


Access Opportunities on the Defence Estate

Castlelaw Edinburgh



Circular route across the Pentland Hills giving fine views of the surrounding hills and reservoirs.

Distance: 5 miles (8 km)
Duration: 3 hours
Grade: 

OS Map Sheet(s)

OS Sheet Landranger 66 (1:50,000)
OS Sheet Explorer 344 (1:25,000)

Starting grid reference: GR 230 637

Site description/history

The MoD estate at Castlelaw and Dreghorn is located within the Pentland Hills Regional Park extending to some 775 hectares. Much of the MoD Estate lies within the Edinburgh Green Belt and is close to the city suburbs.

A variety of habitat types are found on the estate ranging from woodlands, rough grassland and gorse scrub, culminating in open heather moorland in the more upland areas of the hill range. Small burns and wetlands are present together with woodland plantations. Although military training is the primary land use, the estate is also used for agriculture, principally sheep grazing.

Walk Description

This walk begins at Castlelaw **A** (GR 230 637) where a signpost directs you uphill, towards Castlelaw Hill Fort and underground chamber **B** (GR 229 638). This is a fairly broad track with a gentle gradient.

From Castlelaw Hill Fort, climb Castlelaw Hill and traverse the eastern slope. Continue along this path keeping the Danger Area fence on your left for approximately 500m. The path then deviates from the Danger Area fence, northwards, and ascends to Fala Knowe **C** (GR 226 655). From here, drop down to a cattle grid giving pleasant views down the Kirk Burn and south across the Pentlands. Continue northwards between Allermuir and Capelaw Hills.

At point **D** (GR 223 660), take the left-hand track, traversing the northeast slope of Capelaw Hill. After approximately 400m take a track on the left dropping down to a stile. Cross the stile and continue north and

get fantastic views of Edinburgh and the Forth Estuary. The path then descends and bears left towards Bonaly Reservoir at **E** (GR 217 666). Follow the path along the fence with Bonaly Reservoir on your right **F** (GR 211 661).

You re-enter the Training Area approximately 100m south of the reservoir and continue along the path to traverse the south-western slope of Capelaw Hill for approximately 0.5 mile (1km). The route then takes you outside the training area again **G** for approximately 0.5 mile (1km) down towards Kirk Bridge **H**.

The path gently curves away from the fence beyond the reservoir and is waymarked down a tributary glen of the Kirk burn. The path crosses the burn and leaves the Training Area at **G** (GR 211 653), then rises gently over a spur before descending to Kirk Bridge at **H**.



At Kirk Bridge **H** (GR 216 641), re-enter the training area and follow the road southeastwards. After 300m take a track on the left (signposted to Castlelaw) **I** (GR 219 639) and head uphill to join a track. Turn right along the track to Castlelaw car park, giving good views across the Pentland Hills. Alternatively, from Kirk Bridge **H**, follow the road for approximately 1 mile (1.6km) to point **J** (GR 226 633). Follow the path northwards back to Castlelaw car park **A** (GR 230 637).

You can also walk from Dreghorn **K** (GR 224 679) to undertake the circular walk (or just a linear walk) following the track along the Howden Beck valley up towards Allermuir and Capelaw Hill.

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Points of interest

The Castlelaw Hill Fort and Ring Ditch House are significant landscape features well worth a visit. Dating from the Iron Age, the fort is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Restrictions/Access times

Live firing is restricted to the Live Firing Range at Castlelaw. The primary land use is for military dry training (i.e. use of blank ammunition). Red Flags (daytime) and lamps (night-time) are flown/shown when firing is taking place and walkers are not allowed into this Danger Area. The circular walk is accessible at all times and the firing range is clearly demarcated by a fence. This fence must not be crossed at any time.

Safety

Some of the paths/tracks are used by mountain bikers, so walkers should be aware of other users on the routes.

Local facilities

There are car parking facilities at Castlelaw **A**, Dreghorn **K**, Flotterstone Visitor Centre **L** and Boghall **M**. The Pentland Hills Regional Park Headquarters are located at Boghall **M**.

Useful contact details

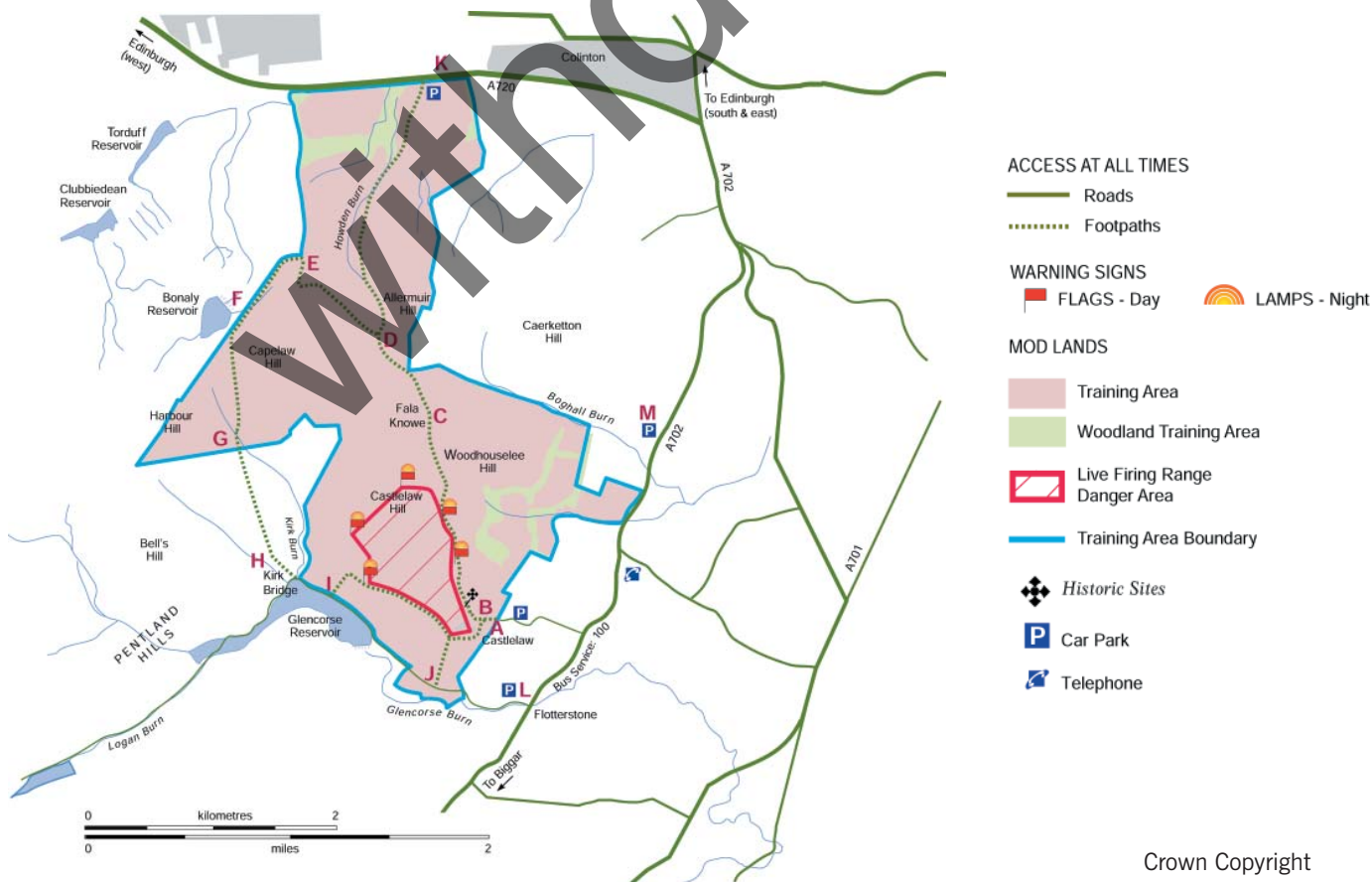
Castlelaw Range Tel: 0131 310 4943.

For information on local public transport, call traveline on 0870 608 2608 (local call rate) or www.traveline.org.uk

Other useful publications

The Pentland Hills Regional Park Visitor Guide and Mountain Bike Leaflets, Mountain Biking in the Pentland Hills

Harveys Superwalker Map Pentland Hills (1:25,000)



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