

Visitor Information

FIFTH MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

30 March - 2 April 2004, North Berwick, Scotland

Venue

The Marine Hotel, Cromwell Road, North Berwick, East Lothian, EH39 4LZ
Tel: +44 (0) 870 400 8129 Fax: +44 (0) 1620 894 480
Email: sale.marine@macdonald-hotels.co.uk

Passports and Visas

You will need a passport valid for 6 months from the date of entry into the UK. You may also require a visa, depending on your nationality.

If you are a national of an EU country you will need no more than a valid passport, for free entry and movement in the UK. The same applies if you are a national of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland.

For nationals of many countries signed up to the AEWA agreement a valid visa is needed for entry into the UK. The cost of a standard visa is £36 (pounds sterling), and this can normally be paid in local currency. Please check with the British Embassy in your country (or the web-site of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office www.ukvisas.gov.uk/) whether you need one. Applications forms for visas can also be found here.

IMPORTANT: If you need a visa to enter the UK, you must get it before you arrive in the UK; without one you will be refused entry. We recommend you apply for your visa as soon as possible.

A visa is obtainable from the UK mission in the country where you are normally and legally resident. The following web address provides details on locations of UK missions:

www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029395231

If a formal invitation letter is needed, please contact Mr. Andrew Williams at andy.williams@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Maps

Attached are maps of:

1. Edinburgh and North Berwick
2. Edinburgh airport
3. Edinburgh city centre and Waverly Station
4. North Berwick
5. Location of Heriot Watt University

Getting to the Hotel

North Berwick is located about 30 miles northeast of Edinburgh airport. You can get to the hotel by taxi, train or bus.

1. Taxi

Skycabs are the listed taxi service for Edinburgh Airport.

Website: www.skycab-edinburgh.com

Tel: +44 (0) 131 333 2220

The advertised fare to North Berwick is £65. If more than two people take the taxi then it is an extra 20p per person.

2. Public Transport - Train

The regular shuttle bus from the airport to Edinburgh city centre will take you to Waverley train station. This shuttle bus is located at Stand 18 outside the airport arrivals hall. The bus runs every 10mins at peak times and every 30mins at all other times. It is about a 30min journey and the listed single fare is £3.40.

Trains to North Berwick Train station run about once an hour. The journey takes about 35min and a single fare is listed as being £3.80.

3. Public Transport - Bus

There is a regular bus service between Edinburgh city centre and North Berwick.

You will need to take either service 124 or service X5. A ticket that gives you unlimited travel on the service route for the day costs £4.75. The website <http://www.firstgroup.com/ukbus/scotland/sescot/home/> gives further details about fares and routes. The journey takes around 1½ hours.

The website www.traveline.org.uk has useful information on public transport.

The information line for public transport in the Edinburgh region is Tel: +44 (0)800 23 23 23.

Time

Scotland is on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), however it switches to British Summer Time on 28th March, so the clocks go forward by one hour to British Summer Time. This change is widely advertised in the media.

Climate

The UK has a temperate climate with Scotland generally being colder. Although winters are often mild Scotland can still be fairly cold even in spring. The average monthly temperature in the UK for March is 6°C. It can also be fairly wet around this time of year. You are encouraged to bring wet weather gear.

Currency

The currency in Scotland is the English or Scottish Pound. The Euro is not used in the UK. Scottish banks (i.e. Bank of Scotland, Clydesdale Bank) often issue their own banknotes. These are exactly the same value as the more common Bank of England notes.

Although there is no longer an English £1 note, Scottish £1 notes still exist and can be used as legal tender in Scotland. However, it is advisable to change them to another currency when leaving Scotland. The pound is divided up into 100 pence (p).

Here are some recent exchange rates:

British Pound	1.00 =	1.42	Euro
Euro	1.00 =	0.71	British Pound
British Pound	1.00 =	1.61	US Dollar
US Dollar	1.00 =	0.62	British Pound
British Pound	1.00 =	10.70	Croatian Kuna*
Croatian Kuna	1.00 =	0.09	British Pound
British Pound	1.00 =	7.11	Israeli Shekel*
Israeli Shekel	1.00 =	0.14	British Pound
British Pound	1.00 =	2.18	Swiss Franc*
Swiss Franc	1.00 =	0.46	British Pound
British Pound	1.00 =	8.57	Ukraine Hryunia*
Ukraine Hryunia	1.00 =	0.12	British Pound
British Pound	1.00 =	9.87	Egyptian Pound*
Egyptian Pound	1.00 =	0.10	British Pound
British Pound	1.00 =	120.88	Kenyan Shilling*
Kenyan Shilling	1.00 =	0.01	British Pound
British Pound	1.00 =	11.57	South African Rand*
South African Rand	1.00 =	0.08	British Pound
British Pound	1.00 =	419.99	Sudanese Dinar*
Sudanese Dinar	1.00 =	0.0024	British Pound

*Selection of countries signed up to AEWA agreement

Up to date information on exchange rates can be found on the following website:

<http://uk.finance.yahoo.com/>

Credit Cards

Most shops and major banks accept cards with the Visa, MasterCard or Cirrus symbol. These cards can be used at ATMs, which can be found on many high streets in all cities and towns.

Travellers' Cheques

Travellers' cheques are a recommended way of carrying money. They can be exchanged at most banks and bureau de change. You are advised to check on the rate of commission charged before cashing your cheques as this can vary from one establishment to another. American Express is the most widely accepted travellers cheque.

Electricity

The UK has 220V AC electricity and uses 3 pin plugs. Therefore you will need an adapter if you are coming from outside the UK. Adapters can be bought at airports and in shops such as “Boots”.

Health

If you require medical treatment or a consultation, there is a charge, unless you have a valid UK National Health Service card. However some countries do have reciprocal health agreements with the UK allowing free medical treatment. These countries can be found on the following website:

www.visitbritain.com/world/fact_files/planning/medical/emergency.htm

You are strongly advised to take out travel insurance to cover accidents, medical support and loss of property.

Emergencies

The free emergency service number in the UK is 999. This dials through to an operator. The operator will ask you the service required: Ambulance, Fire, Police or Coastguard. *Please use this only if it is an emergency.*

Foreign Embassies

Contact details for foreign embassies in the UK can be found on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: www.fco.gov.uk

Customs and Taxes

The individual allowances on the import/export of products such as alcohol and tobacco is regulated. Many other goods are controlled. For further information, please see the UK customs and excise website: www.hmce.gov.uk

This website is also useful for information about the Retail Export Scheme (Tax-Free Shopping). Most goods and services in the UK carry a 17.5% value added tax (VAT) which is included in the price. VAT can be reclaimed on goods purchased for export outside the EU. However, not all shops take part in the scheme and those that do often have a minimum purchase level and charge administration fees. If you want to reclaim the money, you will need a completed valid tax relief form (obtained from the shop, if it participates in the scheme), which you hand to customs along with the goods purchased, when leaving the EU.

Tipping

Tipping only tends to occur in restaurants and taxis. If the service has been good it is customary to tip around 10%. Many restaurants often include a service charge in the price so you are advised to check the menu to discover if this is the practice in the restaurant you are using. Tipping is not usual in more informal eating places and public houses (pubs).

Telephones

The international dialling code for the UK is +44. Public payphones are widely available - the minimum cost is 20p. Phonecards are often a more efficient way of dialling abroad. Many shops such as newsagents and post offices sell cards offering discount rates.

In the case of mobile phones it is worth checking with your local service provider to discover if the phone will still work in the UK.

Other Communications

Post: Mail weighing up to 2 kg can be sent by airmail or surface mail. Airmail is quickest. Postage prices are available from any town post office. You are advised to check if a customs declaration needs to be completed before sending mail overseas. Postage stamps are available at post offices, many high street stores and most newsagents. However post offices are not open on Sundays and many close on a Saturday afternoon.

Internet: Internet facilities can be found in various places such as internet cafes, public libraries and airports.

Fax: Fax machines can be found in similar places. Some newsagents can also offer a fax service.

Marine Hotel Facilities: If you have your own laptop, which can be set to dial 9 for an outside line, then the Marine Hotel has suitable internet access from bedrooms. There are no public access internet points in the hotel. The hotel charges no fee for incoming faxes but for outgoing the cost is £2 for the first page and £1.25 for each additional page. The hotel also accepts parcels and letters addressed to guests.

Onward journey to Heriot-Watt University

If you are going on to the Waterbirds Around The World Conference at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, then the easiest way to get to there will be to travel back to Edinburgh city centre. Please see earlier heading "getting to the hotel" for ways of getting between North Berwick and Edinburgh. There are several options for travelling to the University from Edinburgh city centre.

1. Taxi

Taxis can be taken from Waverly station. The journey takes around 30 minutes. The University recommend Central Radio Taxis (tel: (0131) 229 2468). The quoted price is £14 with a 20p per passenger surcharge if more than 3 passengers take the taxi.

2. Bus

There are several services from Edinburgh city centre to the University. These are the services 25,35,45,61,101 and 201. Number 25, which departs from Princes Street, is the most frequent leaving the city at least every 10 minutes during the day, every 30 minutes after 19:00 Monday to Saturday until midnight, and every 30 minutes from 8:00 until 23:00 on Sunday. The fare is £1, the service provider Lothian Buses ask that you have the exact fare.

3.Train

The nearest station to the University is Curriehill station, which is about 1 mile from the campus. Trains from Waverley station go to Curriehill. A return ticket costs £2.90. However the University warn that Curriehill is fairly isolated and recommend that you take a taxi from the station to the University.

Maps

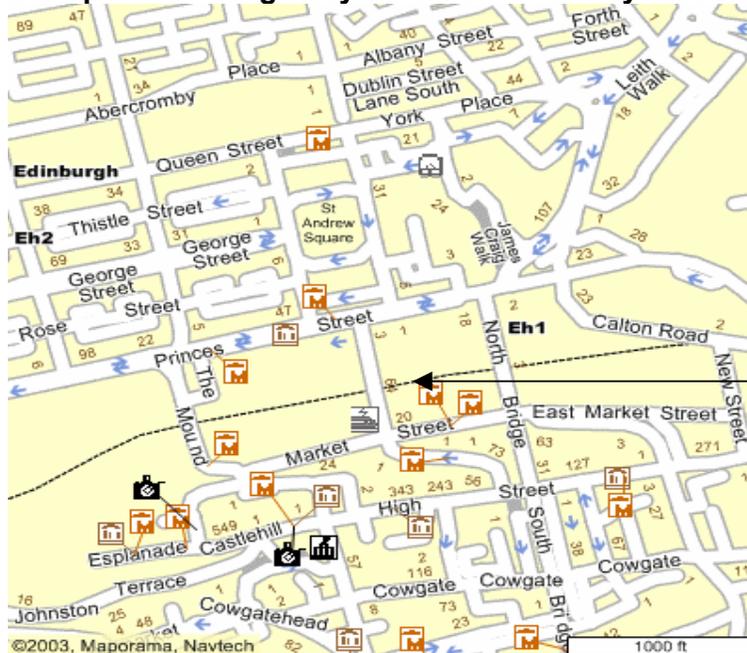
1. Map showing Edinburgh and North Berwick.



2. Map showing Edinburgh airport.

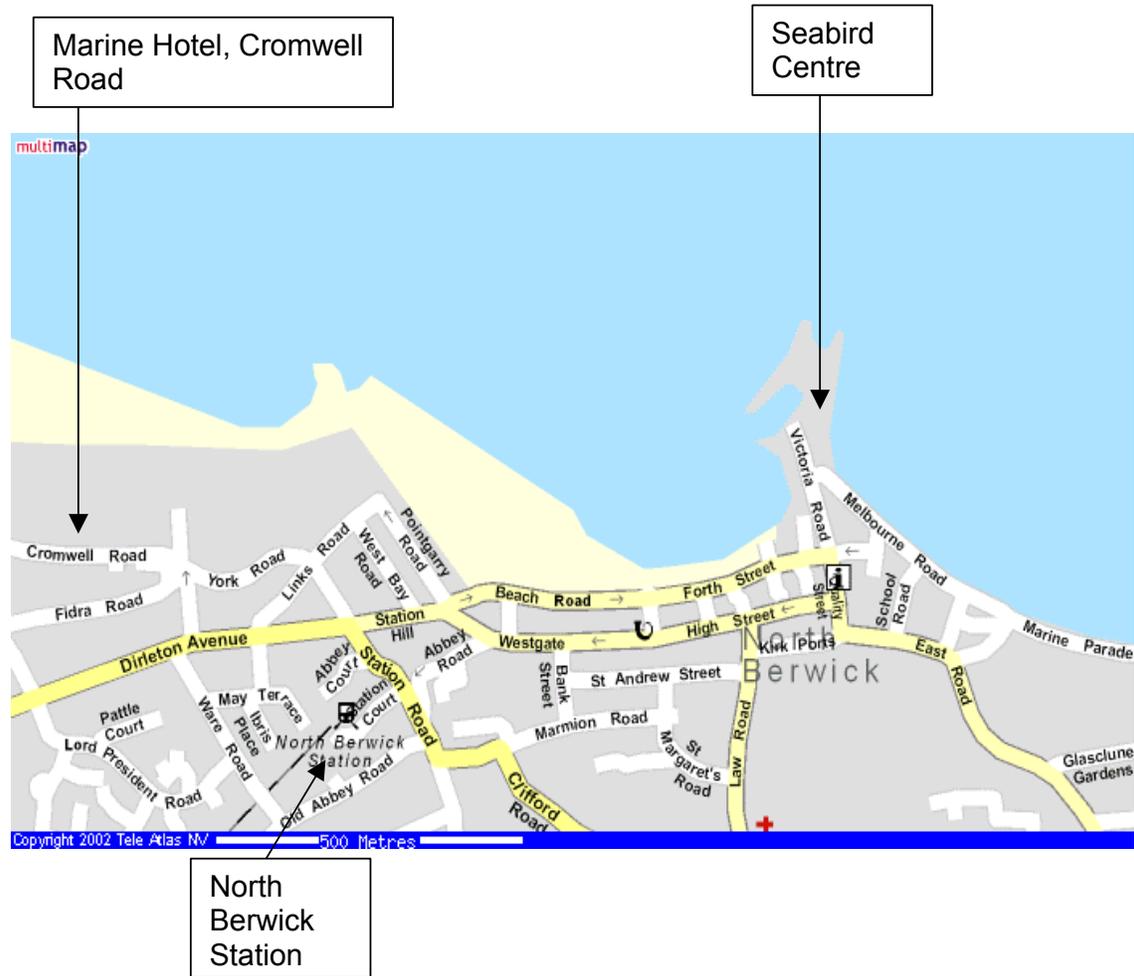


3. Map of Edinburgh city centre and Waverly Station

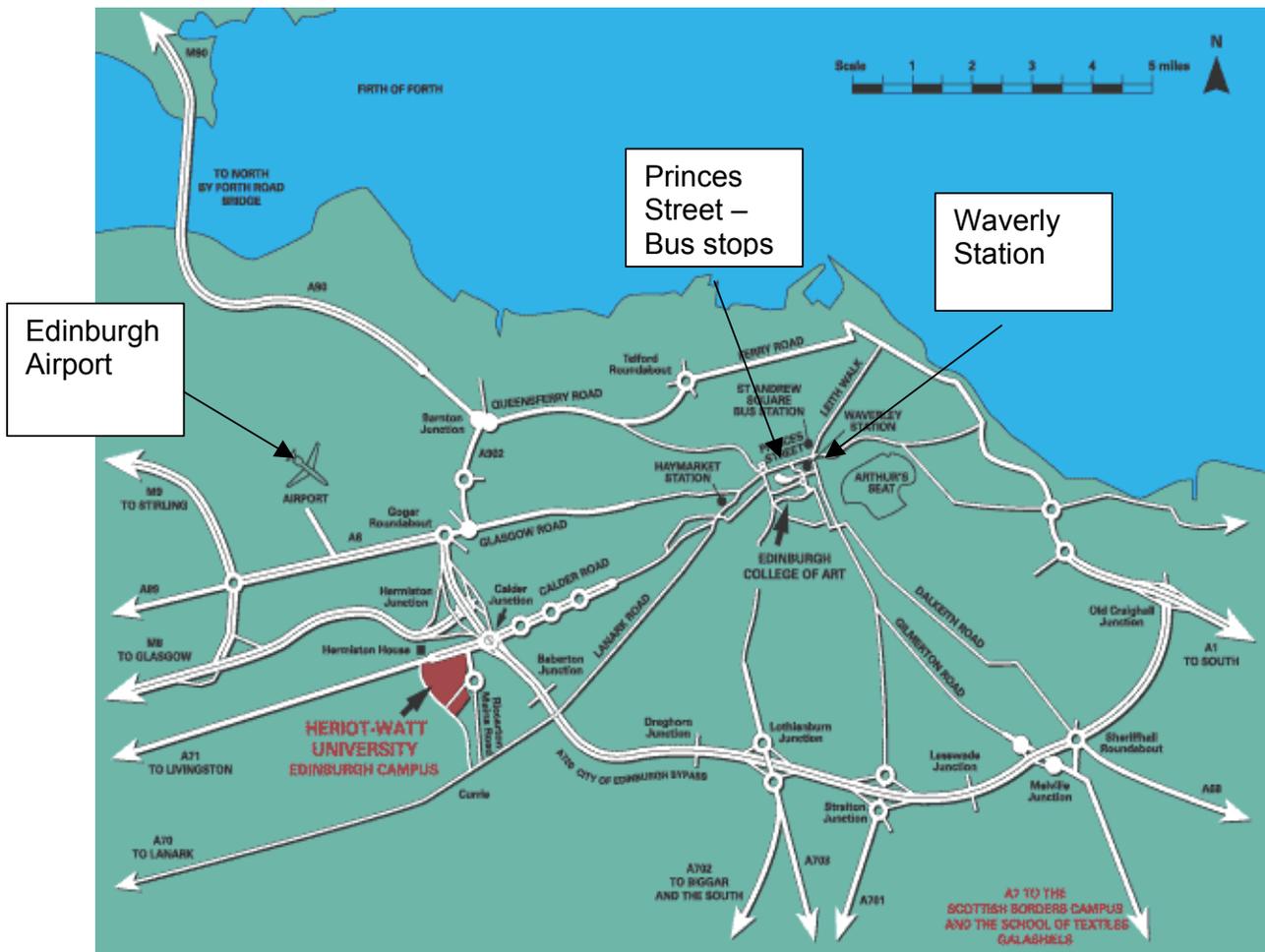


Waverly
Station

4. Map of North Berwick



5. Map showing location of Heriot Watt University.



AEWA Technical Committee Meeting - Field Trip on 1 April 2004

This excursion will visit the John Muir House and a number of birdwatching sites on the south shore of the outer Firth of Forth.

The trip will start by visiting John Muir House in the small coastal town of Dunbar. This is the birthplace of John Muir, the founder of the modern conservation movement in Scotland, and the initiator of the American National Parks system. John Muir was born in the house in 1838, and his boyhood was spent in Dunbar until the family emigrated to the USA in 1849. A small visitor centre opened last summer.

The excursion will then visit Tynningham Bay for a guided walk along a saltmarsh at the edge of the outer Firth of Forth, followed by lunch at the Craigiellaw Golf Clubhouse on a headland overlooking the Firth. The afternoon will be spent birdwatching at Aberlady Bay, a large area on the south coast of the Firth, with extensive dune systems – this part of the trip will include a guided walk along the coast of the Bay. The excursion will end with light refreshments in the village of Aberlady, at the Kilspindie House Hotel, a building dating back to 1638.

The Firth of Forth is the major sea loch in eastern Scotland, and its shores and seabird islands are protected through a number of conservation measures - it is a Ramsar site, a Special Protection Area (SPA), an EU Special Area for Conservation (SAC), and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). To be designated under these measures, the Firth is considered to be an internationally important wetland area breeding site, supporting bird populations of European importance - it regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds.

A wide range of coastal and inter-tidal habitats is found within the site, and the rich assemblage of waterbirds include Slavonian Grebe, Bar-tailed Godwit, Golden Plover, Redshank and Lapwing. Significant numbers of waterbirds can be expected at this time of year.

Scotland can be fairly cold and wet in Spring, so you are encouraged to bring warm, wet weather gear.



FIFTH AEWA Technical Committee Meeting Evening Reception on 1 April 2004

An evening reception will be held on Thursday 1 April 2004 at the Scottish Seabird Centre in North Berwick, a small seaside town on the coast of East Lothian.

Overlooking the sea and islands of the Firth of Forth, the Scottish Seabird Centre is unique in using state-of-the-art telemetry to view at close range the rich variety of seabirds and marine wildlife of Scotland, without disturbing the animals. The Centre provides a range of information about the local seabirds of Fidra, the Isle of May and Bass Rock, which are home to gannets, kittiwakes, puffins and shags amongst others.

The Centre has won a number of awards. These include Five Stars for World Class Status, and a Gold Level on the Green Business Tourism Scheme, both from the Scottish Tourist Board. The Centre also received a commendation in 2001 for its contribution to the quality and appearance of the environment from the Civic Trust - Britain's leading charity devoted to enhancing the quality of life in Britain's built environment, whose awards recognise outstanding examples of architecture and environmental design.

The evening reception will begin with drinks on arrival. This will be followed by a presentation in the Wildlife Theatre by world leading expert on gannets and boobies, Dr Bryan Nelson. You will have the opportunity to have a look around the Discovery Centre and enjoy the films and interactives. You will also be able to find out more about the remote control cameras, with staff available to help out. As it will be too dark to view wildlife live, recorded footage will be shown on the cameras. This will be followed by dinner in the Centre.