



# Activities at The Dean Field Studies Centre (DFSC):

## Introduction:

There are many different activities that we can organise as part of a course at DFSC. All can be done as half day sessions unless stated otherwise. Activities fall into two broad categories:

- Adventurous Activities which require a qualified instructor and will be led by DFSC staff or another provider (in the case of caving, mountain biking and Nagshead Nature Reserve)
- 'Off-the-peg' Activities that can be led by non-specialist visiting staff following a briefing.

## Adventurous Activities Led by Qualified Staff:

### High Challenge Course (HCC):

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XF\\_g\\_UaDRT0&index=3&list=PLRcs1uzc2EeHIppGhfpdvB0ZfiO0SvzRj](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XF_g_UaDRT0&index=3&list=PLRcs1uzc2EeHIppGhfpdvB0ZfiO0SvzRj)

This consists of a number of on-site High Challenge activities including:

- Zip Wire
- Climbing & Abseil Tower
- Jacob's Ladder
- Tree Climbing
- Trapeze Bar Jump
- High Ropes Course
- Crate Stack Challenge

See separate HCC document for full details.



### Abseiling at Stony Green/Hang Hill:

Stony Green is a 60 foot rock face in the woods 4 miles from DFSC.

Students can abseil or be lowered down using climbing ropes and harnesses. An activity which is a good progression on from the on-site HCC challenges.



### Open Canoeing:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30s5E0wGOCM&list=PLRcs1uzc2EeHIppGhfpdvB0ZfiO0SvzRj&index=8>

An activity suitable for all ages and all times of the year. For younger students in colder months we may raft the canoes together and use a small local lake. For older students a day trip down the River Wye or even an overnight expedition is possible.



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## Kayaking:

More suitable in summer months and to secondary school aged students who can be coached in the physical skills required to control a kayak. The emphasis can still be on team work and fun using a variety of games.



## Raft Building & Coracle Building:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6G550qH3Xw&list=PLRcs1uz2EeHIppGhfpdvB0ZfiO0SvzRj&index=1>

This is a team event where a group design and construct a raft from barrels, spars and lashing ropes or a coracle from pipes and plastic sheet and then attempt to paddle it around a marker buoy on the lake.



## Caving:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XF\\_g\\_UaDRT0&index=3&list=PLRcs1uz2EeHIppGhfpdvB0ZfiO0SvzRj](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XF_g_UaDRT0&index=3&list=PLRcs1uz2EeHIppGhfpdvB0ZfiO0SvzRj)

Usually we take our groups to Clearwell Caverns where their guides will lead an adventurous trip beyond the show cave. Other caving trips are also possible in the Symonds Yat area or further away to South Wales for a full day with DFSC staff.



## Mountain Biking:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w06oiSMhZvI&index=6&list=PLRcs1uz2EeHIppGhfpdvB0ZfiO0SvzRj>

Working with Dean Forest Cycles we run ½ day sessions to off-road forest tracks and trails nearby. All bikes are size matched to the students who are guided by experienced Instructors.



## Stream and Forest Walks:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p82qLkhhWAI>

There are several streams near the Centre which can be explored at various degrees of immersion! This activity can also be combined with an informative environmental walk teaching more about the forest.



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## Orienteering:

We have a permanent orienteering course set up in the local woods which can be used for score events and 3-stage orienteering. We put staff out at checkpoints with radios and co-ordinate events for up to 60 students at a time.



## Forest & Mountain Walks:

We lead adventurous forest walks from the Centre and can also drive over to The Brecon Beacons to do hill walks as a full day activity.



## RSPB Nagshead Nature Reserve:

The teachers at the Reserve will provide an environmental learning session based around habitats, after which the group walk back down the hill through the woods to the Centre with visiting staff.



## Bushcraft:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sh7Z\\_vUci-M&list=PLRes1uzc2EeHlppGhfpdvB0ZfiO0SvzRj&index=10](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sh7Z_vUci-M&list=PLRes1uzc2EeHlppGhfpdvB0ZfiO0SvzRj&index=10)

Learn a variety of bushcraft firelighting techniques including friction bow drill to light a fire and cook dampers, washed down with nettle and fennel tea. Use of bushcraft knives can be incorporated to whittle feather sticks. See separate flyer for more details.



## Archery:

Sessions are usually 1 hour 25 mins long and combined with another activity to make a ½ day session. Time enough to develop your skills and hopefully 'hit gold'.



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## ‘Off-the-peg’ Activities That Can Be Led by Visiting Staff:

All the following activities are regularly led by non-specialist visiting staff following a written and verbal briefing by DFSC staff. For remoter activities we can provide radio support and back-up if required. Alternatively if you prefer we can provide staff, at cost, to deliver these activities directly to the group.



### Shelter Building:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Fkg\\_OT8JN4&list=PLRcs1uzc2EeHIppGhfpdvB0ZfiO0SvzRj&index=11](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Fkg_OT8JN4&list=PLRcs1uzc2EeHIppGhfpdvB0ZfiO0SvzRj&index=11)

In local woods the students work in groups to build a ‘survival shelter’ from deadwood and bracken. It can be judged for its camouflage, comfort and waterproof qualities and left in place for another group to find and ‘recycle’.



### Treasure Hunt:

The group work in small teams to follow written instructions and photos to complete a 3km trail through the forest with various team challenges along the way. Hopefully they find and open the hidden treasure in the combination coded safe – if they decipher the code!



### Stream Study:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQS-go5oP\\_0&feature=em-share\\_video\\_user](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQS-go5oP_0&feature=em-share_video_user)

We have direct access in the Centre Grounds to the upper reach of the River Lyd. An investigation can be made into water quality by sampling the river creatures present, looking at them under microscopes in our lab and identifying them from flow charts.



### Problem Solving Team Challenges:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tpbs6D91qBA>

In the Centre grounds we have over a dozen Team Problem Solving Challenges that can be attempted. All the instructions are in place with the equipment and a score sheet can be used to evaluate team performance.





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## Compass Course + Star Course Orienteering:

We have a permanent 'Compass Course' set up in local woods to practice the use of a compass with various levels of difficulty available for progression. Star Course Orienteering can be combined with this to provide easily managed mapwork practice in the same area.



## Sculpture Trail at Beechenhurst:

We can drop you off and pick you up from the Forestry Commission's Beechenhurst Lodge, 4 miles away and provide you with laminated maps to follow the Sculpture Trail. A playground and café are also on site.



## Forest Trail to New Fancy View:

We supply the group with maps, directions, photos and radio support to take turns to lead a walk from the Centre to New Fancy View and back. It is a varied 5-6km route on forestry tracks and paths including a way-marked cross country section.



## Environmental 'Bag of Tricks'

Choose from a range of activity ideas to teach your own environmental awareness session. Make use of our own bird hide to observe birds at our feeding station and then explore further into the woods to discover more of the wonders of nature.



## Village Study:

Learn more about the village of Parkend in which DFSC is situated by following a 'detective trail'. A useful orientation exercise if undertaking curriculum work that is looking at contrasting localities with your home area.



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## Tunnels:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5c2Pd\\_jpDc&t=3s&list=PLRcsIuzc2EeHIppGhfpdvB0ZfiO0SvzRj&index=5](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5c2Pd_jpDc&t=3s&list=PLRcsIuzc2EeHIppGhfpdvB0ZfiO0SvzRj&index=5)

Our network of underground tunnels and junction chambers provide many different team challenges in an unfamiliar environment. This activity can be added to others in the Centre grounds as an extra 15 mins team work or for 1 ½ hours + as a main activity.



## Geography Field Studies:

We are well situated in the Forest of Dean to visit a number of sites to conduct geography field studies whether it is looking at rivers, forestry, tourism or towns. We can advise on suitable venues and provide field equipment and experienced Field study Teachers.



## Explore & Solo:

This is a half -day session in the local woods that is based on a ‘less is more’ principle . The group experience autonomous play and exploration followed by an environmental senses session and culminating in a short solo experience in the forest.



## Photo Challenge:

Sub - groups of up to 4 students are given a digital camera and a list of things and challenges to photo/video. The resulting evidence of teamwork and creativity can be downloaded on to a memory stick and reviewed back at school. 1 hour to ½ day session.



## Number Trail:

A 4km journey through the forest following a clue map and finding the hidden numbers. Returning to the Centre and using the ‘Digit Cruncher’ to mathematically reveal the combination code for the locked ‘Prize Box’. Approx. 1 ½ hours.



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## Eco Orientation of DFSC Buildings:

A worksheet based discovery session finding out about the Eco buildings at DFSC and considering their environmental impact and benefits. Which do you prefer – the Roundhouse or Pond Cabin on stilts? 1 hour

## A Selection of Possible Evening Activities:



### Bonfire and Bar-B-Q Area:

We have a Fire Pit where you can build a bonfire of fallen wood collected locally. We also have a barbeque and can supply food and equipment as required. The group can supply the singing!



### Diaries or Reviews:

Students often benefit from reflecting on the day's activities and discussing or writing about their experiences and what they have learnt. The Dean Garden Rm or other large group meeting areas – lounge and common room – may be useful.



### Games on the Field:

The village Cricket Field, 300 metres away can be used for field games such as Rounder's when a cricket practice or match is not in progress. Another area of common land nearby is also available if a match is being played.



### Night Walk in Forest:

See the Forest from a different perspective – at night. We can provide a suggested route and maps. Extra lights and radios for staff can also be made available as requested.



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## Games & Entertainment in The Common Room & Lounge:

We have a variety of games that are free to use: eg Table Tennis, Table Football, Air Hockey, Bowling Machine & board games etc..

A beetle-drive, talent show or quiz is also an option, or watch a DVD on our large screen TV.



## Karaoke & Disco:

We have a professional Karaoke Machine in The Dean Garden Room that can also be used for a disco along with flashing disco lights. You can plug in your own MP3 Player with playlist as well.



## Tuckshop:

Can be opened as a reward! Selling souvenirs, gifts and goodies. Profit goes to children's charities and providing games etc. for students in the evenings.



## Badge Making Machine:

We have a professional badge making machine that students can operate to create 59mm pin badges at cost of materials only. Their own pictures can be badged or printed photos. Perhaps a design can be created as a souvenir of their residential.



## Owl Display:

By prior arrangement we can provide a free of charge 45 minute Bird of Prey Display in the Centre Grounds. 18:00 – 18:45 on one evening. April – Oct only. A chance for people to see owls close up and perhaps even hold one.