

BORDERS ABBEYS WAY MULTI-USE NOTES

The Borders Abbeys Way is a 68 mile waymarked circular route linking four of the Scottish Borders' ruined abbeys: Melrose, Dryburgh, Kelso and Jedburgh. Following a mixture of riverside paths, farm tracks, forest rides, disused railway lines and old drove roads, the route offers an opportunity to explore and enjoy the best of the Central Borders. The Borders Abbeys Way was originally developed and is still promoted primarily for walkers, but some sections are also suitable for cyclists and horse-riders.

These notes have been produced by British Horse Society Scotland to identify location and brief details of restrictions on multi-use, and to help horse riders and others identify which sections of the route are best suited to multi-use. Only features which may present an issue for experienced riders are noted below – shallow fords, bridges, cross drains, gates which can only be opened or closed if dismounted, rough ground, sheep and cattle are all part of riding off-road and so are not documented.

The notes are intended to supplement route descriptions and other information already available from <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/bordersabbeyway/> and other sources. All route users are responsible for deciding for themselves whether any particular section is suitable for their intended use, taking account of their own abilities, skills, fitness and experience, as well as season, weather conditions etc. Inclusion of a particular feature does not necessarily mean that it is impassable with a horse. Photos have been included where appropriate to help you assess for yourself whether a feature such as steps, a narrow footbridge, gate or gap less than 1.5m wide may present an obstruction to you. Event organisers, groups or commercial operators considering using the Borders Abbeys Way are urged to contact the route managers.

Remember that whether on foot, cycle or horseback, rights of access in Scotland depend on access takers and land managers accepting individual responsibility for their actions. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code <http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/> offers guidance on what this means on the ground. Specific guidance for horse riders can be downloaded from <http://www.bhsscotland.org.uk/responsible-riding.html>. Courtesy, consideration of others' needs and good communication are the key to sharing paths. Always pass others you meet at a walk and limit your pace to ground conditions and visibility. On unsurfaced paths and other well used sections of the route, particularly along the river or across the golf course, riders need to be particularly careful to ensure they are not causing any damage, that they respect other users and clear up dung. As this is a livestock farming area, please take particular care to leave gates as you find them. Although waymarked throughout and easy to follow, it is still worth having a map with you – and making sure you know how to read it!

Parking

There are large public car parks in Jedburgh (next to Visitor Information Centre OSGR NT651205) and in Hawick (NT500145). Parking in Selkirk Melrose, St. Boswells and Kelso can be more challenging with a trailer or horsebox.

Kelso to Roxburgh

Although many of the former stiles and kissing gates along this section have been removed, and the steps at the northern end could potentially be negotiated with care with a bike or horse, a few narrow sections of path and stiles just north of Roxburgh Mill currently make this section unsuitable for horses.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
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<p>NT718337 Path junction with A699 west of Teviot bridge</p>	<p>Stone step stile over dyke</p> 	<p>Wooden gate adjacent but restricted opening width</p>
<p>North bank of river opposite Kings Haugh</p>	<p>Narrow path with steep drop to river to south and busy A road alongside to north. No passing places</p> 	<p>It may be possible to avoid this section by continuing along the A699 and linking down onto the riverside path around Roxburgh Castle, but note other restrictions to south</p>
<p>NT718339 Path east of Roxburgh Castle</p>	<p>Wooden steps leading down bank</p> 	
<p>NT712322 burn crossing opposite Broomy Knowe</p>	<p>1.1m wide wooden bridge</p> 	<p>No alternative means of crossing the ditch</p>
<p>NT711330 east of Roxburgh</p>	<p>Successive stretches of 80 cm wide wooden boardwalk over boggy ground</p>	

Barns		
NT704315 south-east Kersmains	<p>Wooden step stile over fence – path before and after follows broad farm track around field headland</p> 	<p>Double wooden field gates in fence to north but very overgrown – and see further restrictions below</p> 
NT703313 Junction with road to Roxburgh Mill	<p>Wooden step stile over fence</p> 	<p>No obvious alternative. May be possible to follow field headland west and try and find a gate onto the road</p>

Roxburgh Mill to Nisbet

Riders are recommended to use the disused railway between Roxburgh and Old Ormiston. There are no restrictions on non-vehicular access along the disused railway between Old Ormiston and Nisbet.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NT697291 west of Roxburghe Golf Course	Long section of boardwalk	Use disused railway from Roxburgh to Old Ormiston

		
<p>NT696290 north of Nine Wells</p>	<p>Narrow kissing gate</p> 	<p>Double gate in fence 10 m to north but path south of here narrow, rough underfoot and very muddy in places – horse riders use disused railway instead</p>
<p>Nine Wells</p>	<p>Wooden stile over fence followed by long flight of steep steps with further stile at top of steps</p> 	<p>12' heavy metal gate (off hinges) 20m to north leads onto railway</p> 
<p>NT697281 Old Ormiston</p>	<p>Narrow gap leading onto flight of wooden steps</p> 	<p>Gap on west side of disused railway leads down onto road, already used by horses but note step down over tree roots.</p> 



Nisbet to Jedburgh

Some of the fences have been removed along the riverside path between Nisbet and Jedfoot Bridge and there are alternative ways around the remaining stiles and steps so this section is now passable with a horse – but watch out for rabbit holes. There are no restrictions on multi-use access between Jedfoot Bridge and Jedburgh, but the riverside path along the Jed Water around Jedbank is narrow and far from ideal for horses. Riders are recommended to use the Jedburgh loop riding route instead (waymarked with white horseshoes on a blue square) which follows a quiet road and good track east of Hartrigg. The old bridge over the Jed Water and A68 underpass are both passable with a horse with care.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NT675254 Teviot bridge B6400	Signed path uses wooden steps on west side of B6400. Wooden wicket gate on other side of tree tricky to negotiate with horse because of narrow width and uneven ground, drop from road and tree immediately beyond. 	Use wider gate on east side of B600 and pass under bridge to rejoin path on west side of bridge 
NT673251	Wooden step stile over fence	Use wooden slip hurdle in fence 5 m north of stile

		
NT662241 Jedfoot Bridge	Wooden step stile over fence. 	Unlocked field gate across track/ disused railway.

Jedburgh to Denholm

The waymarked tarmac riverside path south of the car park in Jedburgh is very popular with visitors and families of all ages, partly because of the fitness trail along this path. Horse riders are recommended to follow the Jedburgh Riding Route which uses the B6358 and rejoins the Borders Abbeys Way again at the castle. The waymarked route between Jedburgh Castle and Merlin Dean is multi-use accessible, but the section over Black Law is not. Alternatives are suggested below. There are gates alongside the stiles and kissing gates in every fence and dyke between Bedrule and Denholm.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NT949617 Miller's Burn	1.2 m wide bridge with rail to one side. 	Ford adjacent which has suffered from past erosion and can be tricky to negotiate because of steep entry/exit on south bank
Bank south of Miller's Burn	Long flight of wooden steps	Use parallel unstepped path

		
<p>NT629178 Merlin Dean</p>	<p>Long flight of steep narrow wooden steps with boardwalk over burn</p> 	<p>Follow field headland north of fenced planted area, or continue on right of way south to Swinnie Cottages and follow road to rejoin Borders Abbeys Way at Bedrule</p>
<p>NT627178</p>	<p>Wooden step stile over fence around planting area</p> 	<p>As above</p>
<p>NT625179 Path along field headland between Black Law and Merlin Dean</p>	<p>Wooden step stile over fence</p> 	<p>Adjacent wooden hurdle /flake gate (beware electric fence)</p>
<p>NT623180</p>	<p>Wooden step stile over fence</p>	<p>Adjacent wooden hurdle / flake</p>

		<p>gate passable with a horse but boggy during wet weather. Beware live electric fence adjacent and barbed wire wrapped around hurdle to fasten</p>
<p>NT620181 east side of Black Law</p>	<p>1.15 m gate</p> 	
<p>NT620180 Greypeel Burn</p>	<p>90 cm wide boardwalk</p> 	
<p>NT617180 South side Black Law</p>	<p>90 cm wide boardwalk</p> 	<p>Use right of way to Fulton and rejoin Borders Abbeyes Way on road</p>

<p>NT613179 eastern end Blacklaw Strip</p>	<p>3 further short sections of boardwalk over boggy ground followed by stile over fence</p> 	<p>Potentially field gate in fence to south leading into field south of Blacklaw Strip but unconfirmed. Alternatively use right of way to Fulton</p>
<p>NT608178 Path west of Blacklaw Strip</p>	<p>70cm wide footbridge over burn</p> 	<p>As above</p>

Denholm to Hawick

Most of this section is on a riverside path with steps, stiles, boardwalks and narrow footbridges making the majority of it impassable with a horse or bike. The road which runs roughly parallel north of the river via Hassendeanburn and disused railway west of Cocklecooty Cottage (a designated core path) may provide a preferable alternative for horses. The section between Hawick and the ford south of Bucklands is multi-use accessible, but riders may prefer to avoid the town centre by following the Hawick Riding Route (waymarked with white horseshoes on a blue square background) north past Bucklands and then cut through on back roads to Stirches. Alternatively, to reduce the length on road, riders could follow the Hawick Riding Route north via Muirfield and link back into the Borders Abbeys Way at Groundistone.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
<p>NT567187 north side Teviot Bridge</p>	<p>Steps with gate part-way down leading onto riverside path</p>	<p>Double field gate 20 m to north on B6405 leads into same field, riverside path unfenced, but note restrictions further along this section</p>

		
<p>NT566186</p>	<p>Stile in fence across waymarked riverside path</p> 	<p>Use track along field headland to north of waymarked path (but note restrictions further along this section)</p> 
<p>NT560184</p>	<p>Stile in fence across waymarked riverside path</p> 	<p>Use track along field headland which runs parallel on north side of hedge, which riverside path joins west of stile</p> 
<p>NT559185 south-west of Hassendean Bank</p>	<p>Stile in fence across waymarked path</p> 	<p>None. Gate adjacent leads into field to north of path (fenced through riverside woodland strip) but no way out of this field or to rejoin path and further restrictions on path</p>
<p>NT557185 South of road junction south- west of</p>	<p>Steep flight wooden steps up steep bank</p>	<p>None other than using road past Hassendean Bank</p>

<p>Hassendean Bank</p>		
<p>NT557185</p>	<p>Flight of shallow steps (passable with horse but previous flight definitely not)</p> 	
<p>NT544182 Hassendean Burn</p>	<p>Flight of 8 relatively narrow steps leading down steep bank to 1m wide footbridge</p>  <p>Ramp at southern end</p> 	<p>None other than quiet lane/public road parallel to north, originally signed as Borders Abbeys Way</p>
	<p>Narrow riverside path with steps in places</p>	

		
<p>NT543181 Burn south of Hassendeamburn</p>	<p>80 cm wide footbridge, steps at southern end</p> 	<p>None</p>
<p>NT542181</p>	<p>Wooden step stile over fence across path</p> 	<p>None other than road</p>
<p>NT540176</p>	<p>Wooden step stile over fence across path</p> 	<p>None other than road</p>
<p>NT538172 East of Midshiels</p>	<p>Wooden step stile over fence across path</p>	

		
<p>Midshiels to Hornshole Bridge</p>	<p>Narrow, uneven riverside path with some very tight constrictions around rock/trees, unsuitable for horses</p> 	<p>Use road to west</p>
<p>NT535169</p>	<p>Long flight of shallow steps</p> 	
<p>NT533168 north side Hornshole Bridge</p>	<p>Wooden chicane barriers 70 cm gap</p> 	
<p>NT532168 south side Hornshole Bridge</p>	<p>80 cm gap around end of fence – but note further restrictions on this section</p>	<p>Use road or disused railway</p>

		
<p>NT531168</p>	<p>Long flight of wooden steps</p> 	<p>As above</p>
<p>NT528166</p>	<p>Several boardwalk crossings of ditches and long sections of boardwalk with steps between sections, unsuitable for horse, no alternative along narrow riverbank</p>  	<p>As above</p>

Hawick to Ashkirk

See comments above re. alternatives to riding through the middle of Hawick and be aware of the one-way system in Hawick town centre: B6399 is southbound only from Morrisons roundabout. The Borders Abbeys Way is fully multi-use accessible from Sunnybank to Salenside, with unlocked field gates alongside each of the stiles. North of Drinkstone Hill the Borders Abbeys Way coincides with the waymarked link between the Hawick Riding Route and Buccleuch Country Rides.

The path/track between Salenside and Wollrig is passable with care with a horse or bike but riders would only be within their legal access rights using the old thieves' road across the golf course if they avoid causing any damage. The waymarked Buccleuch Ride via Woll and The Floss involves more roadwork but is a better option during or after wet weather.

Ashkirk to Selkirk

The Borders Abbeys Way coincides with the Buccleuch County Ride along forest roads to the northern edge of the forest between Hartwoodmyres and Middlestead, where the two routes braid into a pedestrian route south of the fence, and equestrian route roughly parallel through the field to the north, the two routes reuniting at NT445255 from where a farm track runs east to Middlestead.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NT442253 Middlestead Burn	Two long flights of wooden steps with central boardwalk over Middlestead Burn 	Waymarked equestrian route follows path through field crossing bridge over burn. Be aware that there are often lively cattle in this field. 
NT445255	Narrow squeeze through dyke with stile over fence to south leading back onto farm track	Use waymarked Buccleuch Ride through field to north

		
<p>NT464266 east of Brownmoor</p>	<p>Stile over fence</p> 	<p>No readily identifiable alternative unless it is possible to use the track from Hartwoodburn to Haining Loch. There are unlocked field gates alongside the stiles on the section waymarked as Borders Abbeys Way – but note further stile north of Murieston Hill</p>
<p>NT465269 south of Hartwood Burn</p>	<p>Step stile over fence</p> 	<p>See above</p>
<p>NT465269 Hartwood Burn</p>	<p>Wooden footbridge with steps at northern end</p>	<p>See above</p>

		
<p>NT465269</p>	<p>Wooden step stile over fence</p> 	<p>See above</p>
<p>NT466270</p>	<p>Wooden step stile over fence</p> 	<p>See above</p>
<p>NT466279 path between Murieston Hill and the Haining</p>	<p>Wooden step stile over fence</p> 	<p>None</p>

Selkirk to Melrose

The majority of the Borders Abbeys Way between Selkirk and Melrose follows paths or tracks ideal for multi-use, either with bridlegates or unlocked field gates next to the stiles or

kissing gates. The only restrictions to multi-use are identified below. Horse riders and cyclists need to be particularly careful to avoid causing damage and respect other users on the section around the edge of Selkirk golf course. The narrow riverside path between Abbotsford and the disused railway north of Tweedbank is impassable with a horse because of several flights of steep steps.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NT479280	<p>Wide kissing gate</p> 	
NT485287	<p>Side gate 1.1 m wide. Main gate difficult to open</p> 	
<p>NT510326 Track around West side of Cauldshiels Hill</p>	<p>Wooden kissing gate</p> 	<p>Continue along right of way past Upper Faldonside</p>
<p>NT510346 A6091 underpass alongside River Tweed</p>	<p>Steep narrow steps either side of restricted height underpass, impassable with a horse</p>	<p>Follow B6360 via Tweedbank – take particular care negotiating busy roundabout</p>

		
<p>NT515350 riverside path west of Tweedbank</p>	<p>Narrow footbridge with steep narrow steps on eastern side</p>  	
<p>NT516352</p>	<p>Railway underpass multi-use accessible but steep steps linking Borders Abbeys Way with Southern Upland Way impassable with a horse</p> 	<p>At time of survey no alternative link between disused railway and riverside path</p>
<p>NT531348</p>	<p>Shallow steps, possible to bypass to</p>	

<p>East of bridge over River Tweed north of Darnlee</p>	<p>side</p> 	
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Melrose to Newtown St. Boswells

Kissing gates make the narrow path which runs below the houses at Priorswalk, east of Melrose, impassable with a horse. Other than this, there are no restrictions on multi-use on the waymarked route between Melrose and Newtown St. Boswells.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
<p>NT556341 East of Priorswalk</p>	<p>Kissing gate across narrow path</p> 	<p>Follow B6361</p>
<p>NT553341</p>	<p>Narrow wicket gate</p> 	<p>Use B6361</p>

Newtown St. Boswells to Kelso

The narrow riverside path between Newtown St. Boswells and the bridge over the Tweed west of Dryburgh is impassable with a horse because of steps, boardwalks and narrow bridges. East of Dryburgh, there are bridlegates or field gates alongside stiles and kissing gates, or gaps of sufficient width to make the Borders Abbeys Way multi-use accessible through to the two locked gates and very narrow kissing gates near Old Dalcove. The only

other restrictions on this section of route are two kissing gates on the path between the surprisingly fast and busy B6364 and Berryhill.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NT582318 Bowden Burn north of Hawkslee Farm	Narrow wooden footbridge 	Continue on B6398 and use minor road north-east from Holmes Farm – but see restrictions on bridge over River Tweed below
NT584318 East of Hawkslee Farm	31 flights of steps too steep for horses, no space to pass alongside 	As above
NT586319	Narrow insubstantial footbridge 	As above
NT587320	Successive flights of steep narrow steps impassable with a horse	As above

		
<p>NT588321 Bridge over Tweed west of Dryburgh</p>	<p>Wobbly suspension bridge. Sufficient space for a horse to pass bollards either end but structure not designed to carry horses</p>  	
<p>NT644319 west of Old Dalcove</p>	<p>Locked gate across track, narrow kissing gate adjacent</p> 	<p>It may be possible to use the track past Mertoun Newstead and Whitehouse but not confirmed</p>
<p>NT646321 Old Dalcove</p>	<p>Locked gate across track, narrow kissing gate adjacent</p>	<p>As above</p>

		
<p>NT717361 Path east of B6364</p>	<p>Kissing gate</p> 	<p>Continue north on B6364 and use track past Edenbank – watch out on bends in road. Or turn south on B6364 past Kaimknowe and follow track on west site of Little Cauld Rigg (unconfirmed, not surveyed).</p>
<p>NT720359</p>	<p>Kissing gate</p> 	<p>As above</p>

VWG
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