

Introduction

This booklet describes 14 horse riding routes in the Scottish Borders, many of the routes were developed with horses in mind such as the Buccleuch countryside trails, the Hawick and Jedburgh circular riding routes and the long-distance Cross Border Drove Road, but they are multi user access.

The Scottish Borders is Scotland's Horse Country. Here there are more horses per head of population than anywhere else in the U.K. and we consider ourselves the premier destination for horse riding in the UK.

The Borderers have an association with the horse that stretches back over two thousand years, from the Romans, the notorious Border Reivers & Mosstroopers right up to the tradition of "Common Ridings" that remains a vital part of community pride today. All this has left a rich heritage of horse access, culture & heritage.

With over 500 kilometres of wide open grassy rolling hills, hundreds of square kilometres of quiet forests, woodland, lochs and rivers, the area has an excellent network of trails that provide a wide range of day rides and fantastic long-distance routes.

In this booklet, we have included a wide range of the Scottish Borders towns and areas where there are good waymarked routes on core paths* that are accessible to horses and that have suitable parking facilities. Where the existing core path is not suitable for horse access, we have given a nearby horse-suitable alternative, these are not waymarked but are easily followed in the descriptions.

Please follow the outdoor access code at all times and ride according to you & your horse's ability and the ground conditions at the time. The British Horse Society Scotland have

produced an excellent guide to equestrian access in Scotland which can be downloaded here - www.bhsscotland.org.uk/resources.html

*Core Paths - Many of the paths in this booklet are core paths. Core paths provide the basic framework of legally recognised, promoted and signposted paths. These link to the wider path network of other formal and informal paths and to the wider countryside. Details of local core paths at www.scotborders.gov.uk

How to get here

The Scottish Borders is easily accessed from the South by either the M74, The A7 or A68 and is under an hour from Edinburgh or Glasgow. Some of the starting points can be more remote so journey times may alter depending on your transport.

Please check travel and weather conditions before setting off, again some of the access to the routes can be remote and if you are in a lorry or towing a trailer this may be difficult.

General Advice

There are few places left where you can enjoy the solitude and unspoilt countryside still to be found in the Scottish Borders. We want everyone who visits, lives and works in this beautiful place to enjoy it responsibly.

Enjoy Scotland's outdoors responsibly

Everyone has the right to be on most land and inland water providing they act responsibly. Your access rights and responsibilities are explained fully in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Whether you're in the outdoors or managing the outdoors, the key things are to:

- **take responsibility for your own actions**
- **respect the interests of other people**
- **care for the environment.**

Visit outdooraccess-scotland.com or contact your local Scottish Natural Heritage office.



**KNOW THE CODE
BEFORE YOU GO**
outdooraccess-scotland.com

Riding responsibly

- Follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (www.outdooraccess-scotland.com).
- Respect the privacy, safety and livelihoods of those living or working in the countryside, and others enjoying the outdoors.
- Respect others enjoying the outdoors and always pass pedestrians at a walk – remember that some people are nervous of horses. Take particular care on narrow paths and those used by people in wheelchairs or with pushchairs.
- Look after the places you visit and routes you enjoy: take only memories, leave only hoofprints.
- Ride slowly past all livestock and leave gates as you find them.
- Always take litter home with you for appropriate disposal.
- Remove dung from parking areas and avoid blocking others who might want to use the same parking area. It is always advisable to turn your trailer/box when you arrive in case the car park fills up while you are out riding.
- Do not jump hedges, gates, stacks of timber or use other people's land for schooling without their permission.
- Avoid riding grassy paths or unsurfaced high hill routes during wet weather when the surface is easily chewed up.
- Leave your dog at home, or have it under very close control, particularly near livestock.

Best time to ride in the Scottish Borders?

Horse riders can enjoy the trail network throughout the year, and many of the routes around West Linton, Peebles and Innerleithen, the forest paths and tracks in Cardrona, Cademuir and Ae Forests, and disused railway lines such as the Roxburgh and Sprouston lines are suitable for anyone to walk, cycle or ride at any time of year, whatever the weather.

May to September is the best time of year to enjoy the Cheviots and other routes on higher and more exposed ground. The days are long, countryside at its best, weather (usually!) at its kindest and there is less risk of disturbing lambing or other critical farm activities than during winter or spring.

The risks of enjoying the Scottish Borders on horseback are low, but all riders know that unpredictable things can happen, so we would strongly advise you to plan your route and organise yourself carefully in advance. Remember you are responsible for yourself and your horse!

- Check the weather forecast before you set out. If the forecast is bad, you might opt for a lower or shorter route.
- Look carefully at your map before you set out and have a fall-back plan in case of any problems.
- Take note of key features as you ride along so you always know where you are on your map and where you might find the nearest help in case of emergency.
- Tell someone where you are going and when to expect you back. Make sure you tell them when you have safely finished your ride! Please consider a tracking app, phone signal can be sporadic but GPS is usually good.
- Carry a list of emergency contacts for the area in which you are riding.

- All riders are advised to have third party liability insurance (BHS gold membership automatically includes this). It is up to you whether you choose to insure yourself and/ or your horse against other risks.
- Check you and your horses' equipment and shoes (if you have them) before you set off.

Parking and toilets

Where possible we have described suitable trailer or lorry parking and any facilities. Many of the routes can be started at several points but please take care to park responsibly remembering to show respect for others who might want to use the same parking area, and pick up any dung. It is always advisable to turn your trailer/box when you arrive in case the car park fills up while you are out riding.

Further route suggestions

With care, it is possible to link up most of the described routes to make longer routes of your own design. Where there are not waymarked routes it is often possible to join them up with the aid of an OS map and www.ridescottishborders.com where you can download routes, research other adventures as well as other equestrian information in the Scottish Borders.

Maps

Some of these routes are hill routes, it is essential that you carry and know how to use an OS map and compass. Electronic devices can be used but signal can be limited in places and batteries drain faster in cold conditions. Below is a list of the maps used in this booklet.

Ordnance Survey Landranger series 1:50,000 scale

Map no. 72	Upper Clyde Valley
Map no. 73	Peebles, Galashiels and Selkirk
Map no. 74	Kelso and Coldstream
Map no. 79	Hawick and Eskdale
Map no. 80	Cheviot Hills and Kielder Water

Ordnance Survey Explorer Series 1:25,000 scale

Explorer 324	Liddesdale and Kershope Forest
Explorer 331	Teviotdale South (Hawick)
Explorer 334	Pentland Hills
Explorer 336	Biggar and Broughton
Explorer 337	Peebles and Innerleithen
Explorer 338	Galashiels, Selkirk and Melrose
Explorer 33	Kelso, Coldstream & Lower Tweed Valley
Explorer OL16	The Cheviot Hills
Explorer OL42	Kielder Water and Forest



Exploring the hills of the Scottish Borders