

## 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:

DofE Scotland  
Rosebery House  
9 Haymarket Terrace  
Edinburgh  
EH12 5EZ

T: 0131 343 0920

E: [scotland.assessors@dofe.org](mailto:scotland.assessors@dofe.org)

### Area advisor

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

Jenny Isherwood

E: [tweedjen73@gmail.com](mailto:tweedjen73@gmail.com) (if you wish to call, please email first to arrange a suitable time)

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# Scottish Borders Expedition Area

## Introduction

Well connected by bus and train and easily accessible from both the Central Belt and Northern England, the Scottish Borders is the ideal venue for an eco-friendly expedition.

## Area boundaries

The Scottish Borders Expedition Area covers the wild country South of Edinburgh and East of the M74. To the South it is bounded by the border itself, until the A68.

The DofE website includes a downloadable **GPX of the area boundaries**.



## Choosing Your Route

### Access Issues

North of Peebles the disused railway has not been developed, and is not passable as a path.

The track and footbridge at NT 372 348 in Traquair forest does not exist. Expedition teams should avoid track this track and footbridge.

Eddleston – There is a locked gate at NT 223 461 which blocks the path shown on the map from the east from Hattonknowe.

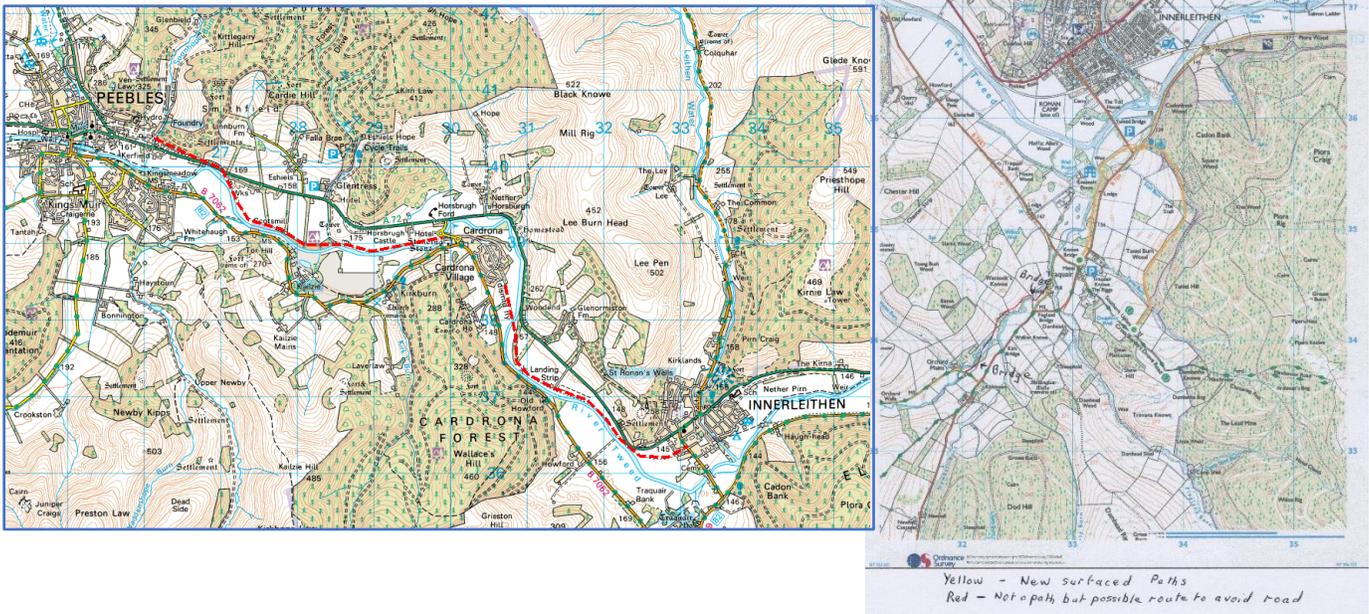
### Vehicle access

Dye Water Road – the road past Horseupcleugh (NT 665 582) to Dye Cottage and Byreclough is marked on OS maps as a yellow public road, however it is not a public road beyond Horseupcleugh (NT 665 582) and therefore permission is needed to take a vehicle beyond this.

### Bonus Paths

#### New Peebles- Innerleithen cycle path

There is a new cycle path from Peebles to Innerleithen via Cardrona, along the line of the disused railway (below left). It is not yet marked on many maps, but the route is shown below in red. This includes a foot/cycle bridge at NT 308 379.



Two new surfaced (but not sign posted) paths shown in yellow have been created near Traquair (above right). One links the cyclist car park near Tweed Bridge with the Southern Upland Way and the other links this car park with Traquair.

It is also possible, but not on a footpath or particularly easy, to walk from Orchard Mains to Traquair by following the Quair water crossing it on bridges twice. This is shown in red on the map.

## 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. **In this area walking, cycling and riding Silver and Gold teams should avoid The Southern Uplands Way.**

## Scottish Hill Tracks

Scotways, the Scottish rights of way and access society, publishes **Scottish Hill Tracks**, a book listing rights of way across Scotland’s 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 **Scottish Natural Heritage website**, with links to details from each council.

## Camping

### Serviced sites

**Ashieview Stud**, Ancrum (NT 600 255), Ancrum, Jedburgh TD8 6UN – T: 01835 830592 or 07814679854

**Blinkbonny Wood**, Gifford (NT 538 642) Princess Mary Road, Haddington, East Lothian, EH41 3NJ

**Broomlee Centre** (an outdoor centre that allows camping by DofE teams) (NT 156 506), West Linton, EH46 7BU

**Glentress Forest Lodges** (NT 287 402)

**Honey Cottage Caravanpark**, Ettrick (NT 295 163), Hope House, Ettrick Valley, Selkirk, TD7 5HU

**Jedwater Caravan Park** (NT 664 160) Jedburgh, Scottish Borders, TD8 6PJ

**Lauder Camping and Caravanning Club Site**, Carfraemill (NT 508 534) Carfraemill, Oxton, Lauder, Borders, TD2 6RA

**Melrose Gibson Park Caravan Club Site** (NT 544 341), High Street, Melrose, Scottish Borders, TD6 9RY

**Netherud** (NT 116 447) Blyth Bridge, West Linton, Peeblesshire, EH46 7AQ

**Rosetta Holiday Park**, Peebles (NT 245 414), Rosetta Road, Peebles, Peeblesshire, EH45 8PG

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[Ruberslaw Wild Woods Camping](#), Denholm (NT 585 177), Spital Tower, Denholm, Hawick, TD9 8TB

**Selkirk Victoria Campsite** (part of the Victoria leisure centre, with camping around the rugby pitch) (NT 464 288), 56 Buccleuch Rd, Selkirk TD7 5DN - T: 01750 20897

[Thirlestane Castle Caravan Park](#) (NT 536 478), Lauder, Berwickshire, TD2 6RU

[Tweedside Caravan Park](#), Innerleithen (NT 338 366), EH44 6JS

[Wooplaw Community Woodland](#) (welcomes DofE groups, although camping is not widely advertised) (NT 500 420)

### Un serviced sites

**Tibbieshiels Inn** (NT 241 205) the inn and campsite are formally closed, but the owner is still amenable to groups camping there by prior arrangement.

**Old Manor Bridge** (NT 230 394) permission to camp via the Wemyss and March estate, contact details available from the Area Advisor.

**Traquair Estate** (NT 328 358) next to the old fishing hut, permission to camp via Traquair Estate Office , contact details available from the Area Advisor.

### Wild camping

Scottish access rights (see the [Outdoor Access Code section](#) for further information) extend to wild camping for small groups (at DofE we consider this to be individual expedition teams). Although not strictly necessary, the DofE recommends that, as a courtesy and to maintain existing good relations, expedition teams inform relevant land owners of their intentions. It is reasonable for owners to react by saying why a particular site might be unsuitable and to suggest alternatives.

### Suggested wild camping sites:

Stewarton (by permission, contact Area Advisor) NT 219 455

Meldons NT 211 427

South of Stobo (by permission, contact Area Advisor) NT 182 374

Loch Eddy (by permission, contact Area Advisor) NT 280 310

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.**

Teams should consult the advice on camping in the Expedition Guide (page 101). There is also lots of useful information and resources about wild camping available via [Mountaineering Scotland](#) and [The Outdoor Access Code](#).

### 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’](#).

## Travel and transport to the area

### 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](#).

## Expedition aim ideas

### 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 land use, flora and fauna and wilderness.

## Physical and Human Geography

The Scottish Borders are in the eastern part of the Southern Uplands.

The region is hilly and largely rural, with the River Tweed flowing west to east through it. In the east of the region, the area that borders the River Tweed is flat and is known as 'The Merse'. The Tweed and its tributaries drain the entire region with the river flowing into the North Sea at Berwick-upon-Tweed, and forming the border with England for the last twenty miles or so of its length.

## History

The region is defined as much by the landscape as it is by its spellbinding abbeys, awe-inspiring stately homes and castles, and the time-honoured and truly unique Common Ridings. It’s really no surprise that these lands inspired the works of literary greats like Sir Walter Scott and John Buchan.

The former counties of Roxburghshire and Berwickshire historically bore the brunt of the conflicts with England, both during declared wars such as the Wars of Scottish Independence, and armed raids which took place in the times of the Border Reivers. Thus, across the region are to be seen the ruins of many castles, abbeys and even towns.

Although there is evidence of some Scottish Gaelic in the origins of place names such as Innerleithen ("confluence of the Leithen"), Kilbucho and Longformacus, which contain identifiably Goidelic rather than Brythonic Celtic elements and are an indication of at least a Gaelic-speaking elite in the area, the main languages in the area since the 5th century appear to have been Brythonic (in the west) and Old English (in the east), the latter of which developed into its modern forms of English and Scots.

## Hazards

### Ticks

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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.

Some useful resources about ticks:

- Lyme Disease Action has useful downloadable [leaflets about ticks and Lyme disease](#).
- [Stop the tick](#) has lots of infographics (some are a bit graphic, but informative)
- 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 disproportionate 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). 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 barefoot, 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. [Mountaineering Scotland](#) 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. The two letter prefix locates your grid reference within a 100km square; a mistake here 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 teams that cover the expedition area are Tweed Valley MRT and Borders 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 and 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

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- Care for the environment.

For further information (including a downloadable e-book) visit [www.outdooraccess-scotland.com](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com)

Any access issues should be reported to the [Scottish Expedition Network Coordinator](#) who will investigate.

### Landuse

The [Countryside Calendar](#) 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](http://www.whoownsscotland.org.uk) . There is a subscription option which gives access to see contact details.

### Lambing

Sheep and lambing season is usually between around 10th April until around 25th 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.

<b>Game</b>	<b>Season Opens</b>	<b>Season Closes</b>
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

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Red, Sika, & Fallow Deer (hinds)	21st October	15th February
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## 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
- Mountain area forecasts for North Grampian and South Grampian and Southeast Highlands. This includes a forecast for the region, with forecasts for individual summits available. These summit forecasts are for the summit height of the mountain, which should be considered when teams interpret them.

**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

Listed below are some links you may find useful. Please note that the Scottish Borders Expedition Area does not directly endorse any of the sites listed.

<https://scotland-info.co.uk/scottish-borders.htm> A tourist information site with lots of useful advice.

### DofE resources

The current DofE expedition kit list can be downloaded from:

**[www.dofeshopping.org/expedition-kit](http://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/](http://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/](http://www.dofe.org/doing-your-dofe/activities-sections/expedition/)**