DofE Meeting – Map Skills Session 1

Wed 6 January 2010

Map Grid References

Grid references define locations on maps using Cartesian coordinates. Grid lines on maps define the coordinate system, and are numbered to provide a unique reference to features.

Grid systems vary, but the most common is a square grid with grid lines numbered sequentially from the origin at the bottom left of the map. The grid numbers on the east-west (horizontal) axis are called Eastings, and the grid numbers on the north-south (vertical) axis are called Northings.

Numerical grid references consist of an even number of digits. Eastings are given before Northings. Thus in a 6 digit grid reference 123456, the Easting component is 123 and the Northing component is 456.

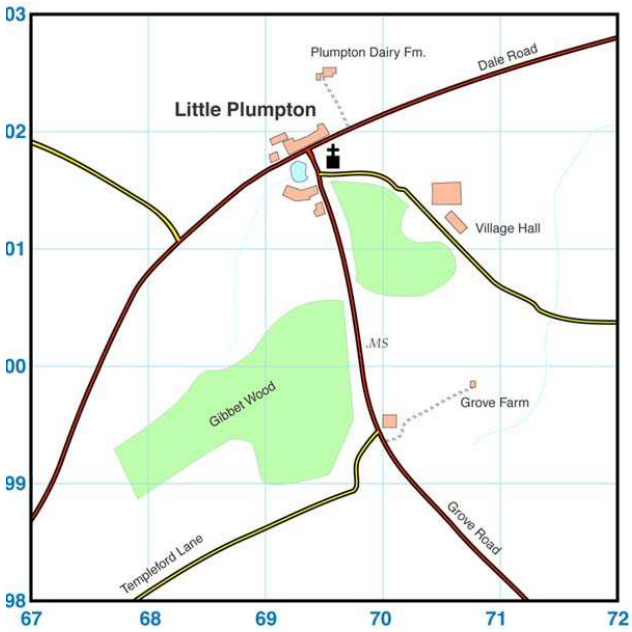
Grids may be arbitrary, or based on specific distances, for example the United Kingdom Ordnance Survey maps use a one-kilometre square grid spacing. 0-0 located near the Isles of Scilly.

A grid reference locates a unique point on the map. The precision of location varies, for example a simple town plan may use a simple grid system with single letters for Eastings and single numbers for Northings. A grid reference in this system, such as 'H3', locates a particular square rather than a single point.

Points can be located by grid references on maps that use a standard system for Eastings and Northings, such as the British national grid reference system used by the **Ordnance Survey**, and located by someone else using grid references, even if using maps of a different scale.

Why is the Grid System important to those participating in a DofE Expedition?

What's the Grid reference for the church below (6 digits)?



Using the Landranger 1:50,000

- **What's the grid reference for Harbury Church?**
- **What's the grid reference for Chesterton Windmill?**

- **What's to be found at 356547**
- **What's to be found at 345333**