

The Otterburn Ranges

Controlled ACCESS AREA

This area of the Otterburn Ranges offers a variety of routes across one of the remotest parts of Northumberland. The military roads are best explored by road bike and with some steep ascents you'll need low gears!

1 Ridley Crag and Stewartshiels

A walk from the Roman fort of Bremenium at High Rochester around Ridley Crag into Stewartshiels Plantation using rough footpaths and forest roads. Distance 10km (6.5 miles)

Start: The A68 layby opposite the café in Rochester. Cross the road and take the permissive path left of the café for 1km to the Roman fort at High Rochester. Before reaching the road cross a stile and take the path around the W side of the fort until you join a footpath heading NW. Follow this footpath along Sils burn for 800m until you reach a forestry plantation at which point turn R uphill. After 300m a stile takes you into Stewartshiels Plantation. With the forest to your R and open fell on your L continue until you join a forest road. Turn L on the road and after 200m turn L again to follow the forest edge path for a further 1.2km. At a waymarking post turn R into the forest for 125m and R again on to a forest road. Head S for 1km and at road junction turn L for 450m to join a public footpath. Turn R for 350m and leave the forest by means of a stile. Continue SW for 1.1km at which point the path joins a farm track. Turn R for 400m and follow the path around the N and W side of Hillock Farm and then head due south for 500m crossing a stream and back to the Roman fort at High Rochester. Follow the path round the E and S side of the fort and you will rejoin the path back to Rochester for a well earned snack in the cafe. (This route is open all year round if you proceed straight on (SE) for 600m at point' above and use the forest edge path to the stile at point.')

2 Dere Street Circuit

This 30km ride takes you up the western side of the Otterburn Ranges to Ridlees Cairn, to the Roman camps at Chew Green, returning by Dere Street.

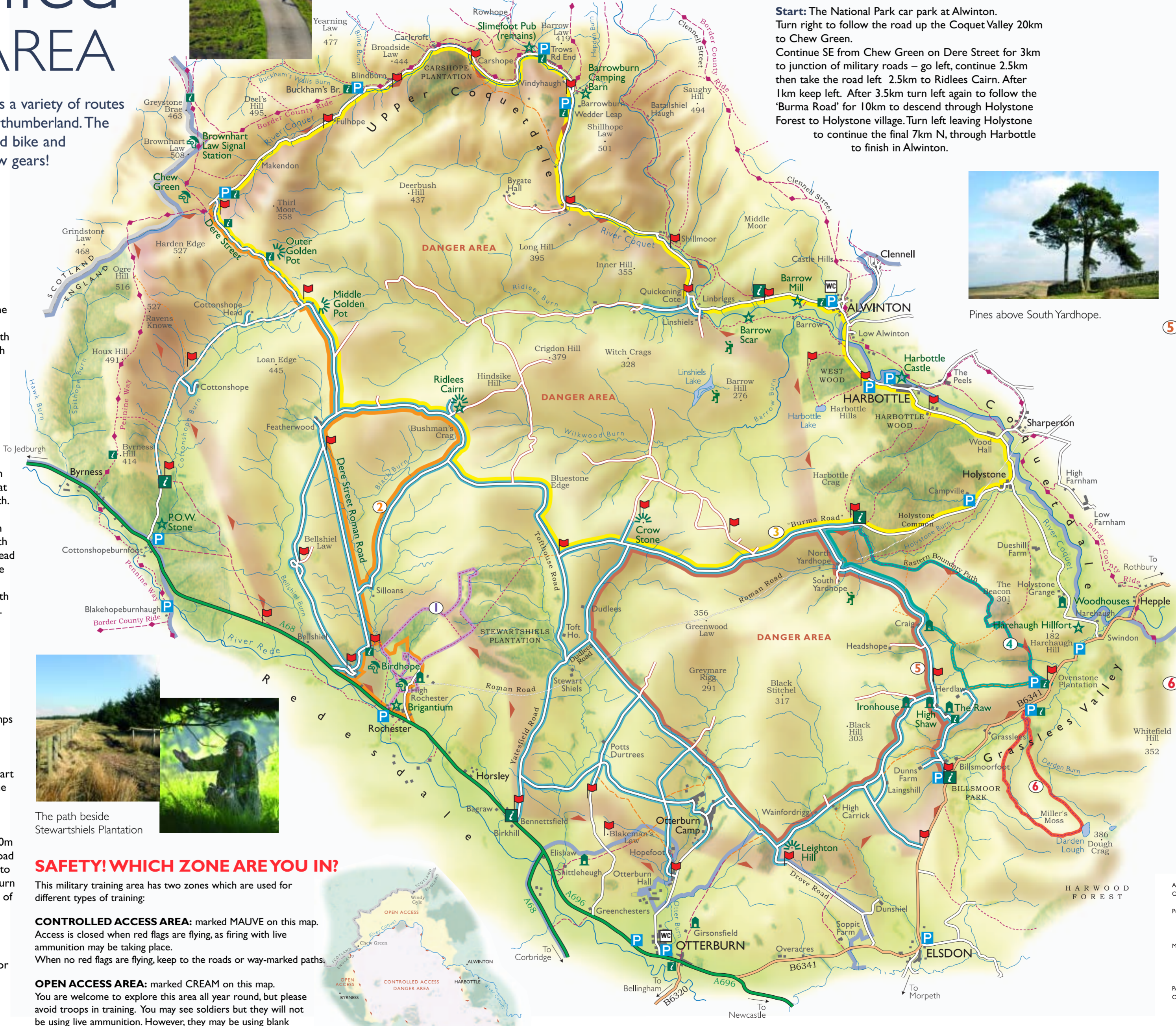
NB. For cyclists the first section is on rough forest tracks, so for bikes with racing tyres the alternative start is by turning L on A68 to approach Dere Street via the road to Redesdale camp. (30km / 19 miles)

Start: The lay-by opposite the café in Rochester. Go right along A68 for 300m to take first road left 800m to High Rochester. Go through the gate and up the road 1km to Hillock. After the pond, take the track right into the forest for 300m. When this meets a larger track turn left downhill for 800m, until you see the straight road of Dere Street on right. Head 1km up the road. Take first right to continue 4.5km to Ridlees Cairn. Continue in same direction 2.5km and turn right at junction back onto Dere Street. After 2.5km turn right where the roads meet, to go for 3km along the ridge and down to Chew Green. Return the same way, but keep on Dere Street the whole way for 10km, with a great straight descent to the 'T' junction. Turn right to go past Redesdale camp 1km and rejoin the A68 for 500m left back to the café.

IF IN DOUBT please contact Range Control, tel. 01830 520569.



The Roman road of Dere Street is part of a fine route for cyclists.



3 50K Challenge

This circular cycle route takes you from Alwinton through the remote beauty of Coquetdale to the Roman camps at Chew Green and then back along the upland spine of the military training area. (50km / 31 miles)

Start: The National Park car park at Alwinton. Turn right to follow the road up the Coquet Valley 20km to Chew Green. Continue SE from Chew Green on Dere Street for 3km to junction of military roads – go left, continue 2.5km then take the road left 2.5km to Ridlees Cairn. After 1km keep left. After 3.5km turn left again to follow the 'Burma Road' for 10km to descend through Holystone Forest to Holystone village. Turn left leaving Holystone to continue the final 7km N, through Harbottle to finish in Alwinton.



Pines above South Yardhope.

4 The Eastern Boundary

A challenging walk over rough terrain requiring navigation skills, with one long stretch of military road. Rewards with views over the River Coquet and Simonside. Distance 17.5km (11 miles)

Start: Park at the lay-by by Ovenstone Plantation. After the gate join the wall NVV for 500m until the wood. Go through the gate for 500m through the wood, keeping parallel to the wall. After the wood follow the waymarked path N for 1km up to forest below The Beacon. This will be hard going! Follow path 1km around the forest which climbs to The Beacon (301m). From here the way is clear along the fence line for 3km. At the forest follow the path which skirts its perimeter for 2km. Cross the bridge over the Holystone Burn. 100m to a gate to join the track along the edge of the wood. Follow the track for 1km to the metalled 'Burma Road'. Turn left. Take 2nd left, after 800m. Follow the road down into the valley and up to the wood 2.5km. Continue 700m to Craig. Take the footpath SE through a field, 600m down to cross the stream and recross after 75m over a ford, to head up the hill to a gate. After the gate keep on the rough track 1km, until the bridleway heads E for 2km back to the starting point.

5 The Bastle Circuit

A 25km circular cycle route to the heart of the Training Area starting near the bastles of the Grasslees valley. Warning: there are some long climbs! (25km / 16 miles)

Start: Billsmoorfoot car park on B6341 and enter Training Area. Head N for 7km past The Raw, High Shaw and Craig. Turn left onto the Burma Road. Head W for 4.5km. Take left to descend 2km past Dudlees Farm. At fork keep left for 6km to take left at Leighton Hill. A steep descent and ascent takes you 2km to High Carrick. Continue NE for 2km back to the bastles and down 1.5km back to the car park.



6 Darden Lough

A well marked walk into the Fell Sandstone Simonside hills, with spectacular views from the heights. Distance 7.5 km (4.5 miles)

Start: Park in the lay-by on the Rothbury to Elsdon Road (B6341) and go through the gate. Follow the trail until the bridge over the Grasslees Burn. Cross the bridge and head SE up the hill following the white posts to Darden Lough 3.5km. From the Lough, head WSW for 500m to the cairn. Return 3.5km by the track heading NW and then NE back to the starting point.

SAFETY! WHICH ZONE ARE YOU IN?

This military training area has two zones which are used for different types of training:

CONTROLLED ACCESS AREA: marked MAUVE on this map. Access is closed when red flags are flying, as firing with live ammunition may be taking place. When no red flags are flying, keep to the roads or way-marked paths.

OPEN ACCESS AREA: marked CREAM on this map. You are welcome to explore this area all year round, but please avoid troops in training. You may see soldiers but they will not be using live ammunition. However, they may be using blank rounds and pyrotechnics.

Please obey all signs and do not enter MOD roads where a red flag is flying.

Do not touch or pick up any object lying on the ground.



ACCESS	PLACES OF INTEREST
Otterburn Ranges (training area)	Roman site
Controlled access - danger area	Battle
Public roads with unlimited access	Other place of interest
A road	Viewpoint
B road	Rock climbing
Minor road	
MOD roads-	VISITOR SERVICES
Road open most of year	Welcome panel
Open when red flags are not flying	Other information
No public access at any time	Car park
	Toilets
PATHS	OTHER INFORMATION
Open at all times	National boundary
Bridleway	Northumberland National
Path	Park boundary
Long distance route	Woodland
Open when red flags are not flying	Lake/reservoir/river/stream
Bridleway	
Path	
Danger flag sites	

NB. All climbers must visit www.thebmc.co.uk for information on accessing climbs here.

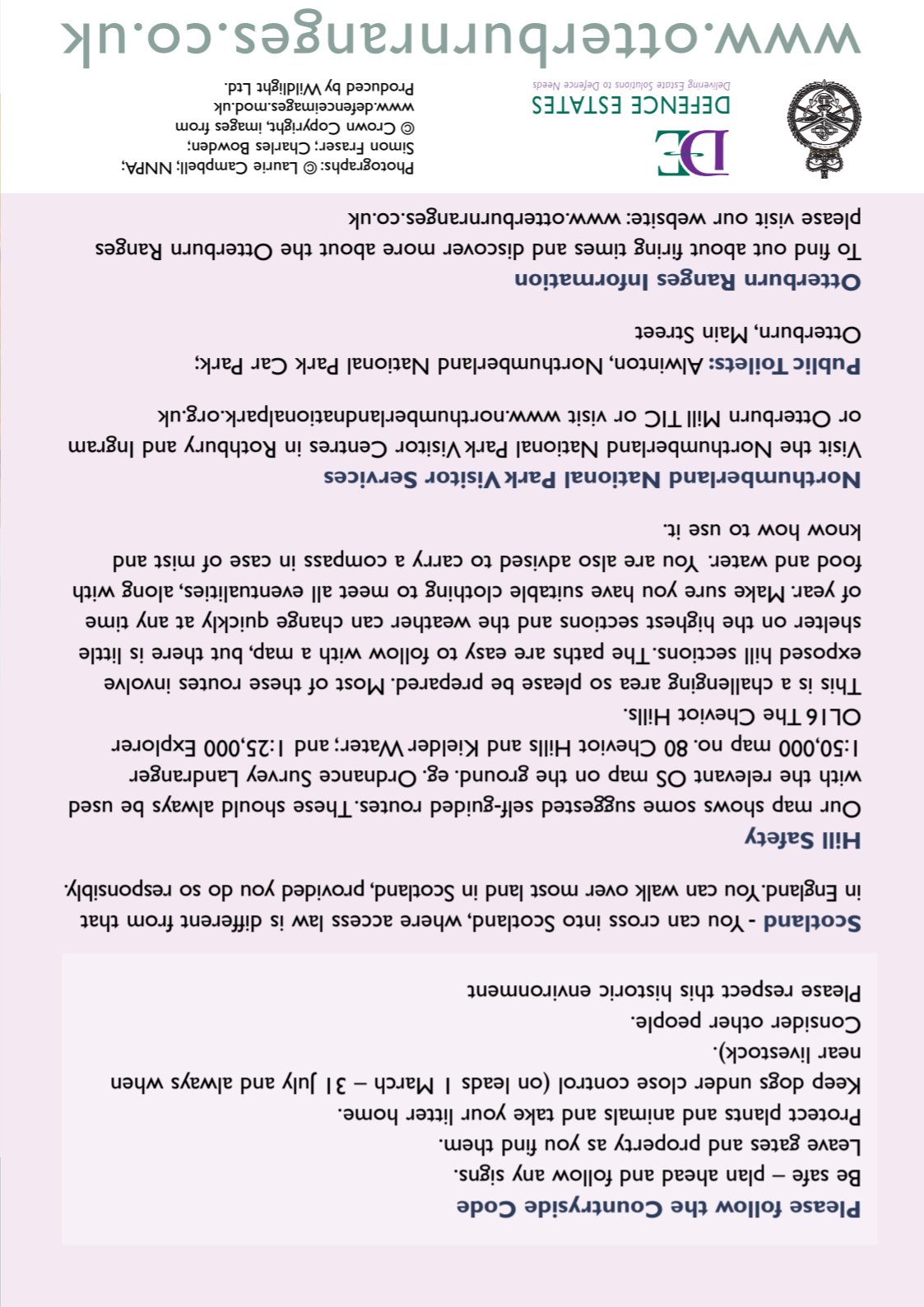
Welcome to the Otterburn Ranges.

This military training area has some of the most breathtaking views in Northumberland National Park.

The **Controlled Access Area** of the Ranges lies south and west of the River Coquet valley and is an upland area of hills, moors, wooded valleys and farmland. It is used for training with live ammunition and artillery.

The map inside explains where you may go. If red flags are flying the military roads in this area will be closed to visitors. When you don't see red flags, you are welcome to use some of the most remote roads in the country.

Marked footpaths through parts of the estate and open roads for cyclists give views of the distant hills beyond Redesdale, Coquetdale and the Grasslees Valley.



Military Training

Otterburn Range is the second largest live firing range in the country and has been used for military training since 1911. It covers over 90 square miles. The wide variety of terrain and the farms on the ranges with their buildings, fields and livestock provide a realistic environment for the British and NATO soldiers who train here each year with the latest infantry weapons, artillery and helicopters.

The **Controlled Access Area** is used for training using live ammunition and pyrotechnics – do not touch or pick up any object lying on the ground.

A wide selection of live firing ranges provide facilities for weapons from 5.56mm calibre small arms to artillery and 30mm guns on armoured reconnaissance vehicles. The soft nature of the ground precludes the use of heavy armoured vehicles such as Main Battle Tanks.

If in doubt about where you can go, please contact Range Control on 01830 520569.

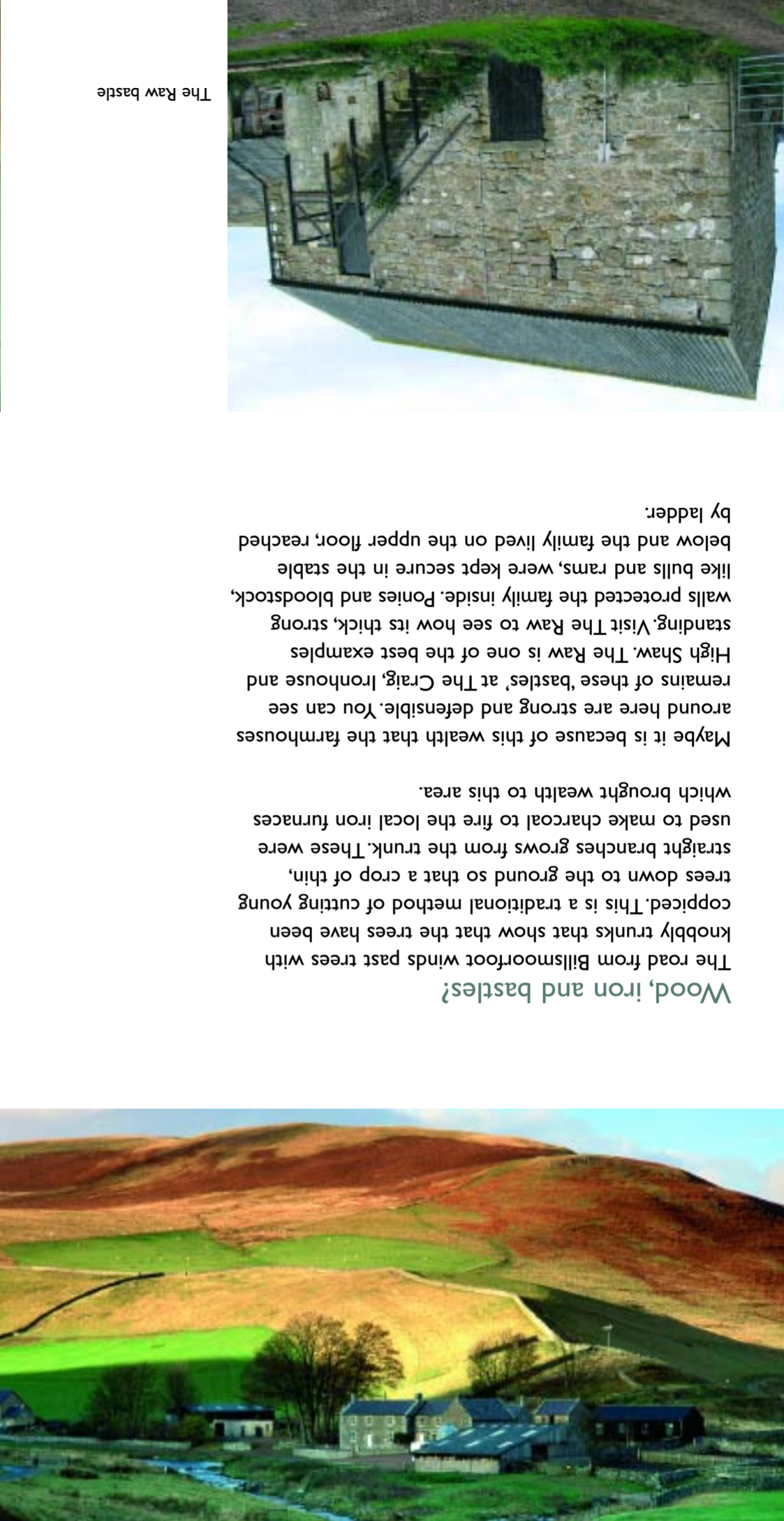


A rugged past

The Roman road of Dere Street crosses the north west of the training area. Built in 71-81AD by Governor Julius Agricola, it stretched over 200 miles from York to the legionary outpost fort at Inchtuthil, near Perth.

Although there are no Roman forts on the estate there are several camps along the road. In the early years of the conquest of northern Britain these camps were home to squads of road-building soldiers.

You can visit the earthworks of Roman camps at Chew Green and Birdhope or travel along Dere Street itself. Long after the Romans had left Britain this remained the main route for armies both sides of the border.



Farming

There are 31 farms on the Ranges, all of which raise sheep. This part of Northumberland is one of the most important sheep farming areas in the country. The cold climate and moorland soils and vegetation limit agriculture to grazing for hardy breeds, though some forage is grown on improved land. Many of the farms also have cattle.

Forestry

The woodlands on the Ranges are managed not only for timber – they provide shelter for troops, and a tactical environment for them to train in and around. For military training purposes woodland needs to be windfirm, fire resistant and provide continuous all year tree cover.

These forests also provide a home for wildlife such as red squirrels and buzzards.