



## YORKSHIRE DALES/PENNINES EXPEDITION AREA

### Useful information from the Expedition Network

#### Welcome!

For more information, please contact the Expedition Area Co-ordinator.

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#### Introduction

Thinking about your DofE Gold or Silver Expedition? Then look no further than the Yorkshire Dales/Pennines. This information will help you when planning your expedition.

Our team of voluntary members will be delighted to offer their expertise, knowledge of the area and general guidance whenever required to all users of the Yorkshire Dales/Pennines for the Expedition section of the DofE.

If there are any points you wish to raise or any information you still feel requires clarification please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

#### Expedition Area

The Yorkshire Dales and Pennines Expedition Area is defined as follows:

The Yorkshire Dales National Park (as far north as the A66 between Bowes and Brough), and including the Howgill Fells - see [www.yorkshiredales.org.uk](http://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk) for a more detailed map. It also covers the Nidderdale AONB: The western boundary of the AONB runs along the edge of Upper Wharfedale and is shared with the Yorkshire Dales National Park, whilst the southern boundary in Lower Wharfedale follows the course of the river close to the towns of Ilkley and Otley. To the east of the AONB are Harrogate, Ripon and Masham. The South Pennines, within the area bounded by Skipton, Keighley, Sowerby Bridge, Littleborough, Holme Chapel, Colne, and Earby.

Should an expedition cross from one network to another, the responsibility for the whole assessment is taken by the area where the expedition starts. The Green Forms/route outlines should be sent to the appropriate Expedition Co-ordinator.

## Network membership

The North Yorkshire Dales/Pennines Expedition Area has approximately 80 members available to assess Gold and Silver teams using the area. They are all very experienced in the area and all are accredited through the DofE Expedition Assessor Accreditation Scheme.

The members are all volunteers and are only reimbursed with minimal travel expenses when undertaking assessment. (Conditions require only Gold teams to operate in wild country - it is optional for Silver).

Although appropriately trained teams at Bronze level are welcomed to the area, and we would expect to receive Green Form Notification, we cannot offer assessment to these teams.

## Description

The area is characterised by broad tracts of elevated moorland, separating upland valleys, which radiate fan-like from the central watershed of Northern England. The major dales of Wensleydale (River Ure) and Swaledale drain eastwards, the Eden valley drains northwards and the smaller dales of Dentdale (River Dee) and Garsdale (River Clough) drain westward. At the western edge of the area the distinctive Howgill Fells, encompassed by the Rivers Rawthey and Lune, link the Pennines with the eastern fringes of the Lake District.

There are three long distance footpaths through the area: The Pennine Way crosses the upper reaches of Wensleydale and Swaledale, the Coast to Coast Walk along the northern side of Swaledale and the Dales Way, a mainly low level route through the western dales. These are heavily used, are often so clearly defined that they are no test of navigational skill and are severely eroded in many places. For these reasons their incorporation in expedition routes should be limited.

## The Yorkshire Dales National Park

The National Park has a team of full-time and voluntary wardens and field staff, some of whom are members of the Network. Their responsibilities include monitoring and maintenance of rights of way and liaison with landowners and farmers. The Park has Information Centres at:

- The excellent Dales Countryside Museum is in the same building as the Hawes Centre and teams in the vicinity during acclimatisation would find a visit worthwhile. The administrative office for the Park is at Grassington, in Wharfedale, and requests for information on educational services, publications etc. should be sent to: Yorkshire Dales National Park, Colend, Grassington, SKIPTON, North Yorkshire BD23 5LB. Telephone: 01756 751 690 Fax: 01756 751693 (Please ensure one enquiry per DofE group so as not to duplicate and overload the office.)
- Malham Telephone 01969 652 380
- Hawes 874898 Telephone 01969 666210
- Aysgarth Falls 0 11887 Telephone 01969 662910
- Reeth 038992 Telephone 01748 884059

In the case of emergency, there is one Search and Rescue Team serving the North Yorkshire Pennines area and this is contacted through the Police (Tel: 999). When making an emergency call from a telephone kiosk or house the location should be given and the person making the call should wait there to meet the Rescue Services. At the same time, a message should be relayed to the Assessor and the Supervisor.

There are telephones well distributed throughout the area. Mobiles should only be used in an emergency but participants and Supervisors need to recognise that signal coverage is still patchy.

## Maps

### OS 1:50 000 - deal for planning and preparing route outlines

- Sheet 98 - Wensleydale and Wharfedale
- Sheet 92 - Bamard Castle and surrounding area
- Sheet 91 - Appleby in Westmoreland ( NW part of area)
- Sheet 99 - Northallerton & Ripon (Eastern part of area)

### OS 1:25 000 - recommended for all teams when on expedition

- Sheet 30 - Yorkshire Dales - Northern and Central
- Sheet 19 - Howgills and Upper Eden Valley
- Sheet 2 - Yorkshire Dales - Southern and Western
- Sheet 31 - North Pennines - Teesdale and Weardale
- OL21 - South Pennines

## More about the area

The rocks underlying the surface over most of the area belong to the Yoredale Series, a repeated sequence of limestone, shales and sandstones. Erosion of these beds of differing thickness and hardness during the Ice Age and the deposition of glacial debris has formed the characteristic landscape - smooth rounded valley sides and lower fell slopes with outcropping vertical scars of resistant limestones giving the appearance of a giant staircase, particularly well seen in profile in parts of Wensleydale. The same process is responsible for the waterfalls which abound the main rivers and tributary streams. In contrast, the Howgill Fells belong to an earlier geological age, being composed of the strata from the eastern Lake District and having more in common with that area than the Pennines. They form a steep sided mass with little exposed rock rising to a large unenclosed dome covered with excellent turf.

The agriculture of the area is pastoral, based on sheep and cattle. Land type and usage can be considered as fertile meadowland in the valley bottom, permanent pasture on the lower slopes, rough upland grazing and acid heather moorland, suitable only for low density grazing and grouse rearing. In terms of the economy of the area, tourism and recreation have probably overtaken agriculture in importance. Major changes in farming practice over the last 40 years threaten some of the best features - the colourful hay meadows, drystone walls and barns. In parts of the region farmers are grant aided if they undertake to manage all/part of their holding by traditional methods.

Apart from wooded areas in the lower dales, tree cover is very limited and there are a few areas of commercial afforestation or broad leaved woodland. The important mixed woodland, predominately hazel, known as Freeholders Wood at Aysgarth Falls (GR 013887) is one of the few tracts of land actually owned by the National Park Authority. There are no surface reservoirs. Semerwater (920875), a glacial lake in a fine setting, is the largest stretch of natural standing water. The impressive bulk of the 14c Bolton Castle (032919) (left) commands mid-Wensleydale and on the fringes of the area are the Norman castles of Appleby, Bowes, Richmond and Middleham, the stronghold of Richard III.

The area has a long industrial history. Lead mining and smelting were of great importance and the Swaledale/Arkengarthdale field was one of the most extensive and productive in the country. Mining ceased by the end of the last century but there is still much evidence of former activity. The National Park is stabilising and partly restoring some of the structures of the most importance. Coal was also mined extensively from thin, poor quality seams mostly by sinking shallow shafts from the moor tops. Quarrying of limestone and sandstone was widespread and there are many ruined limekilns throughout the area. Powdered lime was used as a fertiliser and in mortar for building. Sandstone was the material with which almost all buildings in the northern dales were constructed. Limestone is still extracted in large quarries, mostly in the southern dales. Its main use is as a foundation for road building. Such large-scale operations in a National Park are a cause for concern.

The Settle-Carlisle railway, after a long ascent from Ribblesdale, reaches its summit at the head of Wensleydale before dropping to the Eden Valley and was the subject, some years ago, of a protracted, bitter battle to keep the line open.

In general, the highest land is in the west, the highest point being Great Shunner Fell (848973) at 716m (2,350ft), but much of the area is over 500m (1,650ft) and is exposed with little shelter. Weather conditions can change rapidly and high winds, driving rain and thick mist are not uncommon in summer. Bad weather routes, replacing elevated moorland sections, must be submitted before the venture starts. A detailed weather forecast for the area can be obtained from any National Park Centre.

## Camp sites

Generally speaking, camping is not allowed on open moorland or unenclosed land. The majority of farmers are happy to permit overnight camping but it is essential that prior arrangements are made. It is not the policy of the Network to issue a list of camp sites, but if teams give an outline of the routes, some guidance could be given.

Youth Hostels and large commercial sites offer good base accommodation for training and prior to start or at finish of an expedition.

## Youth hostels

- Hawes: 0845 3719120 GR: 868898
- Grinton Lodge: 0845 371 9636 GR: 048976
- YHA produces an annual booklet of Camping Bams: Camping Bams in England (YHA), 0870 770 8868. E: [customerservices@yha.org.uk](mailto:customerservices@yha.org.uk) [www.yha.org.uk](http://www.yha.org.uk)

## Where to plan your expedition

Gold expeditions must be in Wild Country, whilst at Silver they should be in normal rural or open country. The North Yorkshire Dales/Pennines is designated a Wild Country area and it contains tracts of desolate, high altitude land with gentler terrain towards the valley bottom.

In general there is no difference in the areas used by Silver and Gold groups. Silver groups have ample scope to devise excellent routes at comparatively low level, if they wish. On the other hand, many incorporate, for at least part of their venture, high level, remote routes appropriate to Gold (the Conditions for Silver expeditions in wild country must be complied with). Similarly, no Gold expedition is all 'head in the clouds' and will contain elements of low level journeying.

Many groups base their venture around Wensleydale, Swaledale and their tributaries, in common with many walkers. There are many routes on both side of each valley, but it is worth noting that there are only two crossings between the two dales which do not involve the use, in part of minor roads. One has already been mentioned, the Pennine Way over Great Shunner Fell. Under adverse conditions Shunner needs to be treated with respect, but much of its former challenge has been lost following the construction of a flagged path over seriously eroded areas.

The other crossing is from near Isles Bridge in Swaledale (976973) via Apedale to Castle Bolton (035918).

It is suggested therefore that some groups at least might like to turn their eyes westward to the unjustly neglected areas of the Eden Valley, Wild Boar Fell and the Howgill Fells. In particular, for a strong competent team, the full traverse of the Howgills from say, Ravenstonedale (722040) to Sedbergh could be a memorable experience and a good test of navigation.

Worth noting: Existence of a right of way does not necessarily mean there is any marking on the ground (this includes bridleways). This comes as a surprise to some groups.

The terrain is not always easy to interpret from the map when estimating timings. Most teams adopt the conventional 4km/hour. Some achieve it: many do not. There may be merit in using 3km/hour (with of course allowance for height gain, meal stops etc.). Timings can be adjusted in the light of experience - being able to reduce them, rather than increase them is a boost to morale.

Journeying through enclosed land with many wall crossings can be much slower and more frustrating than the same distance over open country. Timings need to allow for this.

## Practice expeditions

The Expedition Area is ideal for practice journeys as long as the team does not return to the same location for the qualifying expedition.

Practice expeditions need not be of the same duration as the final venture but they should be challenging enough for participants and supervisors to assess readiness for the qualifying event. Clearly they should be in similar terrain, offer multi night camping experience and offer sufficient mileage to test fitness, navigation and equipment and food choices. Lessons learnt and acted on will bode well for a successful final event.

## Other useful information

Much of the land adjacent to the eastern boundary of the National Park is in possession of the M.O.D and is used for Army Training. The ranges are clearly marked Danger Areas on O.S. Maps. The boundary therefore is basically the limit at which teams should operate. Journeying inside the boundary is not always prohibited, indeed some areas are perfectly safe, but the advice of the Network must be sought in advance of detailed planning.

Prior to designation, areas now within the Park were also used as ranges. Although nominally clear of explosive devices, occasional ones are still found. Any suspicious metal object should not be touched, its location should be noted and marked and the police informed.

There are no dangerous bogs. However, moorland becomes waterlogged after continuous rain and it is possible to sink up to knee height. Patches of vivid green should be avoided. Under bad conditions walking can be slow, tiring and demoralising.

Conversely under prolonged dry conditions, fire is a major hazard. Even after a moorland fire has apparently been extinguished, the underlying peat can burn for weeks and a whole moor can be destroyed.

Teams should be aware of the danger posed by the relics of the mining age. Although many are filled in, there are some open shafts, which are an obvious hazard. Less apparent is the danger of shafts filled with stone. They are easily recognized, resembling a bomb crater up to 2m deep, with stone and debris devoid of vegetation, around the sides and top. The temptation is to seek refuge from wind and rain in the bottom of them. The shaft is rarely solidly packed, stones being supported by a timber frame which may be rotten. Collapse is therefore possible: the greater danger is that dislodged stones may trap a foot or leg. Mine levels (stone arched tunnels, often with water flowing from them) are similarly hazardous and **MUST NOT** be entered and there must be no climbing on the crumbling walls of mine buildings.

## Expedition aims

Whether you intend to complete your expedition using the maximum amount of time to travel by your chosen method or to reduce the travelling to carry out more investigation, you will need an aim. This should be your start point for planning and preparation as the journey will need to be planned to meet the aim.

The North Yorkshire Dales/Pennines area is one of great character and diversity. It offers many opportunities for the investigation of topics of interest to individuals and teams. Such studies

can greatly add to the enjoyment and satisfaction of your adventurous journey. You chose the depth of that study by balancing the journey and investigation time within the minimum amount of planned activity per day depending on the level of your venture. As with the choice of method of reporting and to whom, the aim of your expedition is down to your interests, commitment and enthusiasm for the task to be completed.

If you chose to undertake an expedition with a commitment to investigation and exploration, then you might try to find an adult mentor to give advice and guidance through the planning stage. Clearly this should be someone knowledgeable about your chosen study subject and with skills and experience in related fieldwork. They will also be able to support you with regards prior venture reading and research.

The following list offers some suggestions of subjects:

- Geology: rocks, fossils & minerals
- The Ice Age and its effects
- The lead mining industry
- Fields, walls & barns
- Traditional dales buildings
- Stiles: type and condition
- Modern farming and landscape change
- River & stream study
- Soil & vegetation
- Flora and fauna
- Settle-Carlisle railway
- Bridges
- Tourism
- Erosion
- Changes to many aspects of life
- The future

## Access

Virtually all land, both within and outside the National Park, is privately owned. Following the implementation of the CROW Act, walkers have rights of access in those areas shown on the new Ordnance Survey maps, subject to certain restrictions. Notwithstanding, the Network remains dependent on the goodwill and co-operation of landowners and farmers and it is vital that DofE expedition teams respect their interests and follow the Countryside Code. Groups visiting the area are strongly advised, prior to their visit, to check on any restrictions in force, by contacting one of the National Park Centres.

Ideally, routes should, therefore, be planned using the extensive network of footpaths and bridleways clearly marked on the maps as public rights of way. However there are many instances of 'other roads, drive or track' not shown as rights of way and indicated by solid or pecked double lines. Some are walled lanes, some tracks over open country. Many are 'unclassified roads' a term which has no legal meaning, but walkers can confidently use them as if they were public footpaths. The Network will advise on the suitability of any that are chosen. They can be useful, particularly at the end of a long day - for example: the walled track Low Lane in Swaledale from Low Houses (983973) to Low Whita (990975) is much easier than the nearby footpath, 'an up and downer' with about 25 wall crossings.

During the expedition adherence to the approved route is important, particularly through enclosed land. Route finding through a succession of enclosures is not always obvious and constant observation and reference to map and terrain is essential. Walking in single file through meadowland will earn the approval of farmers. Many walls will be crossed by means of stone stiles. The gap in some of them may be narrow and/or the sides unstable. Care is therefore needed in negotiating them: in extreme cases it may be advisable to hand rucksacks over the wall. Bulky items, such as tents and sleeping mats, should be carried high on the pack and not under-slung.

During the time that lambs are in the fields farmers sometimes place obstructions across gap stiles to prevent them straying. Walkers are entitled to remove the obstruction to permit passage but must replace it. Permanently blocked stiles and locked gates are illegal and their location should be noted and reported to the Assessor.

Care should be taken at all times to avoid disturbing moorland birds particularly during the nesting season from April to June. Grouse shooting can take place between 12 August and 10 December except on Sundays. It is normally done by a line of beaters, carrying flags and advancing across the moor, driving the birds towards shooting butts.

If a shoot is encountered follow this procedure:

- On approaching the area (if restrictions are in force and you should, of course, be on a right of way), STOP at a prominent point.
- If in sight from the butts make sure that you have been seen.
- Respond to any request or signal to move, otherwise remain stationary and in sight all the time.
- Proceed when advised that it is safe after shooting has finished.
- If beaters are crossing the moor STOP and, if they are nearby or approaching you, again make sure you are seen and respond to any request. If they are some distance from you and moving away, wait five minutes then proceed.

With a little thought and consideration you will be safe and the shoot will not be spoiled.

## **DofE resources**

The current DofE expedition kit list can be downloaded from: [www.DofE.org/go/expeditionkit](http://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](http://www.DofE.org/go/downloads)

Further information of the Expedition section can be found at: [www.DofE.org/expedition](http://www.DofE.org/expedition)

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