

SPEYSIDE WAY

Notes on multi-use access

The Speyside Way is one of Scotland's four original long distance routes, now one of Scotland's Great Trails. Starting at Buckie, the route runs west along the Moray Firth to Spey Bay, and then follows the Spey upstream to Aviemore. A newly opened extension of the original route continues south to Kincaig, and work is underway to develop further extension to Newtonmore. There is an optional 15 mile spur from Glenlivet to Tomintoul. The short spur to Dufftown which was originally part of the Speyside Way has been declassified following several landslides.

The section of Speyside Way along the old railway line from Craigellachie to Ballindalloch is particularly suitable for multi-use, as is the new extension from Aviemore to Kincaig, but most of the route is accessible to horse riders, cyclists and trampers. In some places the route follows broad forest tracks or the hard surfaced bed of the disused railway, in other places the Speyside Way is a narrower less formal path. On most of the route, gates and stiles have been replaced wherever possible to allow multi-use access, and where barriers are still required to restrict illegal vehicular access, gaps at least 1.2m wide have been left alongside. Between Cragganmore and Cromdale, and on parts of the Tomintoul Spur, kissing gates and boggy ground restrict multi-use access. The route managers are currently exploring alternative options to improve this section for all users.

These notes have been produced by British Horse Society Scotland to help identify location and brief details of features which may influence multi-use of the Speyside Way. The notes are intended to supplement information already available from other sources, including detailed route guides, <http://www.speysideway.org/> and other relevant websites. Although the route is waymarked throughout, sometimes the waymarks are difficult to find, so make sure you have a map with you.

The Speyside Way includes numerous bridges of varied construction, particularly along the disused railway. There are also several tunnels and underpasses of varied width, length and height. Only those which may present an issue for experienced riders are noted below. Photos have been included where appropriate to help you assess whether a feature such as steps or a narrow footbridge may present an obstruction to you. Non-slip strips have been laid down the centre of most wooden bridges but other timbers and metalwork can be slippery when wet. Riders will need to decide for themselves whether they consider it safer to dismount and lead through narrow gaps or across bridges.



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 along the trail at a walk, and elsewhere limit your pace to ground conditions and visibility. On formally surfaced paths, keep to a walk, and either move your horse off the path to dung, or dismount and clear dung off the path. Horse riders should take particular care to clear up after their horse through public parks. Please make sure you close all gates to prevent livestock straying. Event organisers, groups or commercial operators considering using the Speyside Way are urged to contact the route managers.

The background information for these notes has been provided by volunteers who surveyed the route in 2014 as part of a multi-use long distance route audit funded by Scottish Natural Heritage. The notes were updated following review with route managers in March 2016. BHS will endeavour to update notes as and when notification of subsequent changes is received, but cannot guarantee accessibility or the accuracy of information provided. Inclusion of sections of route and car parks does not constitute a recommendation. All route users are responsible for deciding for themselves whether this route, or sections thereof, is suitable for their intended use, taking account of their own abilities, skills, fitness and experience (and in the case of horse riders, the disposition, fitness and experience of their horse), as well as season, weather conditions etc.

Details of suggested circular routes developed by local riders which incorporate parts of the Speyside Way can be downloaded from <http://meaq2010.files.wordpress.com/2010/03/speyside-way-circular.pdf>.

Parking

Location/OS Grid Ref.	Comments
Spey Bay NJ349655	Ample turning space for lorries and trailers but it can be busy at times, especially in summer.
Aberlour	Large free car park past the bowling green/public toilets with easy access for horse boxes, open 24/7, direct access onto Speyside Way next to the cemetery.
Carron NJ225412	Car park at entrance to disused distillery
Craigellachie Station	Car park very small, unsuitable for trailers. Toilets only open in holidays and weekends in summer.
NJ322416 Dufftown	Public car park is too small to accommodate trailers. The adjacent larger distillery car park may be used at weekends but not during the week.
Boat of Garten NJ953190	Small car park, often busy, unsuitable for trailers due to restrictions on turning space. Large lay-by on west side of road immediately south of road junction opposite provides much easier parking for trailers and potentially a lorry.
Aviemore	Potential parking at Dalfaber Industrial Estate
Tomintoul	Car park at start of Speyside Way has limited space for trailers or lorries

Buckie to Spey Bay

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NJ382642	Narrow 1m wide wooden footbridge 15m span, metal mesh over planks 	Continue along the road from Porttannachy to Auchenreath, rejoining the route at NJ372642. Alternatively those willing to ford the burn could use the steep informal path either side of the bridge. 
NJ354648	Wooden steps 	Bypass the steps on the informal track 100m east

Spey Bay to Fochabers

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
Spey Bay car park NJ349655	Western loop along riverbank solid path but narrow, includes gateway >1.5m wide and sturdy footbridge 1.2m wide with low level kick rail (bypassed on beach to west).	Riders recommended to follow eastern loop (main waymarked route) with no restrictions, which merges with western loop at NJ350652
NJ350630	Path shown on older OS maps diverted to avoid riverbank erosion. Solid track >2m wide	Follow waymarked route through the forest
NJ347604	Path takes sharp zig-zag: if heading north take care to follow waymarked route onto new firm path rather than carry straight on	

Fochabers to Craigellachie

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NJ345587	1.4m wide chicane between metal railings to slow cyclists	Minor public road on other side of railings
Fochabers to Boat o'Brig	The Speyside Way has been re-routed for a short section on the south side of Fochabers – follow the waymarkers. The route then follows minor public road for 4 miles, including some tight bends with limited visibility.	Potential alternative using forest roads and tracks through Ordiequish Forest
NJ319517	Steep, narrow (60cm) steps leading up from B9103 	Follow public road uphill (east) for 100m and turn on to farm track to rejoin Speyside Way. Beware heavy lorries on road.
NJ324510	Locked gate at entrance to Ben Aigan forest, gap to side. Following section is wide hard surfaced forest roads. Beware of shooting range which can be noisy at times.	

Craigellachie to Ballindalloch

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NJ285448	Large diameter tunnel approx. 12m long under A941. Horse riders may prefer to dismount. 	

<p>NJ284442</p>	<p>Old railway tunnel approx. 100m long followed by bridge</p> 	
<p>NJ263429 Burn of Aberlour</p>	<p>1m wide very wobbly wooden suspension bridge, fine for walkers, not recommended for horses, uncertain weight bearing capacity – and easy alternatives</p> 	<p>Ford immediately upstream, adjacent to bridge, runs diagonally across the burn which is usually shallow. Alternatively if burn in spate, turn left immediately before the bridge, following the path between the burn and cemetery, turn right onto the A95 for 100m, then turn right again on the track past the football pitch which leads back onto the Speyside Way. Take care on the busy A95.</p>
<p>NJ175378 Allt Gheallaidh Burn</p>	<p>1m wide wooden slatted suspension bridge, bounces with horses on and no guarantee of weight bearing capacity</p> 	<p>Turn off Speyside Way at Blacksboat Station (NJ183392) onto B9138, turn right heading west to join the B9102 for approx. 1.5m to rejoin route at NJ173375</p>

Dufftown Spur *(De-designated as SGT due to landslides)*

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description
	<p>Two landslides which have eroded the railway embankment have constrained the width of the path along the disused railway. Repair work is scheduled by the access authority. Signs say walkers only, but passable with care with a horse at your own risk.</p> 
NJ390446	<p>Railway bridge, path narrowed by landslide at one end, passable with care at your own risk.</p> 

Ballindalloch to Grantown

NB. Section from Cragganmore to Cromdale unsuitable for multi-use

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
Cragganmore to Cromdale	<p>Speyside Way leaves disused railway and heads uphill through fields and woodland. Steps avoidable following road through Cragganmore but thereafter 15-20 chain pedestrian only V-gates, many without any alternative access. Promoted route also involves short section alongside very busy A95. Access through adjacent fields throughout this section limited by boggy ground.</p>	<p>Follow the B9102 along the north side of the Spey, which is a quiet single track road, but with limited visibility in places and occasionally used by tractors and distillery vehicles. Use passing places to give way to other traffic. At NJ054293 turn left towards Cromdale, turning right just before the metal single track bridge over the Spey onto the</p>

		<p>Speyside Way which follows the stone chipped fisherman's track then climbs a steep slope alongside a fence, taking the left fork, up into the woods.</p>
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Grantown to Nethy Bridge

No restrictions. (Former problems with the bridge at NJ008228 have now been resolved.)

Nethy Bridge to Boat of Garten

Most of this section follows minor roads and constructed paths which are largely multi-use accessible other than a section on boardwalk for which there is a readily identifiable alternative. Potential scope for circular rides using other minor roads, tracks and paths through woodland to the south.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NH999205 Nethy Bridge to Duackbridge	<p>Newly waymarked route runs through public park including a stretch of wooden boardwalk. Fully multi-use accessible but can be slippery when wet and no passing space on the main long stretch of boardwalk. Give way to others users</p> 	<p>Turn left immediately south of River Nethy (shop on corner) up minor road to the village hall, and follow the waymarked path through The Birchwood to rejoin the waymarked Speyside Way at NH996204</p>
Duackbridge to East Croftmore	<p>3 wooden footbridges, passable with a horse but take particular care when wet and potentially slippery</p>	<p>Continue along B970 rather than on the waymarked path through the forest</p>

Boat of Garten to Aviemore

This section of the Speyside Way is very popular with cyclists as well as walkers. It is accessible throughout by horses, although riders should remember it was not designed for equestrian use, and they will need to dismount to negotiate the railway underpasses at the Aviemore end of the route, and possibly some of the narrow footbridges. Horse riders should restrict pace to walk to avoid damaging the path surface, give way to other users, and take particular care when passing young or old walkers, or those with mobility issues.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NJ904142	<p>Narrow underpass under railway with open burn alongside, approx. 8' height in middle, passable with care but riders should dismount and lead.</p> 	None
NJ902143	<p>Narrow underpass under railway with restricted headspace as above but without burn alongside.</p>	None
Railway underpass to Grampian Road	<p>Whindust surfaced path meanders through woodland with numerous wooden footbridges, passable by a horse but may require dismounting. Take particular care when wet as wooden planks can be slippery. .</p>	Riders may prefer to use Johnstone Road, Jones Road and Dougal Drive rather than the narrow path north of the housing development
Grampian Road (B9152) to Aviemore centre	<p>Waymarked grass path runs parallel to and east of main road to Dalfaber Drive, then south along main road.</p>	

Aviemore to Kincaig

This new 10km extension to the Speyside Way is fully multi-use accessible with self-closing bridlegates and multi-use throughout. Horse riders should be aware that much of this section runs parallel to the main railway line.

Tomintoul Spur

The northern section of the Tomintoul Spur from Ballindalloch to Glenlivet is fully accessible without restrictions on multi-use. The section between Glenlivet and Cairn Daimh is ridden regularly by horses, but parts of the route south of Carn Daimh are boggy for much of the year and unsuitable for horses during or after wet weather. Between Carn Daimh and Tomintoul there are also numerous stiles and narrow footbridges which are impassable by horses, although this section is used regularly by cyclists who lift their bikes over. Cairngorms National Park Authority is currently working on upgrading this section of route for all users. Meanwhile quiet lanes and forest tracks already promoted as waymarked walks by Glenlivet Estate (tel. 01479 870070) provide a straightforward alternative between Carn Daimh and Tomintoul.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
Glenlivet NJ190284	12' metal gate with stile adjacent leads onto broad firm stone/grassy track.	
NJ185283	Access along waymarked Speyside Way along edge of forest plantation restricted by kissing gate.	Alternative path runs parallel along the edge of the adjacent field. Can be damp in places but ridden regularly.
NJ183278	12' metal farm gate, off hinges but easily opened, leads onto grass track through open plantation.	
NJ18277	12' wooden gate leads onto broad track through heather, stony in places, regularly ridden. Some patches washed out but easily avoided.	
NJ182262	12' wooden hurdle fastened on string leads onto grass track along edge of forest climbing up to Carn Daimh summit. Can be boggy in places after excessively wet weather but regularly ridden at other times.	
Carn Daimh summit NJ182249	Very stony Land Rover track leads south to Cairn Ellick but note restrictions on equestrian use further towards Tomintoul.	Alternative route branches off from Carn Daimh summit, following forest road, initially north-west then south-west to gravel pit, and around west side of Tom a Chor, following hard stony forest track south, along west side of burn, to car park at Glenconglass.
NJ189241	Old wooden gate leads onto track through forest, muddy in places even in dry weather but firm underneath	
NJ190233	Wooden gate, no hinges, tied with rope	
NJ180217 to NJ182220	Stile and boardwalk across boggy area	
NJ180216	Stile and narrow footbridge	
NJ177205	Kissing gate leading onto rough narrow path between fences	
NJ173205	Stile and kissing gate onto road	
NJ170201	Speyside Way branches off road through self-closing bridlegate but steep steps at NJ168200, stiles with no alternative and a narrow footbridge over the Conglass make this section unsuitable for horses.	Continue along minor road south to B9008, west over Bridge of Conglass, north on Conglass Lane (parallel to A939)
Tomintoul NJ165194	Self-closing gate at end of rough tractor track but see restrictions above	