



LOWTHER HILLS EXPEDITION AREA

Useful information from the Expedition Network

Welcome!

Green forms and requests for assessment should be submitted to the Scottish Network Co-ordinator, who can also assist with enquiries regarding landowners, routes, and campsites:

Eleanor Birch
DofE Scotland
Rosebery House
9 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 5EZ

T: 0131 343 0920

E: Scotland.Assessors@DofE.org

Eleanor works 9-5 Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.

Area advisor

The local area advisor is based in the area and can assist with enquiries regarding routes and campsites.

Alasdair Offin
T: 01355 231 504
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Introduction

In this document you will find information to help you prepare for your Expedition. We will endeavour to keep the information up-to-date but please let us know if you come across new contact details or some interesting discovery that others might benefit from.

Though not mountainous the Lowther Hills are prone to low cloud, mist, fog and with little ground features on the moor like hills, it can make navigation difficult and as such you must be confident and competent in applying 'poor visibility navigation skills'.

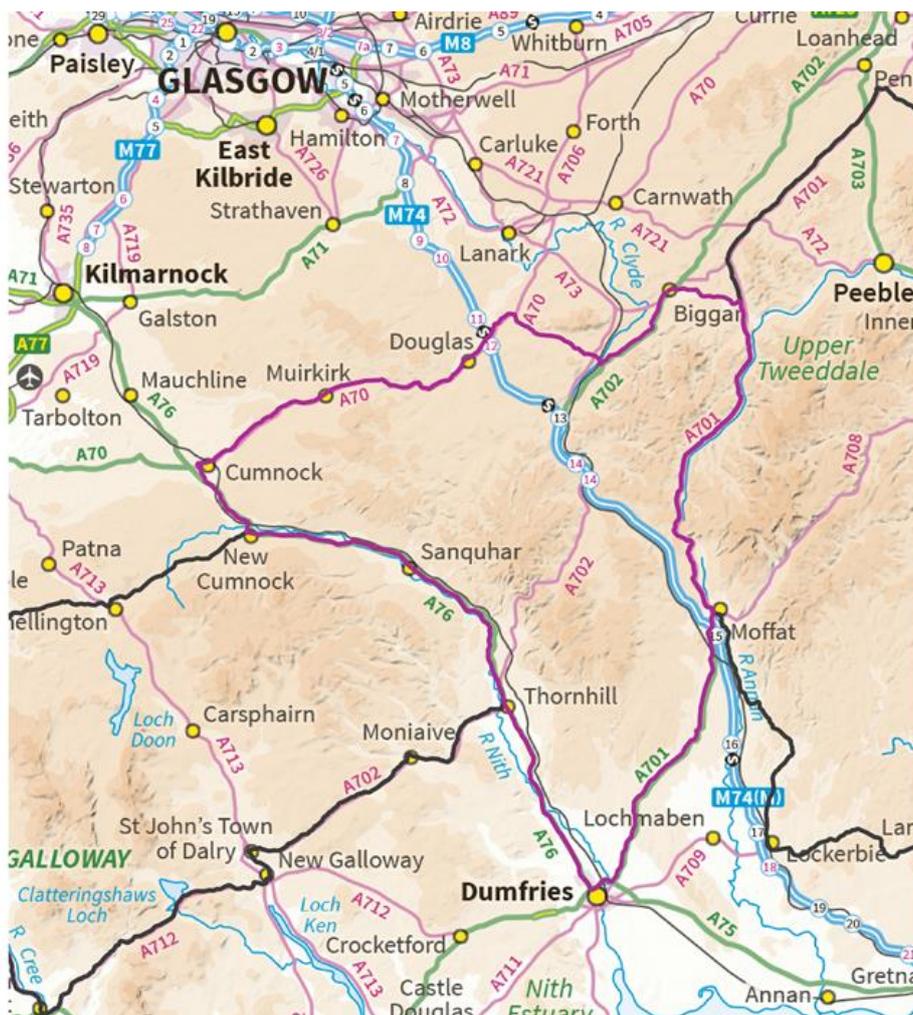
High winds on the tops of the hills are experienced regularly and you should be aware of the potential of wind-chill when you are making any plans. It has been known for the transmitter masts on Green Lowther to be severely damaged by wind, and there is recent experience of severe damage caused to a meteorological wind/weather station on top of Stony Hill, caused by a wind storm, which, though remote, is not at all high.

A reasonable, slightly above average level of physical fitness is required if you intend to cross the hill tracks, as they are not to be underestimated. However, there are several routes through the valleys that can be utilised and close examination and good preparation will assist in success.

Area boundaries

The Lowther Hills Panel Area is the land contained within the boundaries of - from Dumfries on the A76 north-west of Cumnock, then east on the A70 via Douglas to Rigside, then south-east on the B7055 via Wiston village to Lamington, then north on the A702 to the town of Biggar, then east on the B7016 to Broughton, returning south to Dumfries via Moffat and Beattock on the A701.

The DoFE website includes a downloadable [PDF map](#) and [GPX of the area boundaries](#).



Route updates

There is now a locked gate at the end of the minor road between Crawick and Fingland (NS 753 176). Styles have been erected to allow groups to cross. There is limited turning space so access by mini-bus is not recommended, this is likely to affect access for supervisors between Spango Bridge (NS 821 178) and Kames (NS 696 265). (update Feb 2016)

There high metal fences blocking the track at Gubhill in the Forest of Ae (NX 972 922) that were installed in 2016. They seem to becoming permanent. These block both the turnoff from the road (NX 970 921) and the tracks from the wider forest coming in past the farm (NX 972 922 and NX 973 921). This cuts off a route previously used by teams, and will be particularly problematic for teams trying to get out to the road using this track. A nearby entry/exit point from the forest is the picnic area in Ae (NX 985 922). (updated March 2019)

The Scottish Rally usually occurs in the Forest of Ae at somepoint during the year, and may affect routes in the forest on that weekend.

The Forestry Commission's **Forest of Ae** has maps with routes that may not be on OS maps and show carparks and other facilities [on its website](#).

Walking, cycling, and riding Silver and Gold teams should avoid using the Southern Upland way apart from short sections to join up other routes.

Way marked and long distance paths

The DofE *Expedition Guide* says "long distance footpaths should not be used, particularly by Silver and Gold teams, except in small sections to link up other paths." (page 10, also see page 39). The quality of way-marked and long distance paths in Scotland varies considerably – some are concepts that don't exist on the ground (for example the Skye and Cape Wrath trails) while others are clearly signposted heavily used routes (for example, the West Highland Way).

In some areas there are no alternatives to some way-marked paths. Teams may use these, but should not plan an expedition with more than half a day continuously on the same route. Heavily used way-marked paths provide little navigational challenge, undermine the sense of isolation, and potentially have negative environmental impacts, and therefore should be avoided by DofE teams as much as possible. Any such routes in this area have been highlighted in the above advice about route updates.

Scottish Hill Tracks

Scotways, the Scottish rights of way and access society, publishes **Scottish Hill Tracks**, a book listing rights of way across Scotlands uplands. This is an excellent resource for ideas for routes as some paths are not shown connecting on a map where historic routes exist. Scotways are also interested to hear about any issues with paths and routes.

Core paths

Under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 every local authority and National Park authority (access authority) in Scotland was required to draw up a plan for a system of core paths that gives the public reasonable access throughout their area. Some of these paths do not yet appear on OS maps, and may help DofE teams link up routes. All core paths can be seen [on the SNH website](#), with links to details from each council.

Road works

Road closures and works in the area can have a serious impact on the ability of team's and leaders to get to and from expeditions, and for supervisors and assessors getting around due to the lack of quick alternative routes. Information about current or planned noticed road works in Scotland is available at [the Scottish Road Works Register](#).

Campsites

Serviced sites:

- The South West Scotland Scout Association have two camp-sites at Craigshields (NX 983 929) and Boreland (NY 065 958). Contact details are as follows:
For Boreland – Ivor Brough – tel. 01387 262810, ivor.brough301@btinternet.com. Their web-site is - www.swscouts.scot/about-us/campsite/district-campsites
Craigshields - the building is now closed and groups should not attempt to access it. The field may be

available for camping only. Groups planning to camp there should contact [Malte Iden of Forest Enterprise](#).

- Floors Caravan and Camping Park, Scarside, Penpont, Thornhill DG3 4BH, Tel: 01848 30470, Grid reference NX 850949
- Castleview Caravan Park, Sanquhar DG4 6AX, Tel: 01659 50291, Grid Reference NS 787095 <http://www.visitsouthernscotland.co.uk/item-1946-castle-view-caravan-park>
- Beattock: Craigielslands Country Park, Tel: 01683 300591 - <http://www.visitsouthernscotland.co.uk/item-1997-craigielslands-country-park>
- Wanlock Outdoor centre:

Wanlockhead Outdoor Centre
Located in Scotland's Highest Village



Walled Camping Area



Main Hall Lesser Hall Ktchen
Ladies & Gents Toilets and Showers
Disabled Friendly
Sleeps up to 24





Hill Walking Nature Studies
Orienteering Skiing/Snowboarding
Southern Upland Way
Mennock Pass
Museum of Leadmng
Narrow Gauge Railway
Shop

Wanlockhead Community Centre, Wanlockhead ML12 6UT

Further Enquiries: (website under construction)

Isobel Gibb Phone: 01659 74629
Email: isobelgibb@hotmail.com
Charlotte Paul Email: charlotte.paul1@btinternet.com

- Wanlockhead Inn – there is no accommodation in the inn itself. The inn does have a wigwam which can be hired as accommodation for leaders and camping in the grounds surrounding the inn is permitted by agreement with the owners. Contact details: Gardendyke, Wanlockhead ML12 6UZ 01659 74535
- Camping may also be possible at Rivox Farm & Bunkhouse by arrangement with the owner, Rivox Farm & Bunkhouse – contact Duncan Lloyd – rivox.farm@gmail.com – offers opportunities for exploration. Mr Lloyd is happy to assist groups by providing information about wildlife, sites of historical interest etc. in the area.
Rivox is a quiet farm overlooking the Southern Upland Way, by Moffat . Set within a thousand hectares of forestry rich in wildlife, including: Red squirrels, Black grouse, Goshawk, Owls, Otters and Badgers, and with 57 archaeological sites dating back to the Iron Age.

Wild camping

Scottish access rights (see the [Outdoor access code section](#) for further information) extend to wild Camping for small groups (i.e. individual expedition teams), although the DofE still recommends that, as a courtesy to land owners concerned and to maintain existing good relations, expedition teams inform them of their intentions. It is reasonable for owners to react by saying why a particular site might be unsuitable and to suggest alternatives.

If multiple teams from the same DofE centre intend to camp at the same location, this falls outside the definition of 'Wild camping' permitted under access rights. Therefore, centres planning to camp with multiple teams in the same location should always seek permission from the landowner.

The following locations have been arranged with the Estates as appropriate campsites:

- Mennock NS 849 105
- Spango NS 823179
- Durisdeer NS 895 039
- Glentaggart NS 899 029
- Morton Castle NX 889 993
- Auchengruith NS 827 097
- Glenimp NS 897 030
- Wanlock Water NS 854 142

Note: this is not an exhaustive list as Estates are approachable and can be flexible.

The area around Wingate House (NT 015 272) is a site of archaeological interest and should not be used for camping.

While camping in the vicinity of reservoirs is not encouraged it may be possible for responsible groups. Any group planning to camp in the vicinity of a reservoir should contact Katie or Mike from West of Scotland water (see contact details under Landuse).

Teams should consult the advice on camping in the *Expedition Guide* (page 101), there are also lots of useful information resources about wild camping;

- [Mountaineering Scotland](#) has lots of good advice, with links to their minimal impact and 'where to go in the outdoors' leaflets
- [The Outdoor Access Code website](#) has advice on responsible wild camping, including various information downloads.

Local History

History abounds in The Lowther Hills. There is evidence that points to the existence of man during the Bronze Age and also the Iron Age. The area was also inhabited by Romans at one time - one of their roads, Watling Street, can be found in Crawford.

As well as being noted for its history, the area is also known for its mining. In particular, the Lowther Hills mines produced gold, silver and lead. Many of the precious stones in the Scottish crown jewels originated here.

The Lowther Hills are named after Lothus, King of the Picts, and the area is steeped in history which is easily accessible and available to be explored!

If you study the Ordnance Survey map(s) (Landranger series No's 71, 72 and 78) you will immediately see evidence of settlements dating through history from neolithic times, with principal settlements at Beattock Hill and Arbory Hill, to the modern day. There is also evidence of Roman Britain when you are looking at the maps, with roads, forts and other antiquities, which are all there to be explored!

The area has been affected by medieval 'reiver' feuding, with evidence of castles, keeps and battle grounds. You will also be able to see early Christian and druid influence in place names, events and antiquities. The Lowther Hills have been a major contributory factor in the lives of famous people in the area as they have changed the course of Scottish history. The area, rich in minerals, has supplied the gold for the Crown of Scotland (now on display within Edinburgh Castle). It was also the principal hunting grounds for Royals dating

before King David I, who established a castle at Crawfordjohn village and was once the lands of King Robert the Bruce's family.

Lanark, the Royal Burgh town, is located a few miles north of the Lowther Hills and was at one time the seat of power for most of the area. It was the town in which William Wallace ('Brave heart') (pictured) lived and where he began his historic fight for Scottish independence, with many escapades in and around the Lowther Hills. Robert the Bruce, King of the Scots, began his struggle against English tyranny immediately following Sir William Wallace in both the neighbouring Galloway Hills and the Lowther Hills. He learned methods of guerrilla tactical warfare, some still copied to this day, enabling him to succeed in battles with a small ill-equipped army.

An expedition in the Lowther Hills will probably at some stage involve walking in the Buccleuch Estate, which dates back many centuries. Then, as today, it is still sometimes referred to as the Queensberry Estates. The Douglas family own this land and are famous supporters of King Robert the Bruce through to the Royal Stuarts. Also, in the 17th Century, Sir William Douglas of Drumlanrig became the first Duke of Queensberry. He was responsible for building Drumlanrig Castle, near Sanquhar, but he never resided there, preferring to live in the castle (now ruins opposite Castle View camp site) at Sanquhar.

The 2nd Duke of Queensberry was the senior member of the 'Parcel of Rogues in a Nation' (refers to a Robert Burns poem) who negotiated the Treaty of the Union with England in 1707 and was rewarded with a £3,000 pension per year annuity! He and his wife are entombed in the magnificently ornate marble tomb at the rear of the church at Durisdeer. The Church has much history to be explored, both within its walls and in the graveyard, and it's worth exploring the history of the village and its buildings which date back many centuries.

Bonnie Prince Charles (Charles Edward Stuart, Pretender to the Crown) passed through the area and was welcomed by the Duke of Queensberry at Drumlanrigg Castle. However, his army was not welcomed by the people of the area, so it encamped around Drumlanrigg and Durisdeer as it marched through both the Enterkin Pass and the Well Pass en-route to Culloden.

The Lowther Hills were the scene of Britain's last civil war, which is known as the Killing Times. The civil unrest began and finished here in the Lowther Hills. Covenanters were led by a preacher named Richard Cameron. He called for armed insurrection against King and

Government, and in 1680, by affixing a declaration at Sanquhar, he led an army against the Government, consisting primarily of townfolk and farmers from Ayrshire, Dumfriesshire and Lanarkshire.

After the reformation, protestanism, in a particularly austere form, had established itself in Scotland. Led by John Knox, from his Kirk at Shotts (Lanarkshire), it practised rigorous old testament virtues. Amongst its primary principle was that presbyterian ministers should be appointed by the congregation and elders of the Church, and not by the Church hierarchy, who at that time were answerable to the Sovereign. During the insecurity that led to the English Civil War (Cromwellian Wars) King Charles I needed and gained the support of the Scottish Presbyterians and in 1649 succumbed to be a signatory to their Covenant.

Charles II initially found it convenient to subscribe to the Covenant but after the restoration (of the Church Powers to appoint ministers and Bishops, equivalent to the present Episcopalian and Anglican Church today) in 1661, the presbyterian appointed ministers were overthrown by Church appointments. However, around 300 ministers refused to resign and fled their manses to hold Church meetings - 'Conventicles' - on the moorland, which can be discovered in the place names in the Lowther Hills. The Government side was led by Bonnie Dundee, Sir General James Claverhouse, with a relentless and cruel slaughter of the covenanters, many at prayer, though the Government side also met many defeats.

The period of the killing fields ceased when the orange King William and Queen Mary assumed the Sovereignty of Britain in 1690. The history of the covenanters can easily be explored throughout the Lowther Hills.

Other points of historical interest

- John Taylor, who died at the age of 136 years, is buried in the graveyard at Leadhills village, and worked as a miner to the age of 100. Still a record to this day!
- Leadhills Public Library (*pictured*) is the oldest lending library in Britain opening as the first lending library in 1741 by the poet Alan Ramsay. The lending library



opened a few years later at Wanlockhead village and, still open today, is worth a visit and is the second oldest lending library.

- The poets and writers Robert Burns, Alan Ramsay, Sir Walter Scott, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and John Buchan a notable Statesman, politician and author of 'The 39 Steps' were all influenced by the Lowthers and have written their observations in their writings.
- Lowther Hill is the location of Britain's most important Civil Aviation Authority radar station, controlling the crowded skies above the mid-Atlantic, Scotland, Northern England and Northern Europe. It appears as two massive golf balls on the summit. Green Lowther Hill has the British Telecom and Mercury telecommunication transmitters probably amongst many others.
- Sir Hugh Dowding, Air Chief Marshall, RAF, was born and raised at Moffat and was the Commander in Chief of Fighter Command during the Battle of Britain in 1940.
- Sanquhar Post Office (*pictured*) is the oldest Post Office in Britain and still owned and operated by the Royal Mail.
- The Beam Engine (Pump) at Wanlockhead is the first and only remaining water powered piston pump designed and used to pump water from the mine.



Industrial history

John Macadam the discoverer/inventor of the tarmac road surface was born, lived, and is buried in the graveyard at Moffat, while his contemporary friend and associate engineer designer, Thomas Telford, was born and resided at Ecclefechan near Moffat. Thomas Telford is renowned for the design and construction of roads and bridges, notably the Menai Bridge in Wales and the harbour at Aberdeen. His efforts are also seen locally in the Lowthers, in the design of the Sanquhar Toll Booth - the first example of traffic calming in the world. There are also bridges in the area named after him, or his design techniques used, most notably the Telford Bridge on the former A47 near Elvanfoot and Beattock.

Mining of coal is evident in the Nithsdale and Elvanfoot (Leadhills Village) areas, and lead, silver and gold evident at Wanlockhead village. The mining has affected this area of the Lowthers with many ingenious inventions and discoveries in engineering to be explored, with assistance at the Museum of Mining at Wanlockhead village. Mine shafts in this area were dug more than 430 metres deep. With Wanlockhead and Leadhills villages being the highest villages in Britain, this means the mines are dug to a depth below sea level; an incredible feat of engineering!

Railways were required to service these mines and so communities were established. Then, as the mines became uneconomical and started to close, so did the railways. Unlike many other areas, these railways and their buildings can be explored. The line built in 1901 and closed in 1938 from the main line at Elvanfoot servicing both the Leadhills and Wanlock villages can be explored, with these small gauge railways still working between Leanhills and Wanlock, operated by local enthusiasts.

Geology

The area offers much to be explored if you are interested in geology and a visit to the Museum of Mining (*pictured*) at Wanlockhead Village is a must!

The area is part of a range of hills known as the Southern Uplands. It includes 15 hills over 610m (Donalds) and two (Corbetts) Lowther Hill (725m) and Green Lowther (732m).

The Southern Upland fault line is from just south of Ballantrae (Ayrshire) on the west and to Dunbar on the east. The rock is predominantly sedimentary, grey coloured, sandstone known as greywacke, and it is punctuated with tiny pebbles of granite.



The foundations of this rock were laid between 500-395 million years ago in the Ordovician and the Silurian times. There are several safe sites to fossil and/or rock hunt. For example, near to the former Whitecleuch school where there is a quarry and around Spango.

In addition to a visit into a mine at Wanlockhead, the curator, if timeously and courteously approached, will assist in helping your exploration of the gold, silver and lead, as well as other rocks and minerals in the area.

In addition, you can find desert sandstone which is bright red coloured, crumbly and entirely different in its structure from the predominant greywacke. This rock can be observed at Crichton Linn in Nithsdale, near Sanquhar.

Geography

There are many aspects of local geography that can be explored with ease in a DofE expedition in the Lowthers.

River systems are unique in this area as the important principal rivers of the Clyde, Tweed and Nith all have their source in close proximity. There are signs on map and land that these river systems may have at one time had similar routes of flow but due to land heave have now distinct east-west and north-south flows. River catchment areas can be observed and explored with several major reservoirs established, principally the Daer, Camp and the hidden Kettleton (which provides water for Dumfries).

The physical geography of the area has been affected by both glaciation and weathering.

U valleys and V valleys can be observed, together with dry and raised riverbeds. The best example of a glaciated U valley (other than the Lairig Ghru in the Cairngorms) is found in the Lowther Hills, although it has been extensively farmed - see if you can locate it on the map! The Cleuchs are the visible evidence of weathering, caused principally by water erosion.

There are differing styles of settlements in the area, including linear, nucleated and nuclear-linear, although most of them are dispersed. Even micro-urbanization is evident in Leadhills and Wanlockhead.

Places of interest in the area

Historian/Curator of **Drumlanrig Castle**: Specialises in the history of the community of the area and the Douglas-Queensberry family.

Museum of Lead Mining and Visitor Centre Wanlockhead by Biggar, Lanarkshire, ML12 6UT.: 01659 74387 email: miningmuseum@hotmail.com, web-site: www.leadminingmuseum.co.uk Group visits to the mine can be arranged by contacting the museum directly. Applications from DofE groups should be made in advance. They will be given favourable consideration and rates can be agreed with museum staff when making the booking. There is a café in the visitor centre that serves hot meals during the day. The museum is open 7 days a week from April 1st – 30th September

Crawfordjohn Heritage Venture: Open 1pm to 4pm on Saturday and Sunday, May to September for public admission which is free. It has excellent local history, both ancient and modern, including a wealth of information on the former Whitecleugh School. DofE groups have used this information since 1960 and still tend to camp close by. The school was established in 1810 (prior to the Education Acts) by the Duke of Buccleuch. It is located within the old Church on Cross Street, behind the primary school. If you require further information regarding Crawfordjohn Heritage Venture please contact them at: enquiries@crawfordjohn.org

Sanquhar Tollbooth (Community) Museum (www.dumgal.gov.uk): Contact the Curator, Tel: 01659 50186 or by email to dumfriesmuseum@dumgal.gov.uk

Biggar Museum Trust, 156, High Street, Biggar: There are four museums operated by the Trust in Biggar and are of great interest, one of which is wholly for the history of the Covenanters. Contact Details: Tel: 01899 221050 email: info@biggarmuseumtrust.co.uk

Moffat Museum. The Museum is open from Easter until the end of September. Admission is free. Opening hours are Monday to Saturday (closed Wednesday) from 10:45am to 4:15pm and Sundays from 1:15pm to 4:15pm. Find the Museum at Harthope House, Churchgate, Moffat, DG10 9EG. Contact the Museum on 01683 220 868 or by email to secretary@moffatmuseum.co.uk. During the closed winter season please ring 01683 220 100.

Lowthers Railway Society SC035209. The Station Leadhills, Lanarkshire ML12 6XS. **Opening Hours:** Every weekend from Easter until the end of September **Saturday and Sunday 11:00 - 17:00** Email: secretary@leadhillsrailway.co.uk

Carmichael Clan Visitor Centre: Opened in 1994, the Carmichael Visitor Centre and Farm Shop features the former Edinburgh Wax Model Collection depicting Scotland's millennium from Queen Margaret and Macbeth

through to the present day.

Scotland's story is told through realistic wax model scenes and informative story board interpretation. The centre has a 'Clan Room' dedicated to Carmichael Clan family history and the thousand year period that the family has lived on the land. The scenes also depicts crafts and culture of the countryside of the district. As well as featuring Scotland's only wax model collection there is an exciting adventure playground for children and interesting animals including chickens and deer to inspect and enjoy.

Carmichael history walks and treks for cyclists and on foot from the visitor centre are available and our Licensed Restaurant provides meals and snacks all day featuring Carmichael produce – particularly venison. The Visitor Centre is free of charge to enter and go around. Donations are most welcome if you enjoy your experience.

Shop telephone 01899308169. Office telephone and cottage reservations 01899308336

Lanark Community Museum: Address: 8 Westport, Lanark ML11 9HD Phone: 01555 666680

The Cameronian Regimental Museum (Covenanters) at Hamilton: The museum has provision for local Hamilton community history and specialises in the history of the Hamilton Family and especially on the history and events of the Covenanters Period and the related Cameronian Regiment. Low Parks, Muir Street, Hamilton. Phone 01698 452382 Email: museumresearch@southlanarkshireleisure.co.uk

Douglas Heritage Museum: A wealth of local and Douglas Family history and also Covenanters history. Bell's Wynd, Douglas, Lanarkshire. Tel: 01555 851536. Web-site: douglasheritagemuseum.co.uk

Scottish Wild land areas

The Scottish Government has **defined 42 Wild land areas around Scotland**. The discussions around defining these areas and the implications of this may be of interest for teams considering aims around landuse and wildness.

Hazards

Ticks

Ticks are small, blood sucking creatures found across the uplands of Scotland, especially in areas with lots of deer and sheep. Some ticks carry Lyme disease, which is treatable but can be tricky to diagnose. Teams should be made aware of the risks of Lyme disease and how to reduce the risk of being bitten. All teams should carry a tick remover and check themselves daily.

There are several useful information resources about ticks;

- The organisation Lyme Disease Action has useful downloadable **leaflets about ticks and Lyme disease**.
- **Stop the tick** has lots of infographics (some a bit graphic, but informational)
- Lyme disease UK has posters and leaflets as part of their **Wake up to Lyme campaign**, as well as detailed information about the disease

Midges

The biting midge is particularly prolific in parts of Scotland, and worst in late Spring through to early Autumn. The detrimental effect midges can have on an expedition is not proportionate to their tiny size, and should not be underestimated, especially with teams unused to them. During this summer period teams should carry midge nets, insect repellent and clothes to provide full coverage (including gloves and long sleeved tops) and first aid kits should include antihistamines to reduce discomfort. Teams should also be aware of how to reduce their impact including:

- choice of campsite (in direct sunlight and breezy, ideally in both morning and evening)
- choice of clothing (pale, bright, and smooth rather than dark, wooly, or fleecy)
- campcraft (menu planning, positioning of tents, keeping tent doors closed)

Snakes

There are Adders (the UK's only venomous snake) in the area. They are not aggressive or commonly seen, but they will bite if stood on, sat on, or picked up. Because of this teams who are wild camping should always wear shoes (which the snakes cannot bite through) and not walk around bare foot, in socks, or in sandals such as flip-flops. If anyone has the unusual misfortune to be bitten, then medical assistance must be sought urgently.

Drinking water

Watercourses across Scotland can contain a variety of waterborne infections. Therefore, when wild camping it should not be assumed that streams and rivers are clean sources of drinking water, especially due to the high density of livestock and deer across large areas. Leaders should refer to the DofE *Expedition Guide* advice on taking water from streams (pg 122). Other good sources of information about health and hygiene outdoors (including issues around drinking water) are the NHS advice about **avoiding bugs and germs outdoors**, and the Mountaineering Scotland advice on **health and hygiene**.

River crossings

Rivers and streams throughout the area rise quickly after rain, or during snow melt, and careful consideration should be given to any route which involves river crossings. Even small streams can quickly become completely impassable and larger rivers can become very dangerous even if the rain has not been falling in the immediate vicinity of the planned crossing.

All teams should understand what to do in case of streams rising – stream levels will fall as fast as they rise and often waiting overnight is all that is needed. In case of snow melt, peak levels are often late afternoon/evening, and the lowest levels in the morning. Teams planning river crossings must have an alternative plan in the event of continued wet weather.

Hours of daylight

All visitors, especially those from the south, need to be aware of the shortness of daylight hours in the expedition shoulder season; March has 11 hours of daylight and the October half term a little over 9 hours.

Emergencies and Incidents

Mountain rescue

In Scotland, responsibility for the provision of rescue facilities rests with the Police Force - who will call out/co-ordinate mountain rescue as appropriate. Teams must be clear that if they need to call for help they must ask for the police, and then ask for mountain rescue. Teams may not be connected to the nearest police control room to their location, so should be clear on the general area they are in, and their exact location. **Scottish mountain rescue** has advice about the process of calling for help, and the information that should be supplied.

Teams must be trained to supply the control room with a six-figure grid-reference for their location, including the two-letter prefix code e.g. NX 345 678 not 345 678. 'GR' is not the correct prefix for any location; it is a commonly used shorthand for 'grid refence'. There is information about six figure grid references **the Ordnance Survey website**. Correct provision of a full six figure grid-reference is essential as the police computer system will not be able to interpret a grid reference without this two-letter prefix. Also, some Network Areas in Scotland have intersections of the letter labelled 100 km² grid squares in their centre, so a mistake may lead to significant delays in support from Mountain Rescue. DofE Scotland strongly recommend that all DofE route cards are prepared including two letter prefixes to avoid delays or uncertainty in emergency situations.

The Mountain Rescue teams that cover the expedition area are **Galloway MRT** and **Moffat MRT**.

Remember that in case of an incident both the team's Licenced Organisation and the **Scottish Expedition Network Coordinator** should be notified using the DofE Incident Report Form (available through the resources zone in eDofE).

Mobile signal

It should be noted that in many parts of the area telephone boxes are rare and the mobile phone network reception is limited/non-existent away from centres of population and cannot be relied upon for getting assistance. Therefore, teams must know how to deal with an emergency in a location without mobile phone signal.

Teams should be encouraged to **sign up for the 999 text service** in advance of their expedition to give them the best chance of contacting emergency services in an emergency.

Outdoor access code

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 has been implemented through the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. This provides access rights for the purposes of recreation or education across most of the land and inland

water in Scotland. This includes mountains, moorland, woods and forests, grassland, margins of arable crop fields, paths/tracks, rivers and lochs, and the coast. These access rights are balanced with responsibilities towards the environment and the interests of those who make a living from the land.

Three key principles of access

- Take responsibility for your own actions
- Respect the interests of other people
- Care for the environment.
-

For further information (including a downloadable e-book) visit www.outdooraccess-scotland.com

Any access issues should be reported to the **Scottish Expedition Network Coordinator** who will investigate.

Landuse

The **Countryside Calendar - Year** gives a month by month snapshot of typical activities and happenings in the farming and wildlife year in Scotland, any may be helpful in planning expeditions and thinking about appropriate aims.

Landowners

To identify the borders of estates see www.whoownsscotland.org.uk. There is a subscription option which gives access to see contact details.

The land to the South of the Dumfries and the South Lanarkshire Authority divide (marked on Ordnance survey maps) is primarily owned by the Buccleuch Estates. To the North of the divide is primarily owned by the Hopetoun Estates and Douglas and Angus Estates, with the remainder of the area owned by The West of Scotland Water Board, the Forest Enterprise (formerly known as the Forestry Commission) and the Tulhill Economic Forestry.

The principal estates in the Lowther Hills area are:

Buccleuch Estates Ltd, Drumlanrig Mains, Thornhill, Dumfriesshire DG3 4AG. Contact: Rosie Ogg Land Agent, Queensberry Estate, Estate Office, Tel: 01848 600 283/ 07891099037, Email; rogg@buccleuch.com

Hopetoun Estates Ltd, Newton, Broxburn, West Lothian EH52 6QD, Contact: Gamekeeper – Zander Aitken, Tel: 07824590631

Douglas & Angus Estates - Grant Conchie, Estate Manager, Douglas & Angus Estates, Newmains Home Farm, Douglas ML11 0RH, Tel: 01555 851536 / 07967 959434, Email: grant.conchie@daestates.co.uk

Forest Enterprise, Ae Forest District, Ae Village, Parkgate, Dumfriesshire DG1 1QB. Contact details – Malte Iden tel: 0300 0676917

West of Scotland Water, Camp Water Catchment Area, Contact: Katie Roberts or Mark Mitchell on 01738 621121 or by email to katie.roberts@bellingram.co.uk or mark.mitchell@bellingram.co.uk

Culter Allers Estate, McCosh Brothers, Culter Aller Mains Farm, Coulter near Biggar, ML12 6QB, Contact: Jon McCosh. Tel: 01899 220275. This estate is the land between Biggar and Lamington.

Windfarms

developments are taking place all over Scotland, including the Lowther Hills area. As a result access to some areas may be restricted during the construction phase. A map of wind farms in Scotland is available on the Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) web-site and this may be used as a guide to their location. If you are in any doubt about the likelihood of wind farm construction taking place on a planned route contact either:

Scottish Power Renewables – 0141 568 2875

or

Scottish & Southern Energy (SSE)

Noel Cummins

Corporate Affairs, SSE | Inveralmond House, 200 Dunkeld Road, Perth, PH1 3AQ

T: +44 (0)1738 516901

E: noel.cummins@sse.com

Lambing

Sheep and lambing season can start as early as February and can continue until the end of May and lambing ewes must not be disturbed. If an apparently 'lost' lamb is seen - do not touch or intervene, as the mother will not be far away. At all other times it is advised that teams should pass through sheep quietly and if possible at a distance in an effort not to disturb and stress them.

Traps

Teams may observe traps on the high moorland. These should not be touched or disturbed as they have been set by the game keepers to catch predators to the ground nesting birds, typically the Hooded Crow.

Scottish game seasons

During the deer stalking season teams should utilise the **'Heading for the Scottish Hills website'** in addition to contacting landowners to find out where and when shooting will be taking place. Teams should stay on recognised footpaths whilst in these areas for safety reasons.

Game	Season Opens	Season Closes
Salmon/Sea Trout	Jan/Feb	October (dates vary)
Trout	15th March	6th October
Roe Deer (bucks)	1st April	20th October
Red & Sika Deer (stags)	1st July	20th October
Fallow Deer (bucks)	1st August	30th April
Grouse & Ptarmigan	12th August	10th December
Snipe	12th August	30th January
Black Grouse	20th August	10th December
Wild Fowl	1st September	30th January
Partridge	1st September	31st January
Capercaillie & Woodcock	1st October	30th January
Pheasant	1st October	31st January
Roe Deer (does)	21st October	31st March
Red, Sika, & Fallow Deer (hinds)	21st October	15th February

Bothies

Bothies are basic shelters in the hills. Many are open to the public for use and managed by the **Mountain Bothies Association (MBA)**. If teams plan to use a bothy for lunch or shelter they should be aware of the **MBA's bothy code**.

DofE teams are generally advised not to camp within close proximity to a bothy without permission from the owner because of problems that come with the pressure of numbers. This often leads to issues with pollution from human waste, so risk assessment would suggest these sites are not appropriate as a campsite. You can find more information about use of Bothies, via the DofE **'Use of Bothies information sheet'**

Weather forecasts

- The Met Office provides:
 - **Forecasts with summaries for the region and 7 day detailed forecasts for the chosen town/village.**
 - **Surface pressure charts**
- **The Mountain Weather Information Service (MWIS)** provides 72 hour forecasts for 5 Scottish regions. These forecasts are for the summits of the mountains which must be considered when interpreting them for DofE use. They provide some interpretation which can assist participant understanding. The forecast that covers the area is **the Southern Uplands**.
- Outdoor conditions forecasts are available on BBC Radio Scotland (FM: 92.8-94.7, MW: 810) at 18:25 Monday-Friday, and on Saturday and Sunday at 07:00 and 19:00.

Useful Links

Dumfries and Galloway Countryside Ranger Service: Protects and provides information on the Southern Upland Way. Head Ranger: Richard Mearns, Tel: 01387 260000.

Tourist Information Centres:

Welcome Break, Motorway Service Area (Junc 13 M74), Tel/Fax: 01864 502436, E-mail abington@seeglasgow.com

Biggar - 155 High Street, Biggar ML12 6DL, Tel/Fax: 01899 221066,

Dumfries & Galloway - 64 Whitesands, Dumfries DG1 2RS, Tel: 01387 253862, Fax: 01387 24555, E-mail: info@dgtb.ossain.net, www.dumfriesandgalloway.co.uk

Lanark Horsemarket, Ladyacre Road, Lanark ML11 7LQ, Tel: 01555 661661, Fax: 01555 666143, E-mail: lanark@seeglasgow.com

Scottish Wild land areas

The Scottish Government has **defined 42 Wild land areas around Scotland**. The discussions around defining these areas and the implications of this may be of interest for teams considering aims around landuse and wildness.

DofE resources

The current DofE expedition kit list can be downloaded from:

www.dofeshopping.org/expedition-kit

A range of expedition downloads, such as the Green Form and spare expedition safety cards, can be downloaded from: **www.dofe.org/leaders/resources-and-downloads/expedition-downloads/**.

Further information of the Expedition section can be found at: **www.dofe.org/doing-your-dofe/activities-sections/expedition/**