

ANNANDALE WAY

Notes on multi-use access

The Annandale Way is a 55 mile long distance route linking the source of the River Annan, high on the hills above Moffat, with where the river flows into the Solway Firth just south of Annan, including a loop around the Beef Tub above Moffat, and alternative options through Lockerbie or Lochmaben. Some parts of the Annandale Way have a long history of equestrian use, whereas others are impassable with a horse or bike, and never likely to be multi-use accessible, despite the many improvements which development of the Annandale Way has brought about.

These notes have been produced by British Horse Society Scotland to help those interested in using part or all of the Annandale 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, 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. 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. These notes are intended to supplement detailed route guides and other information already available from the route website (<http://annandaleway.org/>).

Suggestions for parking and alternative routes to avoid restrictions on multi-use are included where information has been provided by volunteers, 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. Event organisers, groups or commercial operators considering using the Annandale Way are urged to contact the route managers (see route website for details). These notes will be updated as and when notification of subsequent changes is received, but neither BHS or Dumfries and Galloway Council access team can guarantee accessibility or the accuracy of information provided.

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 Annandale Way, 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 may be less readily visible, so make sure you have a map with you and know how to read it.

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>.

Newbie to Annan

As elsewhere on the Annandale Way, self-closing bridlegates have been installed alongside gates on the loop path which follows the coast from Newbie around Barnkirk Point. There are no obstructions to multi-use access on the path along the west bank of the Annan north from Barnkirk Point, but signs request horse riders to use the hard track which runs parallel to the west.

The tarmac cycle path between Newbie and Annan is signed for pedestrians and cyclists but is equally suitable for responsible horse riders.

There are metal chicanes at the eastern end of the footbridge over the River Annan, which are easily negotiated with a horse, although riders use this bridge at their own risk. The waymarked Annandale Way continues north from the eastern end of the bridge, up the east riverbank. Steps leading up onto the road make this unsuitable for multi-use. The alternative is to follow the road into Annan, or for those wishing to continue along the Annandale Way, to leave the route at the western end of the footbridge over the River Annan at OSGR NT187664, follow the track to the B724, turn right on the B721 then first left on the quiet lane to Brydekirk.

Annan to Brydekirk

The waymarked route between Annan and the small informal car park just south of Blacketlees at NY190684 is impassable with a horse and unsuitable for multi-use due to the narrow footbridge across the river just south of the A75, which has barriers either end to restrict use to pedestrian only. The path north from the A75 along the west bank of the river is also narrow and eroding in places. Kissing gates, narrow footbridges and several badly eroded sections restrict use of the path along the east riverbank between the A75 and Brydekirk to pedestrian only.

Between Blacketlees and Brydekirk, the Annandale Way is waymarked along the west riverbank. This section is multi-use accessible but includes several short sections of boardwalk. To avoid causing damage and erosion, horse-riders and cyclists should not use this section in wet weather. All users should note that this section is particularly tricky when the river is in spate.

Brydekirk to Hoddom Bridge

For most of this section, as elsewhere on the Annandale Way, self-closing bridgates have been installed. The only physical obstruction to multi-use on this section are:

- the old metal hooped kissing gate at the Brydekirk end, which is impassable with a horse but possible to avoid by using the track which branches off the road up towards Newpark 500m east up the hill,
- steps either end of the footbridge over the Mein Water, which can be avoided by using field gates onto the road either side of the road bridge over the Mein Water.
- At the path junction with the B725 on the east side of Hoddom Bridge, where there is a field gate alongside the narrow squeeze stile.

However, none of this section is recommended with a horse, nor would cycle or equestrian use be considered responsible because of the fragility of the path along the riverbank which is regularly inundated when the river is in spate and subject to erosion in places. There are also several narrow sections of boardwalk north of Meinfoot Farm which although in theory might be passable with care with a steady pony, are not suitable for equestrian use.

Alternatively, on the west side of the river, there is an unwaymarked track through Upper Brydekirk, Turnshawhead and Woodcock Air, albeit boggy in places through the wood and unsuitable for equestrian or cycle use other than in dry weather. At times the gate onto the B725 at the western end of Woodcock Air is padlocked with no alternative other than a narrow wooden kissing gate alongside which is impassable with a horse. The most sensible alternative for horses is to follow the minor road which runs parallel to the Annan from Brydekirk on the east side of the river.

Hoddom Bridge to Sorrysike

Heading north from Hoddom Bridge, the first part of the Annandale Way is waymarked along the very narrow former Lady's Walk perched, in places precipitously, on a slippery bank

above the river, with a couple of narrow steps part-way along. This path is unsuitable for horses. The alternative would be to follow the tarmac Hoddom Castle estate road for 500 m and then branch off down to the river on stoned track, which leads back onto the riverside path which skirts around the edge of Hoddom Castle golf course, which is far from ideal for horses. The bridlegate between the golf course and field has recently been replaced with a kissing gate, which can be avoided by following the narrow path on the river side of the fence along to a field gate. The tarmac approach drive to Hoddom Castle is multi-use accessible but it is questionable whether horses would have access rights through Hoddom Castle caravan park. Both options use the same footbridge to cross the River Annan east of the castle, which is passable with a horse but not ideal. The riverside path between this bridge and Brocklerigg Bridge over the Milk Water is not suited to horses or multi-use because of steps, narrow wooden footbridges and the fragile nature of the path which is regularly flooded when the river is in spate. There is no other facility to cross the River Annan until Williamwath Bridge.

The preferred alternative for horse riders and cyclists to the waymarked route past the castle is to follow the B723 north from Hoddom Bridge, past Buckie Cottage, branching off first left down the lane to Mainholm, keeping right along the tarmac road at the next junction, to reunite with the Annandale Way at Brocklerigg Bridge. The farm track between here and Sorraysike has a long history of multi-use.

Sorraysike to Lockerbie

This section is multi-use accessible between Sorraysike to Pilmuir with self-closing bridlegates in fencelines, in some places adjacent to field gates.

The spur from South Turnmuir into Lockerbie is restricted to pedestrian only by the footbridge over the M74, which can be avoided by heading north through the housing estate onto the A709.

Lockerbie to Millhousebridge

Both the Torwood and Dryfesdalegate arms of the route are fully multi-use accessible other than the path through Gallaberry Plantation, which has some restrictions at South Lodge (OSGR NY115828). The waymarked Annandale Way goes through a 2-in-1 gate alongside the Dryfe rather than along the old avenue. This gate has a pedestrian self-closing section which most people use, although the main gate is not locked. Immediately north of this gate, the path branches west through a kissing gate back onto the avenue around the northern end of South Lodge's garden. The adjacent wooden slip hurdle is not locked but is difficult to open. The easier alternative is to follow the quiet road past West Lodge and Dryfeholm.

Sorraysike to Dormont

The Annandale Way follows quiet tarmac lanes from Sorraysike to Nutholm. The waymarked route turns off just west of Nutholm, cutting the corner through to Williamwath Bridge. Kissing gates have been erected either end of this path because although the path in the middle along a field margin is relatively flat, the steep banks either end cannot sustainably support multi-use, and there is now a steep set of steps at the western end leading down to Williamwath Bridge. The preferred alternative is to follow the quiet lane past Nutholm and Beck Bridge.

The waymarked route follows the road up the hill from Williamwath Bridge to Dormont. To reduce the distance on tarmac, follow the track which branches off at the western end of Williamwath Bridge, rejoining the public road at Dormont.

Dormont to Hightae

Self-closing bridlegates have been installed throughout on this section of the Annandale Way so there are no physical obstructions to multi-use but you should be aware that there

are usually cattle grazing on Almagill Hill, and on the hill to the north of this over Moss Castle. As a result, both of these hills are rough underfoot from cattle poaching over winter. Most of the remainder of this section is on good tracks.

Hightae to Lochmaben

There are self-closing bridlegates most of the way along the top of the floodbank on the east side of Calf Lake Burn. There is also a 2-in-1 gate with pedestrian section, but the main gate is unlocked, although may require dismounting to open and close because of restricted turning space.

At the junction with the public road between Mill Bridge and Parkend, the Annandale Way is signed through a kissing gate in the hedge. There is a field gate onto the road 20m east towards Parkend.

The 2-in-1 gates along the track between Parkend and Castle Mains only have pedestrian self-closing sections but the main gates are unlocked so do not restrict access. At Castle Mains, the Annandale Way goes through the farm yard. To avoid going over the clanging metal weighbridge, go through the open gate alongside the cattle shed (to the right of the weighbridge heading north).

The path which runs parallel to the B7020 through Castle Woods has no access controls either end, but there are two narrow footbridges. Please note that this path often floods in wet weather. Horse riders need to take particular care to avoid causing any damage, which may mean using the road instead of the path during or after wet weather.

At OGR NY83182 the footbridge has rails along one side only. Although narrow, it would probably be passable with a horse dismounted. Steep banks and tree roots do not allow option to ford the burn. There is no gap in the dyke onto the road south of the bridge so the only alternative to avoid the bridge is to continue north along the road to join the woodland path through a bridlegate in the roadside hedge immediately north of this burn.



Shortly after this at OSGR NY083813 there is another narrow footbridge, railed both sides, and no scope to ford the burn. The easiest option for horse riders is to avoid the bridge by using the gaps from the path onto the road immediately north and south of the bridge.



Lochmaben to Corncockle

The fenced path along the edge of the field between Beebinkless and Corncockle is multi-use accessible, with self-closing bridlegates either end, but beware of rabbit holes, particularly around NY093856, just south of the intersection of the path with a hedge at the bend in the track.

Corncockle to Archwood

The path through Corncockle Plantation waymarked as the Annandale Way varies between broad grass ride and narrow path over peat which can be boggy in places. In wet weather, it is far easier to follow the minor road to the east. The track around Spedlin's Flow is firm and in the most part stony, with no restrictions on multi-use access

Lochbrow to A701 at Kinnelknock

There are no restrictions on the track between Lochbrow and North Lochbrowmoor. At time of last survey, the waymarked path which runs between B7020 and Black Burn between the end of the North Lochbrowmoor Track and Heathfield was impassable due to electric and other fencing across the field. The path through the fields north of Heathfield is also difficult with a horse. The signed alternative is to follow the B7020 north for 980 m to a sign shortly south of Woodside which marks the Annandale Way turning west through a field gate off the road to rejoin the path north from Heathfield. The farm track north from this path junction, waymarked route from Greenbeck through to Blackburn, and forest road through to Kinnelknock on the A701 are all fully multi-use accessible.

A701 Kinnelknock to Park Bridge

Self-closing bridlegates or gaps adjacent to any locked vehicular gates make the whole of this section multi-use accessible for walkers, cyclists and horse riders (but not carriage drivers).

Cauldholm to Beattock

From Cauldholm, the Annandale Way follows a clearly signed broad grass track across moorland to the Crooked Road, a single track road which, true to its, name, winds its way down to Beattock. In fine weather, the views across to Moffat are fantastic, and this is a great section to ride, but it's less suitable during winter or wet weather.

There are self-closing bridlegates throughout on the off-road section, and for most of the way the track is firm underfoot, albeit with a few boggy bits which are easily negotiated other than during or after wet weather when you will need to pick your way around carefully with a horse. Expect to meet cattle along much of this section.

Beattock to Moffat

The 2-in-1 gates across the old road which leads onto a track under the M74 include pedestrian rather than bridlegate sections but the main gates are unlocked, so this section is

100% multi-use accessible. There is ample height clearance for horses on the A701 and M74 underpasses, but some horses may be alarmed by the sound of traffic overhead. If in doubt, riders are advised to dismount and lead under these bridges. There is a fence alongside the river under the A70 (pictured below left)¹, but not on the wider M74 underpass (pictured right below).



Annan Bridge to Adamsholm, Old Edinburgh Road (north of Moffat)

There are no restrictions on multi-use also the riverside path between Annan and New Bridges, but this path is the most popular in Moffat with local and visiting walkers, including coach parties of people of varying physical mobility, so cyclists and horse riders using this path need to take particular care to respect other route users.

The riverside path north of the A701/Hope Johnstone Park is narrow in places, with a kissing gate at the northern end at Adamsholm.

Moffat Loop around Beef Tub

Self-closing bridlegates have been installed right the way along this section of the Annandale Way. The only restrictions on multi-use are on the eastern arm of the loop from the Beef Tub around to Corehead.

OSGR NT066134 – Approx. 250m Narrow rocky section along the regional boundary above the Beef Tub between Peat Knowe and Great Hill. The path, such as it is, runs between the stone dyke and fence, but is boggy in places. Walkers often pick their way along the south side of the dyke, but there is a fairly steep cross-fall in places. Passable with care in dry weather.



OSGR NT081129 Two wooden log bridges over narrow ditches/burns on the eastern arm of the loop following the Tweedhope Burn. Easy to pick your way around these, the remainder of the track is good broad, firm grass



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