

FORMATINE AND BUCHAN WAY - NOTES FOR HORSE-RIDERS

The Formatine and Buchan Way is one of Scotland's Great Trails. Following the disused railway line between Fraserburgh and Dyce, just north of Aberdeen, with a spur to the east linking Maud and Peterhead, the route is relatively level throughout and ideally suited to year-round use by walkers, cyclists and horse-riders of all ages and abilities. Further details of the route, including detailed sectional maps and route descriptions, are available from http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/outdooraccess/long_routes/formatine_buchan.asp

All route users are responsible for deciding for themselves whether this route, or sections thereof, are suitable for their intended use, taking account of their own abilities, skills, fitness and experience, as well as season, weather conditions etc. 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>. Event organisers, groups or commercial operators considering using the Southern Upland Way are urged to contact the route managers.

Riders can expect to meet cyclists, walkers and occasionally wheelchairs and buggies along this route. Courtesy, consideration of others' needs and good communication are the key to sharing paths. Riders need to be particularly careful to respect other users and either move their horse off the surfaced path to dung or dismount and kick dung to the side to ensure it doesn't interfere with others' enjoyment of this fantastic route. Always pass others you meet along the trail at a walk, and elsewhere limit your pace to ground conditions and visibility.

Many of the original bridges along the disused railway have been removed, with gentle gradients sloping down to cross directly over minor roads. Originally there were padlocked barriers each side of such road crossings to restrict illegal vehicular use, with a cycle stile and chicane for wheelchairs alongside.



Over the past few years the route managers have removed the padlocks and cycle stiles at the southern end of the route, and east towards Peterhead, leaving more easily negotiated gaps. There are plans to remove more along other stretches. Where such barriers still exist, nervous or very wide horses might require some persuading, particularly where the metal bar is relatively high, although most will walk over the cycle stile without a problem.

Elsewhere along the route there are occasional staggered barriers, again to prevent illegal vehicular use. Horses can easily walk around these, although horse-drawn carriages would not be able to.



Some sections of the route have been resurfaced with gravel which some unshod horses may find sharp underfoot

