

ROB ROY WAY

Notes on multi-use access

The Rob Roy Way is one of Scotland's Great Trails. Starting in Drymen, north of Glasgow, and finishing in Pitlochry in Perthshire, the route follows paths and tracks through the spectacular countryside in the Southern Highlands where Rob Roy McGregor lived and fought in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Rob Roy Way was originally designed and created as a walking route, incorporating some sections of path and track with a long tradition of equestrian or multi-use, and others such as forestry, water authority and hydro roads, quiet lanes and disused railway tracks which are ideal for multi-use and potentially offer great scope for day rides as well as longer distance enjoyment. However other sections of the route were never envisaged for use by anyone other than walkers. Although Scottish access legislation has changed since the Rob Roy Way was set up, and in theory horse riders and cyclists enjoy equal rights as walkers, at some points along the route there are stiles, kissing gates or barriers which may restrict multi-use.

These notes have been produced by British Horse Society Scotland to help those interested in using part or all of the Rob Roy Way to identify location and brief details of features which may restrict multi-use of the waymarked route. Only those which may present an issue for experienced riders are noted below. Shallow fords, vehicular bridges without parapets, cross drains, gates which can only be opened or closed if dismounted, rough ground, sheep, cattle and timber stacks are all part of riding off-road and so are not documented. Inclusion of a particular feature within the notes 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. You should be aware that you may meet heavy traffic on some of the road sections. On the forestry sections you should be prepared to meet forestry vehicles and timber wagons, and be aware that temporary diversions may be in place during timber extraction or other forest operations.

Both the notes and maps are intended to supplement detailed route guides and other information already available from the route website <http://www.robroyway.com>.

Suggestions for parking and alternative routes to avoid restrictions on multi-use are included where information has been provided, but do not constitute a recommendation. All route users are responsible for deciding for themselves whether this route, or any part thereof, is suitable for their intended use, taking account of their own abilities, skills, fitness and experience, as well as season, weather conditions etc. The route goes through some remote countryside, with some relatively steep sections, so riders and their horses should be fit, well-equipped and prepared for the conditions. Event organisers, groups or commercial operators considering using the Rob Roy Way are urged to contact the route managers (see route website for details).

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 defines what this means on the ground <http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/>. 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 along the trail at a walk, and elsewhere limit your pace to ground conditions and visibility. On surfaced paths and other well used sections of the route, riders need to be particularly careful to respect other users and clear dung off the

path. Although the route is waymarked throughout, sometimes the waymarks are not immediately apparent, so make sure you have a map with you and know how to read it.

Parking

Note: the public car park in the centre of Aberfoyle is invariably busy, with limited space for loading and unloading horses.

Location/OS Grid Ref.	Comments
Garadhban NS479907	Forestry Commission car park 15m x 8m, identified as suitable for horseboxes but can be busy at times. Broad forest track 200m connects to Rob Roy Way
Drymen Road Car Park NS506936	Spacious Forestry Commission car park which is rarely busy, with ample space for loading and unloading
Loch Venachar NN593055	Small Forestry Commission car park, able to accommodate boxes or trailers other than when busy
Callander NN627082	2 busy public car parks
Kilmahog car park NN608083	Involves crossing busy A84
Glenogle car park NN558284	
Strathyre car park NN561168	Spacious Forestry Commission car park. (Tourist car park at north end of village at NN561171 is small)
Aberfeldy – Moness Terrace Car Park NN858491	Public car park, restricted space but would accommodate horseboxes if not too busy
Aberfeldy – Cemetery car park NN867497	

Drymen to Aberfoyle

The first few miles of the Rob Roy Way are on public road, which can be busy at times. The West Highland Way provides an off-road alternative but involves a short section on the busy A811 from Drymen. Alternatively riders may prefer to start from Garadhban car park north of Drymen.

From Drymen Road to Aberfoyle, the Rob Roy Way mainly follows broad tracks (stony in places) through Loch Ard Forest, passing a number of aqueducts and inspection towers relating to the Loch Katrine water system. Watch out for a small pig enclosure on the right alongside the road just south of Aberfoyle!

There is ample scope for circular rides combining the Rob Roy Way between Drymen Road car park and Aberfoyle with other forest tracks in Loch Art Forest.

Aberfoyle to Callander

The first part of this section is on tarmac, then on good broad forest tracks, but the central hill section is on rougher stony path and involves several fords.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NN553017	Locked field gate across track, fence adjacent has been "informally lowered".	None for horses

		
<p>NN559026</p>	<p>Ladder stile over dyke</p> 	<p>Volunteer surveyor reported no alternative but photo suggests old metal gate adjacent which may be passable</p>
<p>NN567034</p>	<p>Ladder stile over dyke</p> 	<p>Volunteer surveyor reported no alternative but photo suggests old metal gate adjacent which may be passable</p>
<p>NN593055</p>	<p>Metal barrier at junction of track and car park</p> 	<p>Gap alongside, ample width for a horse. If in doubt, dismount</p>

Callander to Strathyre

The Rob Roy Way follows National Cycle Network route 7 from Callander to Strathyre, which is ideally suited to multi-use but heavily used by walkers and cyclists of all ages and abilities so horse riders need to take particular care to respect other users. There are numerous bridges along this section, and other access facilities such as horse stiles, which are fine for horse-riders but would be too narrow for most horse-drawn carriages. (Note that the locked gate which for many years restricted access at Laggan has now been removed.)

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NN622079	<p>Metal surfaced bridge leading onto railway cycle path with good parapets but surface can be noisy</p> 	<p>For horses which can't cope with the clattering footbridge, follow the cycle route south from Callander over the river, then minor road past Gartchonzie. Although this involves a short section on the A821, there is usually far less traffic on this road than on the very busy A84 between Callander and Kilmahog</p>
<p>NN559169 Bridge over River Balvaig south of Strathyre</p>	<p>Waymarked route crosses over suspension footbridge</p> 	<p>Follow minor public road north then east into Strathyre village</p>

Strathyre to Killin(including alternative route bypassing Killin)

The waymarked Rob Roy Way north of Strathyre mainly follows forest tracks east of the A84 to Kingshouse. The first section climbing up from Strathyre is on a narrow path which is soft during and after wet weather. The forest road which branches off the A84 south of Strathyre may be more suitable for horse riders but would involve a section along the very busy main road, albeit within the village speed restriction zone. The alternative is to use the very quiet and scenic minor road between Strathyre and Balquhidder which runs roughly parallel on the west side of the River Balvaig/A84.

Between Kingshouse and Killiln, the Rob Roy Way follows National Cycle Network Route 7. All of the previous restrictions on horse use have now been removed or replaced with horse-friendly alternatives. Take particular care crossing the busy A84 in Glen Ogle.

Forest tracks through Auchmore Woods offer scope for circular day rides in conjunction with this part of the Rob Roy Way.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NN583225	<p>Suspension bridge over Kendrum Burn south of Craggan with good parapets, ample width and strength for horses but can be noisy due to tarmac over metal surface</p> 	
NN559284	<p>6' high overhead barrier, easily bypassed to side</p> 	
NN602314	<p>Main gate across track locked. Adjacent gate through deer fence passable with a horse dismounted but restricted width and height, including wire below top wooden bar which is potentially lethal for mounted horse riders</p>	



Killin to Ardeonaig

After branching off the public road south of Killin, the Rob Roy Way follows good firm forest and hydro tracks past Lochan Breachlaich and Creag a Chaorainn, then alongside a large hydro pipe, to the point where the waymarked route branches off the hydro road at NN652324. Although the ditch is shallow and often dry, horses may be inclined to jump it, with limited take-off/landing space in line with the fingerpost. Proposal has been put forward to create a piped culvert crossing. Meanwhile, horse riders may prefer to choose their own crossing a few metres up or downstream of the waymarked crossing.



For the next mile, the route follows an indistinct path over rough and in places boggy ground past Tom na h-Iolair, linking up with a firm track again just before crossing the Newton Burn south of Brae Farm. This hill section is passable with care with a sure-footed native pony (or similar) in dry weather, but may present problems for horses during or after wet weather. Horse riders may prefer to dismount and lead their horse, and pick their own way through the boggy sections rather than follow exactly the same route as walkers.



At NN659338 the waymarked walking route diverts off the track to cross the Newton Burn over a wooden sleeper bridge with several partly-concealed holes (pictured below left).

Riders are advised to continue straight through the metal gate across the stony track which leads through a shallow, firm, stone-based ford (pictured below right).



There are several cattle grids across the track between Brae Farm and Ardeonaig, each with a gate or hurdle alongside with ample width for horses but unhung so may require dismounting to negotiate.

Ardeonaig to Acharn

Between Ardeonaig and Acharn, the Rob Roy Way follows the public road along the south side of Loch Tay. Although very scenic, this road can be very busy at times, particularly during summer and at weekends.

Acharn to Aberfeldy

Most of the gates along this section of route have been replaced over recent years, many with an independent side gate so that the main gate can be locked to prevent illegal vehicular access. Some of the side gates are narrow and will require dismounting and potentially untacking to get a horse through (and may not be passable with particularly big, wide horses). At the time of survey, where 2-in-1 gates had been installed with pedestrian rather than bridlegate sections, the main gate was unlocked so could be opened full width to allow multi-use access. However, at the time of survey the cattle grid across the track at the east of Upper Farochil, at the western end of Dunskiag Plantation, presented a barrier to multi-use with no alternative.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NN78248	Main gate locked, narrow side gate passable if tack removed 	
NN799464	Main gate locked, side gate narrow and at awkward angle for horses	None

		
NN838479	Cattle grid with no alternative 	None identified during audit
NN840481	2km descending into Birks of Aberfeldy follows narrow path over wooden footbridges, boardwalks and steep steps, impassable with a horse	Range of alternative paths potentially suitable (not surveyed)

Aberfeldy to Pitlochry

North from Aberfeldy, the Rob Roy Way follows a narrow riverside path before joining the bed of the disused railway at The Ward. which although passable would easily churn up if used by horses during/after wet weather, so horse riders should be particularly careful to respect the need to exercise their access rights responsibly. At time of survey, the middle hill section between Strathtay and Ballechin Wood was obstructed by two kissing gates. The waymarked Rob Roy Way around Carra Beag follows narrow paths in places which would easily chew up with equestrian use. The forest road network may provide a better alternative for horse riders.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NN875507	Narrow riverside path leading to wooden footbridge, non-slip surface but relatively narrow	

			
<p>NN917540 Path north from Strathtay</p>	<p>Kissing gate</p> 		<p>No alternative</p>
<p>NN912547</p>	<p>Narrow wooden footbridge, steps either end</p> 		
<p>NN913548 Western end of Ballechin Wood</p>	<p>Kissing gate</p>		<p>None identified in survey</p>

		
<p>NN914549</p>	<p>Sleeper crossing over narrow burn</p> 	<p>Ford/jump burn</p>
<p>NN922553</p>	<p>Ladder stile</p> 	<p>Field gate adjacent at forest boundary open at time of survey</p>
<p>NN939574</p>	<p>Crossing of very busy A9 without any safety crossing</p>	
<p>NN940577</p>	<p>Narrow metal suspension bridge over River Tummel with metal hoops overhead restricting height</p>	<p>Public roads</p>

