

# The Otterburn Ranges

## ACCESS MAP

This **MILITARY TRAINING** area in the heart of Northumberland National Park is rich in folklore and history. A land of story and struggle – discover where history ends and legend begins.



### Edge of Empire

The Roman road of Dere Street crosses the Training Area. Built in 71-81AD by Governor Julius Agricola, it carried troops and supplies from York as far as the legionary outpost fort at Inchtuthil, over 100 miles north of here. Visit the earthworks of Roman camps at Chew Green and at Birdhope or travel along Dere Street itself.

### Outer Golden Pot – a military view

Used by the military to observe artillery and missile training on the ranges, Outer Golden Pot gives views across the Redesdale Range, an 'all-arms' range where modern soldiers train for operational deployment across the world. Red flags are flown when training is taking place, to indicate that the roads across the ranges are closed to public access.

### More sheep than people

Sheep have been grazed in the Cheviots since the 13/14th century. Look out for the white-faced Cheviot, which has been bred in these bleak, windswept hills for over 600 years, and the horned Scottish Blackface. Sheep and cattle are cleared from the training area before any live firing begins. The circular stone pens you see are 'stells' which shelter sheep in winter.

### SAFETY! WHICH ZONE ARE YOU IN?

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

**OPEN ACCESS AREA:** marked CREAM on the 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.

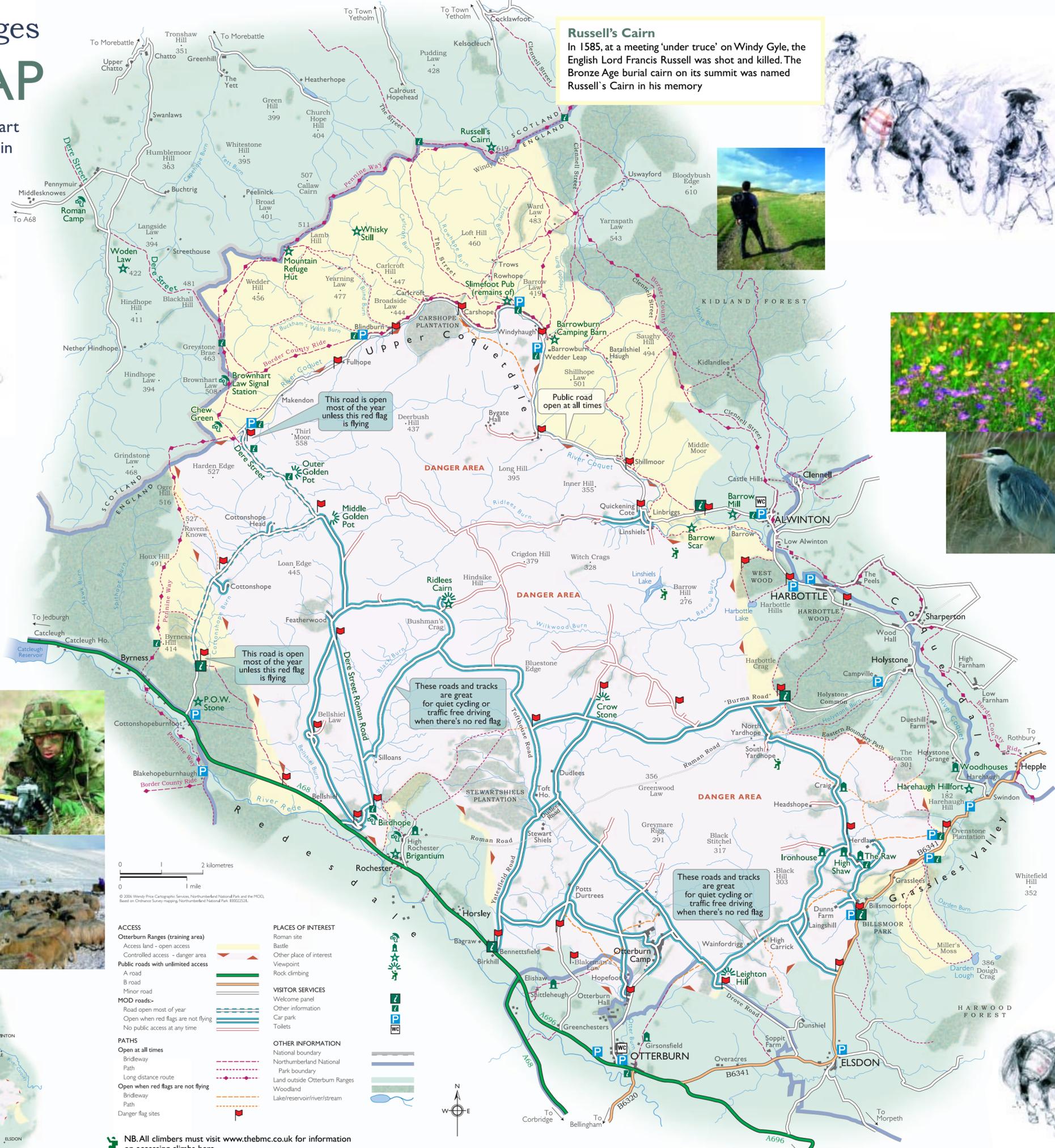
**CONTROLLED ACCESS AREA:** marked MAUVE on the map. Access is closed when red flags are flying, as firing with live ammunition may be taking place.

When no red flags are flying, keep to the roads or way-marked paths.

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.

**IF IN DOUBT please telephone Range Control 01830 520569.**



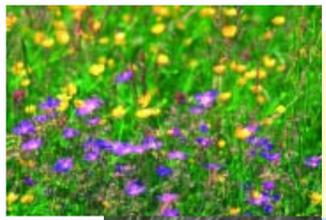
**Russell's Cairn**  
In 1585, at a meeting 'under truce' on Windy Gyle, the English Lord Francis Russell was shot and killed. The Bronze Age burial cairn on its summit was named Russell's Cairn in his memory



**Whisky in the Jar**  
In the 1800s whisky smugglers stole their way down the drove roads that crossed the border ridge. Excise-men would patrol the hills, stopping and searching carts and travellers for contraband liquor. Smugglers like Black Rory then turned to making their own whisky by Coquetdale's fast flowing streams. You can trace the remains of these stills to this day.

**Making Hay**  
Coquetdale was a thriving community in Victorian times. Farmers from the valley held dances, markets and mass-clippings of their sheep at Barrowburn village hall. The meadows at Barrowburn Farm are full of wild flowers in June and July. Today, these upland haymeadows are a protected habitat.

**Folklore**  
Wedder Leap, near Barrowburn, takes its name from a local legend. A thief stole a 'wedder' (male sheep) and tried to escape over the burn. He lost his footing and, dragged down by the weight of the sheep, was drowned in the stream's cold depths.



The bridge at Wedder Leap

**Wood and Iron**  
The Grasslees Valley once rang to the sound of the iron furnaces that brought wealth to this area. Perhaps it was because of this wealth that the farmhouses here were so strong and defensible. See remains of these 'bastles' at The Craig, Ironhouse and High Shaw. The Raw is one of the best examples to visit.

**Murder!**  
In 1791 seamstress Margaret Crozier was murdered by William Winter at The Raw Farm. He was arrested, tried and executed and his body condemned to hang in chains within sight of the scene of his crime. Winter's Gibbet, near Harwood Forest, can be seen to this day.



NB. All climbers must visit [www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk) for information on accessing climbs here.



# Access MAP & GUIDE

The Otterburn Ranges

Northumberland National Park

**Please follow the Countryside Code**  
Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs. Leave gates and property as you find them. Protect plants and animals and take your litter home. Keep dogs under close control (on leads 1 March – 31 July and always when near livestock). Consider other people. Please respect this historic environment

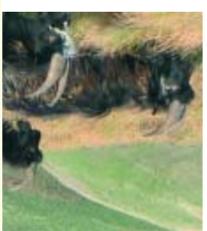
**Scotland** - You can cross into Scotland, where access law is different from that in England. You can walk over most land in Scotland, provided you do so responsibly. Remember take only photographs – leave only footprints.

**Northumberland National Park Visitor Services**  
Find out more about exploring this area – visit the Northumberland National Park Visitor Centres in Rothbury and Ingram or Otterburn Mill TIC or visit www.northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk.

**Public Toilets:** Alwinton, Northumberland National Park Car Park; Otterburn, Main Street

**Hill Safety**  
The map overlaid shows some suggested self-guided routes. These should always be used with the relevant OS map to follow routes on the ground. eg. Ordnance Survey Landranger 1:50,000 map no. 80 Cheviot Hills and Kielder Waters; and 1:25,000 Explorer OL16 The Cheviot Hills.

**Otterburn Ranges Information**  
To find out about firing times and discover more about the Otterburn Ranges please visit our website: www.otterburnranges.co.uk



**Birds and beasts**  
Because of its remoteness the Otterburn Training Area is a haven for wildlife. Herons feed on trout or salmon fry in the River Coquet. Dippers walk its bed to feed on insects and their larvae.

The MOD's conservation team, based at Otterburn Camp, has provided barn owl nesting boxes at farms on the estate. As a result, there has been a marked increase in barn owl chicks raised here over the last few years.

You may be lucky enough to see a merlin, buzzards or black grouse, or chance upon the flocks of feral goats that roam the heather along the border ridge.



Fell sandstone and heather near Darden Lough. Bilberries grow in profusion.



**Remarkable rocks**  
Around 400 million years ago, a chain of volcanoes flung out lava and ash which weathered to form the distinctive, whale-back hills of the Open Access Area north of the river Coquet. Walk or ride in these hills and imagine them as smoky heaps of cooling rock!

Fifty million years later, a shallow, tropical sea washed against these bare hills. Massive river deltas fed into it pushing great fans of sand and silt westwards. These have compressed into the rocks of the Carboniferous period (about 354 to 290 million years ago) that form crags and hills on the Controlled Access Area.

The craggy outcrops of Fell Sandstone that you can see from the walk up to Darden Lough, or along the Eastern Boundary Path, were once sands swept along in the currents of these ancient rivers.

## Welcome to the Otterburn Ranges.

This military training area has some of the most breathtaking scenery in Northumberland National Park with miles of walks and rides for bike and horseback.

There are two zones with different access arrangements for exploring this rich and varied area: Open Access Area; and Controlled Access Area. The large map inside explains where you can go.

You can also pick up a more detailed guide for each area with some suggested routes.



## Military Training

Otterburn 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 farm 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 **Open Access Area** is used for training with blank ammunition and pyrotechnics; it is always open. The **Controlled Access Area** is used for training with live ammunition and pyrotechnics.

Live firing is suspended here during lambing time (mid-April to mid-May) and over Bank Holiday weekends including Christmas to New Year.



## A land of passage

The Cheviot Hills and the border ridge have been crossed by people from the earliest times and the roads used by cattle drovers and pedlars, soldiers and 'reivers' – fighting men, thieves and cattle rustlers – from both sides of the border.

Three ancient track-ways cross into Scotland – Dere Street, The Street and Clennell Street. The Pennine Way follows the border ridge and on a clear day you can see deep into Scotland. These tracks all follow the tops of ridges and after the first steep climb out of the valley you can enjoy wide views across the 'land of the far horizon'.

Dere Street, the great Roman road north from York to legionary forts in Scotland crosses the Controlled Access Area and – when the red flags are down – provides a cycling route with panoramic views across Redesdale and beyond.



The **Open Access Area** covers the Coquet Valley and the hills to the north up to the border ridge, and a part of Grasslees valley to Darden Lough in the south. You may see soldiers training here but they will not be using live ammunition and you are free to explore on foot, or ride its bridleways by bike or horseback all year round.

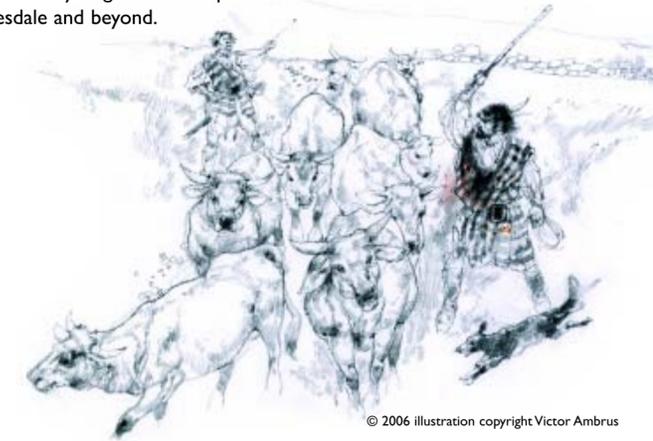
The **Controlled Access Area** lies south and west of the River Coquet and is an upland area of hills, moors, wooded valleys and farmland. It is used for training with live ammunition and artillery. Red flags fly when training is taking place and the roads are closed to visitors. When there are no red flags, you are welcome to use some of the most remote roads in the country.

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



Artillery System 90

The Controlled Access Area is closed to visitors when training is taking place. Do not enter any road by which a red flag is flying.



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