

Access in the Antrim Hills UPDATE 26 April 2016

It is always advisable to seek permission to cross private land in the Antrim Hills and there are also areas where access is restricted or where dangers exist of which walkers should be aware. Some are listed below as well as on the local, Northern Ireland section of the DofE website. Further details can be obtained from the EA DofE Manager, Gerry Meehan based at Woodhall Centre Tel: 028 2954 0762 email: gerry.meehan@eani.org.uk

Restricted Access

Slaght (150350)

Avoid area north of Owencam River and south of Killuca Burn particularly Standing Stones at 147348

Ballymullock

Avoid area at standing stone 336043. Keep to waymarked Antrim Hills Way in this area

South of Capanagh Wood

Avoid the area immediately west of Brunt Hill 314012 extending to the south western border of Capanagh Wood, where grouse rearing takes place. Further information from gamekeeper at Greenmount Hill Farm (mob: 07860 951 323)

Cleggan Estate (2110)

Walking through the estate is not permitted due to larch disease although **Cleggan Forest** is now accessible using the track on the Longmore Road (206100). Please contact Joe Taylor for more information about the Cleggan area (mob: 07718 755 388)

Croaghan (118308)

Grouse rearing is taking place in this area and walkers should obey the signs. There has also been a 'bog slip' in this area and the waymarked path to the summit of Croaghan starting at the right angle bend on the Altarichard Road GR 119297 is permanently closed. An alternative has been opened starting opposite the car park/picnic area GR: 123294 running North West along the forest edge.

Please note that this route is also closed, due to grouse on their nests, in the Black Hill area. It should reopen during the second week in June.

Access to Croaghan can still be gained from either of the tracks starting at 127292 or 129287 but please contact Derek Anderson the warden/gamekeeper who is very helpful with information about the area. (Mob: 077395 39441) He is also prepared to talk to groups if required. The area is owned by Beltrim Charitable Trust

Sonja Crawford, the Rights of Way Officer with Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council, (028 7034 7034) is also a useful contact with information about this area and also about access around Marconi's Cottage.

Summit of Slieveanorra There is **no access** to the large area to the north west of the summit of Slieveanorra stretching as far as the Altarichard Road at Glens Bridge (GR: 104298) and west approximately as far as the grid line 10. Derek Anderson can also provide further information about this area if required.

Glenarm to Slemish via Agnews Hill

There have been a few access issues in this area eg Brae Hill (2400) and expedition teams are advised to use the Antrim Hills Way as far as possible.

Be aware of the following:

Fences and Walls

Supervisors will realise that many of the planned DofE expedition routes require fences or walls to be negotiated. Please ensure that all teams **check carefully for suitable crossing points** and look for gates and stiles which may only be a short distance away! Apart from litter one of the main complaints from farmers is broken or damaged fences.

Areas to be particularly aware of:

From Torr Road access to **Carnanmore** see details below.

Area around the summit of **Collin Top** (GR: 218167) extending west to Dungonnell Dam

Area of stone walls just outside the SE boundary of **Glenariff Forest Park**, marked on the 1:25,000 Antrim Hills map GR: 209188. These walls appear to be in the form of old sheepfolds and are very unstable. It is **not necessary to cross them** as they can be easily bypassed and must be avoided.

Access to Carnanmore (D2138)

Farmer annoyed about fences being damaged in this area. Young people are being dropped off at junction of Torr Road and Farranmacallan Road (GR: 210403 Glens Activity Map) and being encouraged to climb over the fence at this point to access Carnanmore. If they do this there is a second fence some 50m further which also has to be climbed. Obvious damage has been caused which farmer has had to repeatedly repair. Please note that both fences can be avoided if a gate just over 200m east of this junction (GR: 212403) is used. There is also space for minibuses to turn or even park at this point. This will also apply to teams descending from Carnanmore. The farmer involved has also had problems with broken fences on the northern side of this junction with groups heading towards Murlough and, while he is not blaming DofE participants entirely, he has seen DofE groups climbing fences with rucksacks which obviously can cause damage. Please encourage teams to look for gates and stiles, even if it means a short detour, to avoid damage to the fences and the justifiable wrath of farmers.

Glenshesk

Shoots take place regularly throughout the shooting season (usually November to February) and access along the Glenshesk section of the Moyle Way may be interrupted at times.

Dungonnell Dam

A blanket bog restoration project is taking place in this area. RSPB and NI Water are responsible and it has involved creating dams, some 6 or 7 feet deep in order to flood the land. The area is mostly between the roadway and the dam itself, not an area where walkers would normally be although please be aware particularly in misty conditions or where there is snow cover.

Please contact the farmers listed below before you access these areas – they are very supportive of DofE groups but need to know who, when and where.

Colin Top and north to Glenariffe

If you are intending to walk or camp in this area Colin Top (219168) extending north to Glenariffe Forest, west to Dungonnell Dam and northeast to Crockravar you should contact James McHenry at Dieskirt Farm Tel: 028 2177 1308 Email: dieskirt@hotmail.com

Glenshesk

If you are intending to walk or camp in the area east of McQuillans Grave on the Glenshesk River (1432) you should contact Patrick Black Tel: 028 2075 1284 Mob: 07717 045 090

Slieveanorra and Croaghan contact Derek Anderson 07739539441

Forest Areas

Wild Camping is no longer permitted in forest areas managed by the Forest Service and groups intending to walk through the forest areas in the Antrim Hills should contact Richard Kernohan at the Forest Service based in Castlewellan Tel: 028 4377 2246 or 028 4377 2243

The office staff at Garvagh Tel: 028 2955 6000 may also be able to provide some information since there may be events taking place in the forest which will restrict access.

Access to Glenariffe Forest Park

The forest is open for walkers although access to certain areas is still restricted with signs in place. We will try to keep groups updated with any changes to these arrangements.

Harvesting of trees is taking place at present (April 2016) which has restricted access in certain areas. Please check with Forest Service to confirm access.

As you will probably know Glenariffe camping and caravan area has undergone some change. Information to date is as follows:

The caravan site has been moved across the road to an area beside the existing café and visitors' centre taking in the old overflow car park. The existing site has been closed and there are no plans for it to reopen.

Definitely NO CAMPING will be permitted on this site in the foreseeable future

DofE groups should seek alternative camp sites and it may be that some of the local farmers may allow camping on their land. Some information below.

Management for the new caravan site is being handed over to the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council but this has not happened yet and it is unclear whether or not there will be camping in this area.

Camping

Many groups have made private camping arrangements with farmers throughout the Antrim Hills. Several farmers have also made it known that they are happy to accommodate groups e.g.

Greenmount Hill Farm, Glenwherry (2700) Contact: gamekeeper 07860 951 323

Crosswater Bridge (299000) Contact Tommy Miskelly 0771 1020 046

Watertop Farm near Ballycastle Tel: 028 2076 2576

Agan Bridge (GR: 179207) If your teams are intending to camp in this area please contact Ian Crawford 07904845166. Ian is very supportive and has no issues with groups using this area. He has been very complimentary about the young people he has come across but he would like to know who is camping there and when. When asked about financial contribution he suggested that, if groups wished, donations could be made to MacMillan Cancer but this would not be obligatory.

Slieveanorra. There is some camping possible in this area (1329) and further details can be obtained from Derek Anderson 077395 39441

Supervisors and assessors should note the following:

Principals of Leave No Trace should be followed at all times.

Farmers have asked particularly that attention should be drawn to the behaviour of groups especially with regard to leaving litter, toileting and leaving gates open. Also under no circumstances should dogs with or without leads be taken into the Antrim Hills.

Road Closure

The Glenariff Road will be **closed to a point above the Forest Park for 4 weeks from 3rd May 2016**. If using the area please check for information beforehand and look out for diversion signs which will be in place.

26 April 2016

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