

MOFFAT MOUNTAIN MARATHON (MMM)

The Moffat Mountain Marathon is an Anytime Challenge Walk or Run over the Moffat Hills in the heart of the Scottish Southern Uplands.

Moffat is easily reached by car, being only one mile from the M 74 motorway, junction 15, about 45 minutes drive from the northern end of the M 6 near Carlisle. It is also easily reached by the M 74 from Glasgow and Edinburgh and the Scottish Central Belt. Bus services operate from Carlisle, Lockerbie, Dumfries, Glasgow and Edinburgh. The town is well served with hotels, B & Bs and has an excellent Camping & Caravanning Club Campsite, which is open all year.

The walk is a demanding one over mainly trackless and remote terrain in high mountain country. The route includes the ascent of two Corbetts (Scottish hills above 2500ft with at least a 500ft drop on all sides), ten Donalds (2000ft + hills in the Scottish “Lowlands”) and three Donald Deweys (500m – 609m Scottish hills with a drop on all sides of at least 30m). The highest point reached is the summit of White Coomb, 821m (2693ft). Only two isolated dwellings are passed en route, at Fruid Farm and at Corehead, and only one road, the latter a minor single track mountain road at approximately the half-way stage of the walk (the small parking area, suitable for little more than one car, at the Megget Stone on the Megget Road (GR NT 151203) is the only place on the whole route suitable for a support vehicle – please park with full consideration for other road users). The last 9 km of the route involves relatively low level walking on good paths, tracks and a quiet lane. Good navigation skills are essential and walkers are advised not to attempt the round in conditions of dense hill fog. The whole route is covered by O.S. Explorer Map 330 (Moffat & St Mary’s Loch). The trek should not be underestimated, as the terrain is often rough with considerable ascent and descent totalling around 2400m (approx. 7900ft) and the length is just a little over 33 miles. The walk should not be attempted under winter conditions and walkers must set out sufficiently early to cover the route during the hours of daylight. Expect to encounter few other people and remember that help is often a long way off. Walkers are strongly advised not to attempt the route between the beginning of October and the end of March, as day length is too short during the autumn and winter months for all but the fastest of hillwalkers or fell runners. An unplanned benightment could have serious consequences in these hills where conditions can be severe. It should be unnecessary to stress that full equipment for the hills must be carried on this walk and the hillwalker must be fully self-sufficient, carrying ample food and drink.

Neither badge nor certificate is available, but those who complete the route should enjoy some of the grandest scenery in the Southern Uplands and will have the satisfaction of having achieved one of the most demanding hillwalks of its length outside the Scottish Highlands. Please let me have a brief account of your walk, and I will keep a list of all those who successfully complete the route.

The inaugural walk of the Moffat Mountain Marathon was led by the MMM Originator and Recorder, Alan Castle, accompanied by LDWA members Nigel Dean, Carole Engel, Tim Glenn, Jeff Parr, Chris Seddon and Tony Willey, on 21st April 2008 in a time of 16 hours 13 minutes. The fastest walker known to have completed the route was Andrew West on 20th June 2009 in 13 hours 30 minutes. Most fell runners take between 8 and 10 hours. The record for completion at May 2025 was 6 hours 24 minutes by fell runner James Britton.

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Ample free parking is available in the main town car park in Moffat at NT084049, a few minutes from the “Moffat Ram” in the centre of the High Street, the official start and end point of the MMM.

A route description is not provided, but walkers/runners must navigate between the following grid references:

Location	Kilometres	Height (m)	Grid Reference (NT)
Moffat Ram (Moffat High Street)	0.0	100	084054
North-West side of Gallow Hill		210	084069
Archbank		160	091068
Moffat Well		185	092072
Greygill Head		474	098089
Blue Cairn	6.9	584	105108
Swatte Fell (D)		729	120116
Falcon Craig (D)		724	122128
Hart Fell (C & D)	11.3	808	114136
Hartfell Rig		739	125140
Rotten Bottom		620	145145
Firthhope Rig (D)		800	154154
White Coomb (C & D)	17.5	821	163151
Donald's Cleuch Head		776	153160
Firthybrig Head		766	159170
Lochcraig Head (D)	21.3	800	167175
Nickies Knowe (D)		760	164191
Megget Stone	25.1	440	151203
Footbridge, SE of Talla Reservoir		297	134203
Garelet Hill (D)	28.2	680	124202
Laird's Cleuch Rig (D)		684	125196
Erie Hill (D)	29.7	690	124188
Capilus Hill		524	114189
Brawns Dod		516	107193
Fruid Reservoir		320	102189
Fruid Farm	33.3	317	108183
Fruid Reservoir		322	101183
Ballaman Hill (DD)	37.3	540	093161
Crown of Scotland (DD)	39.3	530	081150
Tweedhope, Annandale Way Cairn		450	084139
Chalk Rig Edge (DD)		500	077134
Great Hill		466	067132
Strait Step		420	065134
Corehead (trail to rear of farm)	43.8	202	073125
Ericstane		170	072110
Track junction, west of Braehead	46.1	270	065111
Meikleholmside	48.3	160	072091
Bridgend		141	074084
Footpath sign, Annanwater		125	078069
A 701/River Annan		105	079058
Moffat (main car park – free)		100	084049
Moffat Ram (Moffat High Street)	53.5	100	084054

Abbreviations: (C)= Corbett, (D) = Donald, (DD) = Donald Dewey.

In total: 2 Corbetts, 10 Donalds and 3 Donald Deweys.

Length: 53.5km = 33.2 miles. Ascent/descent approximately 2400m (approx. 7900ft)

Alan Castle

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Please send name(s), date and time (hrs. mins) of completions.