.**
    d. Experience of walking in a remotely supervised group.
7. **Team training requirement**. In addition to the above Teams must:
    a. Be sufficiently trained, physically prepared and suitably equipped to enable the team to operate safely on their own and complete the Challenge unaided even in adverse conditions.
    b. Train as a team on at least one expedition noting that best practice would be to conduct regular training as a defined team. Last minute composite teams are not permitted.
8. **Overnight Camping.** Teams must rest overnight; no team may pass its 8th staffed location (via do not count as staffed locations) before 0600hrs on Sunday.
    a. **35-mile Routes.** Teams are to camp at one of the staffed locations on their route by 2000hrs on Saturday evening.
    b. **45- and 55-mile Routes.** Teams are to wild camp 500m+ from SC or BC locations. No Control Card will be endorsed between 2200hrs Saturday and 0600hrs Sunday
9. **Finish.** The Challenge finishes at 1700hrs Sunday, this may only be extended if:
    a. The official start time is delayed.
    b. The Director's orders.
10. **Medals**. Participants are awarded Bronze, Silver and Gold medals.

Establishment expectations – admin and payment

The TM is responsible for ensuring deadlines for communications are met. Any failures in communications results in additional work for the admin team and will be considered at Selection.

Likewise, payment for entries must be within the time frames provided.

Set reminders on a calendar, or appoint an admin assistant take these vital functions on if your skillset in closer to compass bearings than form filling!

Key notes:
Apply for teams in good time, deadlines are listed on the website but roughly:

- Applications – in September
- Payments – in January

Qualifications

Different organisations have different qualifications, CPD is vital to maintain your training standards are current and reflect best practice.

Annex C outlines the minimum qualifications required to be qualified as a trainer for Ten Tors. Weather conditions may change and make some qualifications' validity questionable.

Good judgement from the TM and/or TL will be required to decide whether or not staff are suitably qualified for the conditions on the moor.

1. Equipment for training; Equipment list for event
2. ECM role in training phases

Training

Training should be planned and incorporate a series of phases as participants' skills, fitness and experience develop.

How you do this is your choice, as a qualified leader your training will have covered some elements of planning for skills delivery.

A successful strategy is to consider four parts:

- Initial skills acquisition
- Basic training
- Consolidation phase
- Expedition phase

Initial Skills Acquisition

The most successful establishments invest time in preparing participants before venturing onto the moor.

A series of training sessions covering elements such as:

- basic first aid,
- knowledge of the environment and people who live and work on Dartmoor,
- Ten Tors training expectations (Green Cards, id panels, 3Ps, road walking safety),
- walking skills (packing a rucksack, suitable and unsuitable equipment),
- nutrition requirements for walking in challenging conditions,
- basic map reading
- emergency and communication procedures

Some establishments might choose to deliver these activities in the field rather than in a classroom setting, the staff in charge must ensure compliance with Green Card rules during these sessions on Dartmoor.

NOTE: All events relating to Ten Tors on Dartmoor are expected to meet the Training Rules for Dartmoor (Green Card). This includes taster or induction walks, training walks, activity and skills days. If you are on Dartmoor, the rules apply!

Basic Training

Probably a series of walks, accompanied by qualified and experienced staff, of increasing length and increasingly difficult terrain.

A successful approach will see groups walking on linear features employing handrailing navigation, moving on to simple use of compass bearings.

Subsequent walks will build on the use of a compass and introduce aiming off, catching features and use of contours.

Hazard perception and management will be taught, including simple river crossing techniques and strategies to deal with unsafe water courses.

Navigation in poor visibility will be critical and may be encountered on a foggy day or via night nav.

Teams training for 45 and 55 distances will certainly need to develop night navigation skills, these are unnecessary for 35 as Camp Time is 2000hrs in May.

Emergency procedures and comms with the establishment's safety team will be critical before teams begin remote supervision.

Consolidation Phase

As teams become fitter and more capable, TMs will begin to use shadowing and remote supervision management. A clear assessment of the team should indicate their readiness for this.

From 1 February establishments are limited to 4 days of North Moor training. Camping and parking issues begin to become more of a concern as more establishments begin visiting Dartmoor. Plan accordingly, do not assume you will be able to access popular camping and parking areas. Have a Plan B.

Weather can still be challenging at this time of year, be prepared to change your routes and keen up to date in the week ahead for weather warnings and firing times. (There is often firing at Wilsworthy on the first weekend of the month, but at other time too. CHECK!)

Staff often locate in cafes to monitor progress and keep up to date with conditions whilst being able to move to evacuation points.

Exped Phase

Two walks, back to back, becomes the norm, some establishments return to school overnight for an initial exped, others use serviced campsites.

If using a public site, good manners and high standards of behaviour are expected. Every participant carries the label "Ten Tors" and we must uphold our reputation.

Wild camping is a great privilege on Dartmoor and people travel from far and wide to enjoy it. We must ensure we uphold the expectations of Dartmoor National Park and only camp in authorised places, identified on the DNP Camping Map. We have a special dispensation to exceed the camping limits, this means **up to 12 participants** and 2 staff can camp as a group. No more than this.

If a camp site is already occupied, you must camp **at least** 100m distant. Plan for this, many people want to camp in the same places. Staff "reserving" a site midafternoon is not acceptable.

Parking will be at a premium, plan for this and consider how selfish it is to park several minibuses in one small place. The emergency services will also need access in the case of a callout, one of the reasons we agree to only using 50% of a car park.

The final training weekend will be very busy, usually over 1600 young people on the moor. Car parking will be difficult, wild camping will be difficult, café space will be difficult, plan accordingly.

Event participation

Only teams who have trained together can take part, “Wild Card” entrants will be removed and the establishments concerned may forfeit future places. (Rule 17)

Every year a few teams race off, blindly following the teams in front, and end up at the wrong tor, adding a few miles to their challenge. Sometimes making up this lost time is impossible, and they end up being withdrawn early on Day 2 when they do not meet their DW time. Plan and brief your team for this, go to the start and work out the first part of the route on D Day-1.

Teams need to plan their route bearing in mind the OOB river sections and obligatory river crossing points, many teams rehearse these in their training.

Camping infringements cause many TMs heartache. Plan camping possibilities carefully and ensure OOB camping areas are clearly understood for 45 and 55 teams. Some of these teams camp at SC or BC sites, these are for 35 teams only, others will be identified from their beacon tracks and infringements will be logged.

Many infringements occur late on Saturday night and early on Sunday morning, fatigue and a desire to be first to finish can result in unnecessary infringements. Plan these sections in detail and consider how wise it is to walk at 1kph at 11pm compared to sleeping and starting a little earlier.

Event Camp expectations

TMs are responsible for their participants’ behaviour and establishments can have infringements logged for anti-social and dangerous behaviour.

Advertisements for “spare” participants are not permitted. Any advertisements will result in the TM being held accountable for a breach often Tors rules.

CPD

Many TMs have a great depth of experience and are happy to share this, new TMs can learn a lot from those who have “walked the walk” in every sense of the words!
Bear in mind that advice and best practice changes, if you are a member of an association you ought to be able to access CPD opportunities to ensure you are delivering up to date training.
Those of us who qualified many years ago may be surprised at how things have changed. River crossing is one such example, Mountain Training advice and practice has changed dramatically over the last 20 years, to follow advice from 20 years ago may well be seen as negligent today.

A committed establishment will invest in training for the staff as well as supporting the participants.

Mapping advice

The official map provides valuable additional information which is useful for both route planning and navigation. Bogs, wall crossings, OOB roads and rivers and RBNA are clearly marked on this map. River State Normal sections are OOB throughout the entire training period.

RBNA are OOB throughout the bird nesting season, best practice is to mark maps up for the entire training.

If you are training on the South Moor, you may well not have the OOB marked on the map being used that day, this is perfectly OK.

Many groups now source copies of the map in a laminated form for the training phase, other choose to save their maps for “best”.

As per the kit list, Annex B, 2x marked maps should be carried by each team. These need to be weatherproofed either with a map case or laminated.

River States

The explanation of River States is a key aspect of the TM Briefing. It is vital your TL or TM understands the system.

Throughout the training period sections of river marked red on the official map (RS Normal) are OOB. Any groups seen crossing these areas will be logged as non-compliant.

The state of rivers during the training period will fluctuate, sometimes the water levels and flow rates will be very dangerous. It is the TM/TL’s responsibility to make decisions on the viability of any crossing during training.

During the event the river state will be clearly communicated, teams will be expected to navigate accordingly. It may change during the event and this will be communicated via the Safety Beacon.

Admin: Green Cards, Pink and Orange Cards, id panels

The Team Manager is responsible for ensuring the admin of team entries is accurate and timely.

The bare minimum for a walking group is:

- 2x Green Cards with correct staff information completed
- 2x id panels – ALWAYS visible.
- 2x maps marked with RBNA and river OOB

A common compliance issue is id panels covered by rucksack covers. Plan for this and devise a solution. Some establishments have printed covers, some have robust id panels on bungee cords, some do not use covers, some have made bespoke panels with attachment straps.

Good teams carry spares; some issue each participant with a Green Card and id panel.

Compliance is key, solutions vary.

Parking and OOB roads

We must respect the access of parking for the general public, locals and emergency services. This is common courtesy and a key part of our agreement with Dartmoor Commoners and the National Park.

There is no access away from metalled roads, vehicles encountered at track ends such as Nodden Gate will be logged, and possibly reported to DNP as a breach of bylaws subjecting the driver to a possible fine. (Bylaws 3.1, 3.2)

Please do not leave multiple vehicles at one car park for extended periods, this limits parking for other groups and impinges on the capacity of the car park for rescue operations.

Dartmoor National Park offer preferential day and weekend parking rates for their car parks. Please support the National Park by using this and budgeting it into your costs.

Some roads are OOB for walkers, refer to the current event map and Ten Tors website, Annex A, for specific details and respect these OOB areas.

Safeguarding

During the training each establishment will have its own safeguarding procedures and protocols which will be observed by all those involved in training.

Should team staff encounter an incident on the moor involving another establishment which concerns them, the team's Green Card has the establishment's TM details on it. It is best practice to contact the TM instead of providing instructions or advice.

The Ten Tors Safeguarding Officer is XXXXXXXXXXXXX

The Ten Tors Safeguarding Policy is: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

History and Archive

You can read a first hand account from Colonel Gregory and Captain John Joyner, recognised as the founder and architects of the Ten Tors.

1959 - 1970

Prior to the 1950s opportunities to participate in adventurous outdoor activities were extremely limited in Britain. In September 1959 three British Army officers from the Junior Leaders Regiment, Royal Corps of Signals (based at Denbury Camp near Newton Abbot) were monitoring an adventure training exercise for their young trainees on Dartmoor. Returning at night to their own campsite near Sittaford Tor, Colonel Gregory, Major Parker and Captain Joyner commented on the trainees' enthusiasm as they tackled the challenges of navigating, bivouacking, and field cooking in wild country. Why should such activities, they asked, be confined to Junior Leaders? Why not also to less privileged young civilians?

Two more Army exercises followed, and in September 1960 a 'Ten Tors Expedition' for youths 16 to 18 attracted twenty 'patrols' of ten servicemen each and one 'patrol' of three civilians from Exmouth. The 'entrants' assembled at Denbury Camp and were bussed next day to Haytor. There, following the Start ceremony, they were handed a list of ten checkpoints, which could be visited in any order. The 'best choice of route' was calculated to be 'about 55 miles', and the Finish was back at Denbury Camp.

The 'Expedition' was repeated in May 1961, a time of year more suited to schools' participation. Youths 16-18 were given routes of 50 miles, and there were 36-mile routes for boys 14-16 and for girls 14-20. 'Patrol' size was reduced to six persons, and girls slept overnight at a prepared camp. The finish was at Hexworthy. A total of 156 'patrols' started and 83 completed intact.

In 1962 a 60-mile route was introduced for young men 18-20, and the 36-mile routes were cut to 35: the Finish was moved to Willsworthy. In 1965 the entry exceeded 2,000, and for the first time 'patrols' were made to visit checkpoints in a prescribed order. The pattern for future events was now fully established.

With the closure of Denbury Camp, the Start moved in 1968 to Okehampton: one year later the Finish also moved there. Because 'patrols' were now traversing high exposed moorland just as they were tiring and dusk was approaching, the 60-mile routes were reduced to 55 and the 50-mile routes to 45.

1970's onwards

From the early 1970s the organisers were under increasing pressure to allow girls to participate on terms more equal to the boys. Fixed overnight campsites disappeared, and in 1975 Sussex Police Cadets became the first girls 'team' (no longer 'patrols') to complete a 45-mile route: two years later they were first also to complete 55 miles. By 1984 mixed teams (3 male, 3 female) were permitted, and by 1988 teams of any gender combination were allowed for all ages and over all distances.

In Silver Jubilee Year, 1977, a one-day Special Event was introduced for young people with physical and learning difficulties. In 1996 this was re-named the 'Jubilee Challenge', and in 2009 all reference to 'Expedition' disappeared as the original event became the 'Ten Tors Challenge'.

2010 witnessed the 50th Ten Tors in its 50th anniversary year (foot and mouth disease had caused a cancellation in 2001). A visit by the event's Patron, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, on the Sunday added to the significance of the weekend with some finishers receiving a royal welcome. Coincidentally a Ten Tors Award was introduced to recognise the work of many dedicated volunteers who annually train the participants for this fine event.

Safety and training

Safety and environmental protection have always been priorities on Ten Tors. 1974 saw the introduction of a compulsory kit specification, and in 1977 Kit Scrutineering joined Team Briefing as pre-event requirements. In 1978 an official entry limit was set at 2,400, and this still stands. 1982 saw the first Managers' Training Weekend, which new managers had to attend. During Ten Tors 2007 two thousand participants were rescued from the moor because of torrential rain and fast flowing rivers. Consequently in 2008 the Managers' Weekend was replaced by a mandatory annual Briefing to be attended by all team managers.

The weather

From the outset in 1960 to 1966 Ten Tors enjoyed very fine weather, and there have been many similar years since. 1982, 1999 and 2011 were outstanding years: 1988 and 1998 were too hot. In 1967 dense mist settled on the moor all weekend, and the start (which was then at Haytor) was delayed by half an hour: participants were even advised to use their discretion in deciding whether to set out! Icy rain combined with the dense mist made it an endurance test of the highest order, and over one hundred participants were still on the moor on Monday morning. The weather, because it showed no improvement all weekend, ensured that Ten Tors 1967 is regarded still as the worst to date. Ten Tors 1968 suffered also from heavy rain and high winds, but for that the Royal Army Medical Corps provided a 50 strong rescue organisation. Later that year the Dartmoor Rescue Group was formed, and since 1970 it has contributed invaluable safety cover during training and at Ten Tors itself.

In 1973 torrential rain and dense fog on Saturday made the crossing of the Rivers Tavy and East Dart very difficult: a safety review followed. For Ten Tors 1974 the compulsory kit specification was more detailed, and such kit could be checked before and during the event. Moreover, teams on 35 mile routes had to camp overnight at a manned tor, and a system of Crash Times was introduced so that any team clearly too late to finish by 5pm on Sunday could be stopped at pre-determined checkpoints. For 1976 mobile scrutineering teams were introduced to ensure that participants were complying with the Rules, particularly with regard to the kit requirement. In 1977 teams for the first time were required to have all their kit checked by the Scrutineers in Okehampton Camp on the day before the event.

In 1981 gales, torrential rain, hail and thunder provided an excellent opportunity for critics of Ten Tors to challenge the safety of the event. This was especially so as Ten Tors took place only three weeks after an Easter Weekend during which an Air Training Corps team (not preparing for Ten Tors) had been stranded on the moor for two days following a sudden and dramatic blizzard, and two weeks after gales and heavy rain led to over 100 wet and exhausted youngsters being treated at a centre in Okehampton. Consequently Ten Tors 1982 saw the introduction of a Managers' Training Weekend, which from the following year became compulsory for new managers and today is an annual commitment for all managers.

During Ten Tors 1996 a cold northerly wind throughout Saturday gave way to heavy rain and snow overnight, and blanket fog with driving rain and snow persisted throughout Sunday. The computerized information system had failed from the outset, two checkpoint tents were demolished by wind, and in the early afternoon of Sunday the decision was taken to abandon the event

following requests from Tor Party Commanders to do so. A mass evacuation from the moor was organised and the RN helicopters played a crucial role, particularly on Kitty Tor, in some unspeakable conditions even for them. Despite all this, 51 teams completed their routes, but sadly no record of these successes was available afterwards!

In 2007 the event was again abandoned on account of the weather, this time on Saturday evening, at the end of day one of the event. Dartmoor had seen heavy rain during the previous week, and Saturday added another torrential downpour. By the afternoon streams and rivers across the moor, fed by the soaked ground, were full and flowing fast. The routes of many teams would lead them to stretches of water impassable except by wide detour, or across ground that was turning into mire. Worse was threatened for the following day. For the first time in the history of the event not one of the teams that had started would finish. Throughout Sunday teams were evacuated in a controlled manner from the moor: all participants were consequently awarded their medals.