



Useful information from the Expedition Network

Welcome!

For more information please contact your Licensed Organisation, Raymond Carroll MBE or DofE Northern Ireland Office on 028 9069 9100.

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Introduction

The Mournes Expedition Network was established in 1971 by the then Down Country Education Committee to support DofE expeditions to ensure the quality of the experience and safety of the participants. It is now an integral part of the DofE's provision and its members are all volunteer Accredited Assessors.

It represents the interest of the DofE by liaising with land owners and other organisations dealing with any access and environmental issues. The Network and its members welcome DofE Leaders and participants to the Mourne Mountains.

The Mourne Mountains

The Mourne Mountains are situated in the south east corner of Northern Ireland. Covering an area of 570 square metres, the closely grouped summits dominate the landscape. There are 14 summits over 600 metres and the highest is Slieve Donard (Gaelic name Sliabh Domengard = mountain of Donard) at 849 metres rising from sea level. For a translation of the names of the mountains see www.kendal67.fsnet.co.uk/Ireland.html

Unlike the rest of County Down, the Mourne Mountains are made of granite. Formed approximately 56 Million years ago, the Mournes have gone through periods of extreme heat and cold, the most recent being a series of ice ages ending 10,000 years ago. Glacial activity has resulted in the formation of many of today's features in the Mourne landscape, such as U shaped valleys, drumlins, hanging valleys and moraines.

One of the dominant features is the Mourne Wall which was started in 1904 and took 18 years to build by men from the locality. Built almost without cement, it stands 1.5 m in height and 0.9 m at the base. Starting and finishing at the Silent Valley it extends for 22 miles. Its purpose is to mark the water catchment area for both the Ben Crom and Silent Valley Reservoirs.

The area was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1966 and in 1997 the Mourne Heritage Trust was established. There is currently a consultation taking place on whether the area is to become the first National Park in Northern Ireland. As the most popular mountain range in Northern Ireland the Mournes provides an excellent location for a diversity of outdoor activities. With the many defined paths and a revised 1:25 000 scaled map, many expedition groups enjoy its natural beauty and unique environment.

For further details go to Mourne Heritage Trust web site www.mournelive.com

Environmental impact

The DofE in Northern Ireland has adopted the 'Leave No Trace' principles and is supportive of this all Ireland initiative for providers, retailers and statutory authorities:

www.leavenotraceireland.com

The Leave No Trace programme is designed to help outdoor enthusiasts value the natural environment, to understand the impact of our activities, and to enable them to make decisions to minimise their impact while still enjoying the activities with freedom.

1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Be considerate of others
3. Respect farm animals and wildlife
4. Travel and camp on durable ground
5. Leave what you find
6. Dispose of waste properly
7. Minimise the effects of fire.

It is vital that all expedition groups adopt and adhere to these principles to minimize their environmental impact and future use of the areas.

Maps and access

The Ordnance Survey Northern Ireland have produced two maps of the Mournes area i.e. 1:50 000 Sheet 29 and an Outdoor Pursuit map at 1:25 000 revised in 2009 printed on water resistant paper.

Both are available in most book shops or outdoor shops in Northern Ireland. They can be purchased online by going to www.osni.gov.uk

Access in the Mournes

Northern Ireland currently does not have legislation which permits freedom to roam. Access in the Mournes is by 'de facto' and historically there have been very few problems or restrictions. The land is either publicly owned by Northern Ireland Water and Forestry Services, managed by Trustees or the National Trust or privately owned. DofE participants and Leaders must respect all land owners and minimize their impact on the land. The Panel has adopted the 'Leave no Trace' principles.

Access restriction 1

The area of Crocknafeola Wood (grid reference 275 220). There are access restrictions in the land surrounding this forest and so groups must not enter the section described below: The area bounded by the North Western and Southern part of the forest and the area created if you plot a line joining the following grid references together: 274 227, 272 231, 269 229, 269 215, 263 212, 265 208, 271 208, 274 211, 278 210, 284 215, 280 218. If you require any further information on this please contact the DofE NI office on 028 90509550.

Access restriction 2

Sandy Brae: Parking is available at Attical Community Centre, well sign posted at the lower end of Sandy Brae and always open. An optional donation of £2 for parking may be left in the post-box at the Centre. It is run by local people, without grant aid, and money will be used to support its work. Meantime, please do not park on the edges of Sandy Brae Road and, on no account, drive beyond the end of the tarmac surfaced road. If desired, drop off passengers at end of tarmac and return to park at Centre - it is less than 1km. After crossing the footbridge, grid ref 264276 please walk around the back of the house.

Access restriction 3

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a Registered Charity No: 1072490, and in Scotland No: SC038254, and a Royal Charter Corporation No: RC000806

Slieve Croob: Groups should avoid the Slieve Croob area (315 455) as there are access problems particularly in the eastern side.

Access restriction 4

Trassey Track to Happy Valley: Please avoid using the apparent access points on the Trassey Road between the Trassey Track and Happy Valley. The only authorized access is via Meelmore lodge at 306 307. When walking along the Mourne way in this section please stay to the upper side of the Mourne Wall.

Access restriction 5

Sheep Pen on Trassey track (313 303). These are working sheep pens and should not be used as a camp site or toilet.

Points for consideration

- Gate on Moyad Road: Please use the gate at grid reference 279 222 on the Moyad Road to gain access to and from Slievenaglogh/Slieve Muck as an alternative to climbing the wall on the side of the road.
- Back of Tollymore Forest park: Please use the new fenced gateway (279 222) to gain access to the forest from the Southern side.
- Parking at Rocky River: Vehicles are not permitted up the track into the area between Hen and Cock Mountains and Rocky Mountain. All transport must be parked at the car park opposite the track (grid reference 233 278).

Accommodation

Hostel accommodation

- The Crocknafeola Centre, c/o Mairead White, Bog road, Attical Kilkeel, T: 028 4176 5859, mairiad.white@btopenworld.com / www.cnocnafeolacentre.com
- Meelmore lodge, 52 Trassey Road, Bryanford, Co Down. 0284372 5949
info@meelmorelodge.com / www.meelmorelodge.co.uk
- Newcastle International Youth Hostel, 30 Downs Road, Newcastle, Co Down, BT33 0AG, T: 028 4372 2133, www.hini.org.uk

Commercial camp sites with facilities

- Meelmore lodge, 52 Trassey Road, Bryanford, Co Down, T: 028 4372 5949,
info@meelmorelodge.com / www.meelmorelodge.co.uk
- Tollymore Forest Park, 176 Tullybrannigan Road, Newcastle, Co. Down. BT33 0PW T: 028 4372 2428 www.forestserviceni.gov.uk
- Kilbroney Forest Park, Shore Road, Rostrevor, Co. Down, BT34 3ET T: 028 4173 8134
www.newryandmourne.gov.uk
- Ponderosa, 37 Slievenaman Road, Bryansford, Co.Down. T: 028 38321435.
www.gpws.net/ponderosa
- Shepherds Lodge, Donard Forest, Newcastle, Co.Down (grid reference 356 306) T: 02890324853. www.belfastbb.org.uk/static/shepherd.asp
- Shannagh-more Outdoor Education Centre, The Ballagh, Kilkeel Road, Newcastle, BT33 0LA T: 028 43723841

Camp sites

Name	Location	Distance	Height	Access time	Access from
Windy Gap River	261 218	1400m	50m	20 mins	Attical Track 264 205
Miner's Hole River	293 242	3000m	150m	50 mins	Bann's Road 284 214
Lough Shannagh	295 264	2000m	150m	40 mins	Ott Track 280 278
Blue Lough	328 251	4000m	150m	65 mins	Carricklittle 345 219
Annolong Valley	338 245	3300m	90m	50 mins	Carricklittle 345 219
	339 250	3700m	120m	60 mins	
	339 251	3900m	150m	65 mins	
	341 257	4500m	160m	70 mins	
	342 259	4700m	160m	70 mins	
	342 268	5800m	210m	90 mins	
Trassey Track	339 250	2200m	150m	40 mins	Trassey Track 311 313
	314 296	1600m	150m	35 mins	
	313 302	1000m	100m	20 mins	
Shelter stone at Ben Crom	324 272		260m		Brandy Pad
Spinkwee River	335 307		2000m		Tollymore Park 345 326
Glen River	357 290	2000m	250m	50 mins	Donard Park 372 301
	360 291	1700m	250m	45 mins	
	362 293	1400m	230m	40 mins	
	364 294	1200m	230m	35 mins	
Yellow Water	222 220	1700m	200m	40 mins	Rostrevor Rd 210 225

Useful links:

- The Mourne Heritage Trust www.mournelive.com
- Countryside Activities and Access Network www.countrysiderecreation.com
- Down District Council www.downdc.gov.uk
- Newry and Mourne District Council www.newryandmourne.gov.uk
- Ards Borough Council www.ards-council.gov.uk
- Northern Ireland Tourist Board www.discovernorthernireland.com
- Walking routes www.walkni.com
- Canoe trails www.canoeni.com
- Cycling routes www.sustrans.com
- Download the Mourne AONB Paths map at <http://tinyurl.com/5tsot3a>
- Download the Mournes ownership map at: <http://tinyurl.com/5te5eja>

DofE resources

The current DofE expedition kit list can be downloaded from: www.DofE.org/go/expeditionkit

A range of expedition downloads, such as the Green Form and spare expedition safety cards, can be downloaded from: www.DofE.org/go/downloads

Further information of the Expedition section can be found at: www.DofE.org/expedition

Vouchers for network assessors need to be bought from the DofE Essentials shop accessed through eDofE.