

STROMNESS TO LEITH WALK

Extended Walk Visitor Management Plan

v2015



Walk Rating: Green

Staff/Guest ratio: 1/20 (minimum)

Max Guests: 100

Map: Busen Region, Series BAS 25, Sheets 5A and 5B

INTRODUCTION

This is a pleasant route to Leith from Stromness and is currently marked on the map (details above). It provides very straightforward walking but access is limited by fur seal numbers during breeding season. In this case it would be possible to land Zodiacs on the beach below waypoint 4 on the north side of the bay.

Note there is a high level route that can avoid the fur seals. This unfortunately has an awkward step with a very large drop below that can't be protected adequately without the use of a rope. For this reason it is not recommended but should small competent parties so wish, it does provides an alternative to the route described here. This high level route is designated as a Red rated route and should only be undertaken by skilled and very experienced guides and visitors (max group size 10).

Extended walks should never be undertaken if guides or visitors have any concerns. Careful consideration must be given to the fitness and ability of visitors intending to undertake the walk before participation can be approved. The remote location, lack of medical facilities and highly changeable weather mean that the consequences of an accident on an extended walk will be far more serious than would otherwise be the case in other less remote locations. For this reason alone, it is inappropriate to treat these walks as something that 'anyone can do'.

It is a condition of the visit permit that Visit Permit Holders (and all staff) adhere Site Visitor Management Plans and guidelines for extended walks. Permit Holders must ensure that all other staff and guides are equally well briefed and that they adhere to all SVMP's.



WALK PLANNING AND PREPARATION

○ Walk Grading

Extended walks have all been graded on the basis of length, terrain and technical difficulty.

The Stromness to Leith Walk has been graded as green.

Green Walk:

- Straightforward walk, which might cover large distances, but poses little technical difficulty and does not require difficult navigation or route choices en route
- Minimum staff (guide) to visitor ratio: 1:20. Additional staff should accompany the walk to ensure adequate staffing levels are maintained at all times to manage and respond to any incident arising.
- Suitable for adequately fit novice hill walkers. Robust footwear is essential, and walking boots are recommended.
- Maximum group size 100 visitors, plus guides / staff. Guides are strongly encouraged to manage walkers in discrete groups, rather than one long extended chain.

○ Waypoints

The waypoints have been produced as an aid to navigation on the walks. In the majority of cases, these provide a tangible point to head towards in poor visibility; the ground covered between the points is at the discretion of the leader and will depend on, for example, the nature and experience of the group.

○ Staff Experience

Leading guides should ideally hold recognised qualifications (for example Mountain Leader Award).

All staff should be able to use GPS, map and compass and hold a current first aid qualification. Previous hill walking and guiding experience is important. Every staff member is expected to have sufficient experience to be able to independently and confidently manage and navigate a group of visitors down off a hill to safety.

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○ Staff Equipment

There should be sufficient equipment carried by the each staff member to keep a group sheltered from the elements, raise the alarm if necessary, deal with immediate first aid, and have the tools to navigate independently.

This should include:

- Compass and whistle
- Local area map (plus GPS as required)
- Spare food and drink
- Spare clothing
- Basic first aid kit
- VHF

As a group, the staff should ensure they carry:

- 1 Iridium phone (minimum)
- 2 GPS units and spare batteries (minimum), more are required for larger groups
- Spare walking poles
- Group shelters to accommodate the complete party distributed between staff members

○ Visitors Equipment

Visitor's personal equipment should include:

- Spare clothing
- Hat and gloves
- Emergency food & Drink (or access to these at all times)
- Personal medication (in case of delay ashore)
- Walking poles (if they normally used).

Careful consideration must always be given to footwear. Wellington boots should be avoided, particularly if visitors are not steady on their feet. Walking boots are strongly encouraged and recommended for this walk, due to the slippery conditions.

Guides should pay close attention to the footwear worn by the visitors.

○ Medical Provision

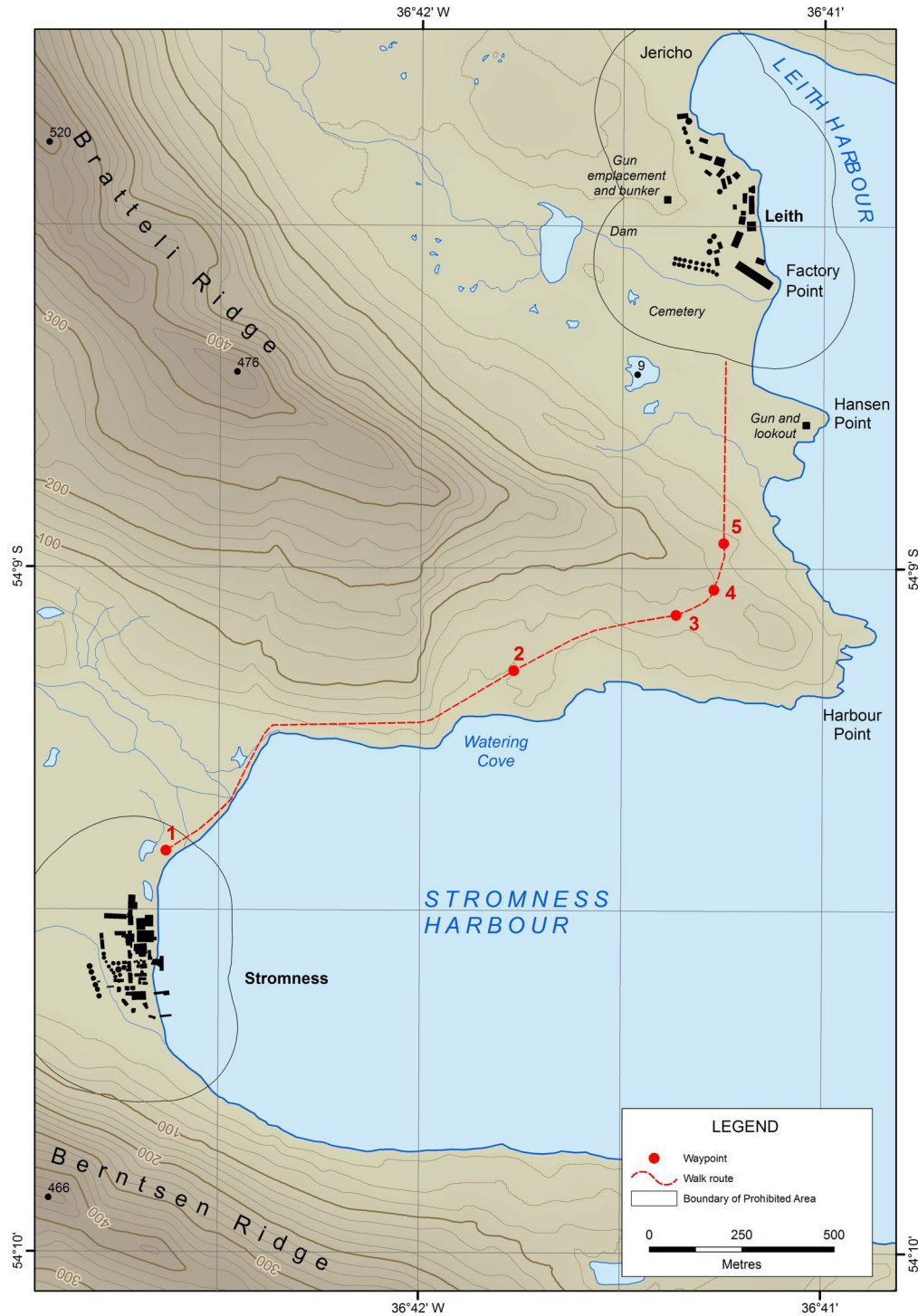
It is a requirement of visiting vessels to be self sufficient in every respect, including medical cover. The visit permit holder and leading guide must both check and ensure that there is adequate medical provision and a tested medical response plan in place to rapidly respond to any injury sustained during the walk or medical trauma incident.

All incidents, accidents and injuries, no matter how minor, must be reported to GSGSSI.

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ROUTE DETAILS



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Additional Note:

At Stromness the northern boundary limit of the exclusion zone is less than 200m subject to the following conditions:

- (a) Visitors are only permitted to land at the demarcated northern boundary of the safety exclusion zone at the approved Stromness landing site in the absence of wind from the southwest (from the direction of the station buildings); and
- (b) The approved landing site is only to be used for landing and embarking and visitors must otherwise comply with the usual 200 metre exclusion zone.

All other landings must take place at the mouth of the stream (or further to the north of the approved site)

Visitors should refer to the 2013 Prohibited Areas Order.

(See the Information for Visitors to South Georgia Booklet).

WPT 1 Propellers

54° 09.414' S

036° 42.631' W

Start anywhere along the beach at Stromness. Head to the northern end of the beach and follow the coastline around for approximately 1km. From the first small beach approached, head inland and uphill to a small lake. This lake can also be reached from beaches further along the shore.

WPT 2 Lake

54° 09.150' S

036° 41.768' W

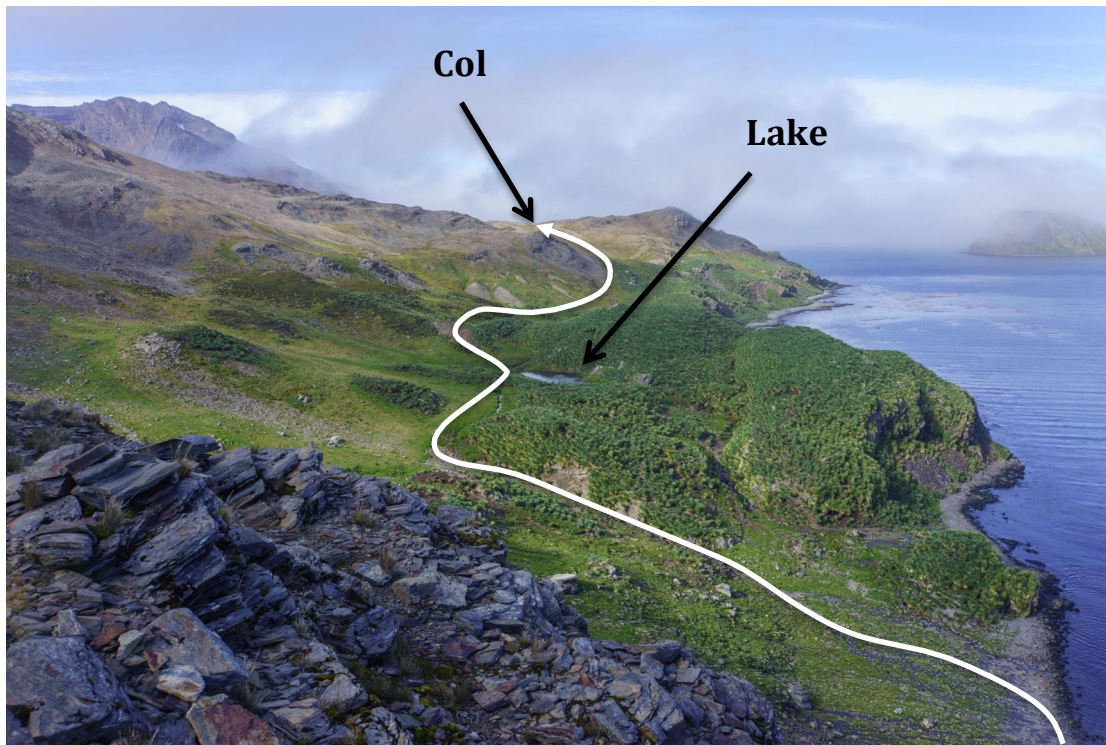
From the lake follow a gently rising traverse line to the east, crossing grass, scree and some tussac to a flat area beneath a col. Be aware of mossy areas and avoid them to prevent damage.

WPT 3 Flat area below the col

54° 09.068' S

036° 41.365' W

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From here, head NE to the col.

WPT 4 Col
54° 09.031' S
036° 41.271' W

This col is marked by a small cairn. Follow reindeer tracks that contour to the north to a second, shallower col.

WPT 5 Minor col
54° 08.963' S
036° 41.247' W

From this minor col, descend to the whaling station, taking the most seal-friendly route. There are several wet areas and moss banks between the top of the col and the whaling station. Take care to go around, not through these.

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