BORDERS ABBEYS WAY MULTI-USE NOTES

The Borders Abbeys Way is a 68 mile waymarked circular route linking four of the Scottish Borders' ruined abbeys: Melrose, Dryburgh, Kelso and Jedburgh. Following a mixture of riverside paths, farm tracks, forest rides, disused railway lines and old drove roads, the route offers an opportunity to explore and enjoy the best of the Central Borders. The Borders Abbeys Way was originally developed and is still promoted primarily for walkers, but some sections are also suitable for cyclists and horse-riders.

These notes have been produced by British Horse Society Scotland to identify location and brief details of restrictions on multi-use, and to help horse riders and others identify which sections of the route are best suited to multi-use. Only features which may present an issue for experienced riders are noted below – shallow fords, 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.

The notes are intended to supplement route descriptions and other information already available from https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/bordersabbeysway/ and other sources. All route users are responsible for deciding for themselves whether any particular section is suitable for their intended use, taking account of their own abilities, skills, fitness and experience, as well as season, weather conditions etc. 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. Event organisers, groups or commercial operators considering using the Borders Abbeys Way are urged to contact the route managers.

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 at a walk and limit your pace to ground conditions and visibility. On unsurfaced paths and other well used sections of the route, particularly along the river or across the golf course, riders need to be particularly careful to ensure they are not causing any damage, that they respect other users and clear up dung. As this is a livestock farming area, please take particular care to leave gates as you find them. Although waymarked throughout and easy to follow, it is still worth having a map with you – and making sure you know how to read it!.

Parking

There are large public car parks in Jedburgh (next to Visitor Information Centre OSGR NT651205) and in Hawick (NT500145). Parking in Selkirk Melrose, St. Boswells and Kelso can be more challenging with a trailer or horsebox.

Kelso to Roxburgh

Although many of the former stiles and kissing gates along this section have been removed, and the steps at the northern end could potentially be negotiated with care with a bike or horse, a few narrow sections of path and stiles just north of Roxburgh Mill currently make this section unsuitable for horses.

Location /	Feature/description	Alternative	access	to	avoid
OS Grid Ref.		restrictions			

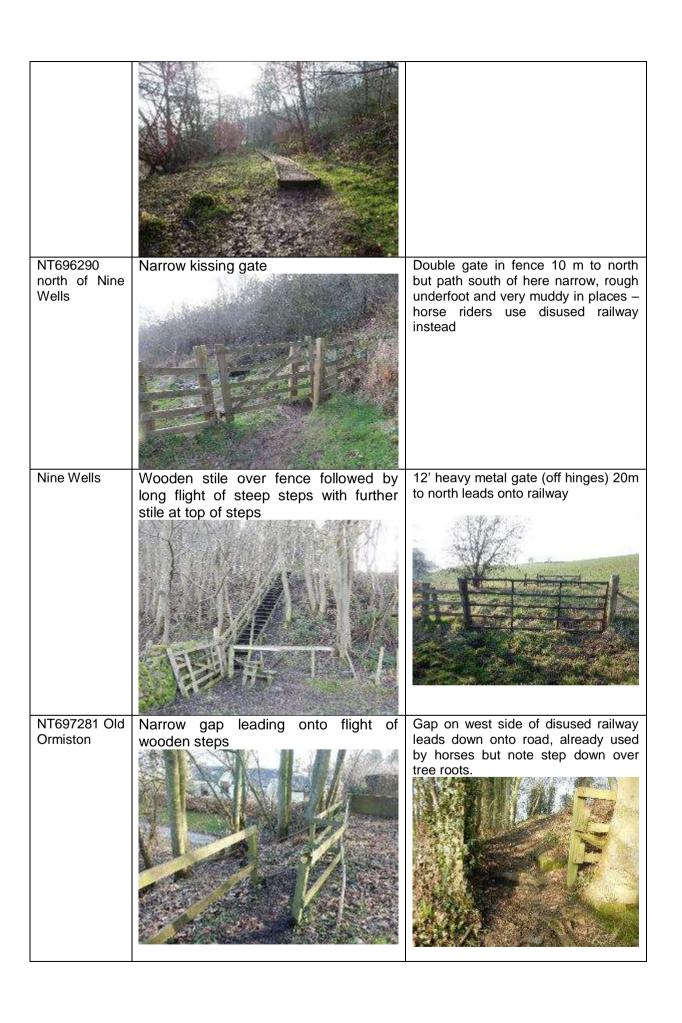
NTTAGOG	0.					[] A
NT718337 Path junction with A699 west of Teviot bridge	Stone	step	stile	over	dyke	Wooden gate adjacent but restricted opening width
North bank of river opposite Kings Haugh	Narrow psouth an north. N	nd busy	A roa	d alongs		It may be possible to avoid this section by continuing along the A699 and linking down onto the riverside path around Roxburgh Castle, but note other restrictions to south
NT718339 Path east of Roxburgh Castle	Wooden	steps le	eading do	own ban		
NT712322 burn crossing opposite Broomy Knowe	1.1m wic					No alternative means of crossing the ditch
NT711330 east of Roxburgh	Success wooden					

Barns NT704315 Double wooden field gates in fence to Wooden step stile over fence - path north but very overgrown - and see before and after follows broad farm south-east further restrictions below Kersmains track around field headland NT703313 Wooden step stile over fence No obvious alternative. May be possible to follow field headland west Junction with and try and find a gate onto the road road Roxburgh Mill

Roxburgh Mill to Nisbet

Riders are recommended to use the disused railway between Roxburgh and Old Ormiston. There are no restrictions on non-vehicular access along the disused railway between Old Ormiston and Nisbet.

Location /	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid
OS Grid Ref.		restrictions
NT697291 west of	Long section of boardwalk	Use disused railway from Roxburgh to Old Ormiston
Roxburghe		
Golf Course		





Nisbet to Jedburgh

Some of the fences have been removed along the riverside path between Nisbet and Jedfoot Bridge and there are alternative ways around the remaining stiles and steps so this section is now passable with a horse – but watch out for rabbit holes. There are no restrictions on multi-use access between Jedfoot Bridge and Jedburgh, but the riverside path along the Jed Water around Jedbank is narrow and far from ideal for horses. Riders are recommended to use the Jedburgh loop riding route instead (waymarked with white horseshoes on a blue square) which follows a quiet road and good track east of Hartrigg. The old bridge over the Jed Water and A68 underpass are both passable with a horse with care.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NT675254 Teviot bridge B6400	Signed path uses wooden steps on west side of B6400. Wooden wicket gate on other side of tree tricky to negotiate with horse because of narrow width and uneven ground, drop from road and tree immediately beyond.	Use wider gate on east side of B600 and pass under bridge to rejoin path on west side of bridge
NT673251	Wooden step stile over fence	Use wooden slip hurdle in fence 5 m north of stile

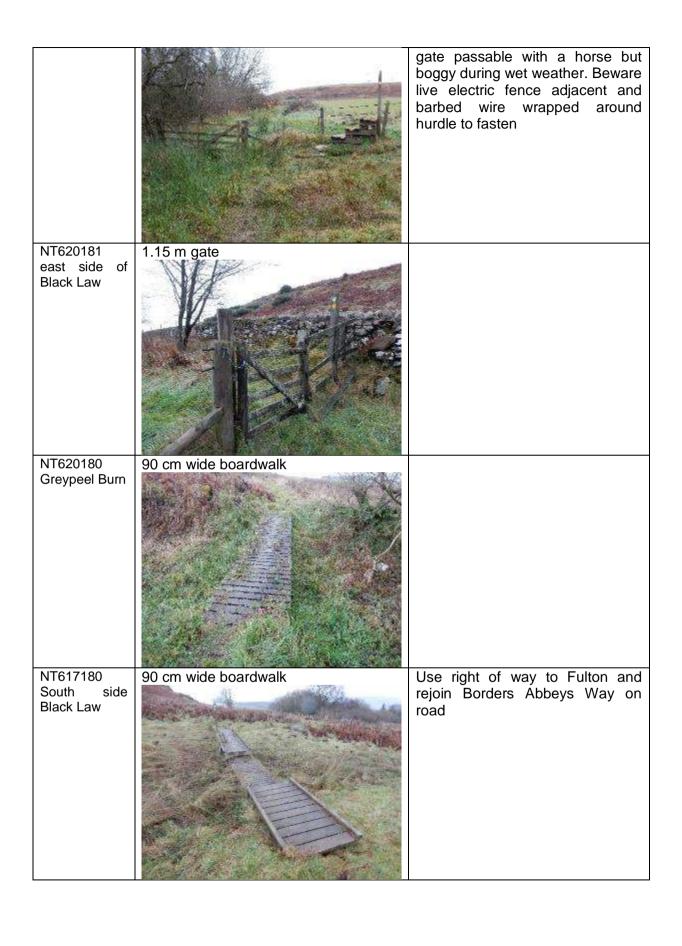


Jedburgh to Denholm

The waymarked tarmac riverside path south of the car park in Jedburgh is very popular with visitors and families of all ages, partly because of the fitness trail along this path. Horse riders are recommended to follow the Jedburgh Riding Route which uses the B6358 and rejoins the Borders Abbeys Way again at the castle. The waymarked route between Jedburgh Castle and Merlin Dean is multi-use accessible, but the section over Black Law is not. Alternatives are suggested below. There are gates alongside the stiles and kissing gates in every fence and dyke between Bedrule and Denholm.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NT949617 Miller's Burn	1.2 m wide bridge with rail to one side.	Ford adjacent which has suffered from past erosion and can be tricky to negotiate because of steep entry/exit on south bank
Bank south of Miller's Burn	Long flight of wooden steps	Use parallel unstepped path

NT629178 L Merlin Dean	Long flight of steep narrow wooden steps with boardwalk over burn	Follow field headland north of fenced planted area, or continue on right of way south to Swinnie Cottages and follow road to rejoin Borders Abbeys Way at Bedrule
	Wooden step stile over fence around planting area	As above
NT625179 Path along field headland between Black Law and Merlin Dean	Wooden step stile over fence	Adjacent wooden hurdle /flake gate (beware electric fence)
I 🖺		



NT613179 3 further short sections of boardwalk Potentially field gate in fence to eastern end over boggy ground followed by stile south leading into field south of Blacklaw Strip over fence Blacklaw Strip but unconfirmed. Alternatively use right of way to **Fulton** NT608178 70cm wide footbridge over burn As above Path west of Blacklaw Strip

Denholm to Hawick

Most of this section is on a riverside path with steps, stiles, boardwalks and narrow footbridges making the majority of it impassable with a horse or bike. The road which runs roughly parallel north of the river via Hassendeanburn and disused railway west of Cocklecooty Cottage (a designated core path) may provide a preferable alternative for horses. The section between Hawick and the ford south of Bucklands is multi-use accessible, but riders may prefer to avoid the town centre by following the Hawick Riding Route (waymarked with white horseshoes on a blue square background) north past Bucklands and then cut through on back roads to Stirches. Alternatively, to reduce the length on road, riders could follow the Hawick Riding Route north via Muirfield and link back into the Borders Abbeys Way at Groundistone.

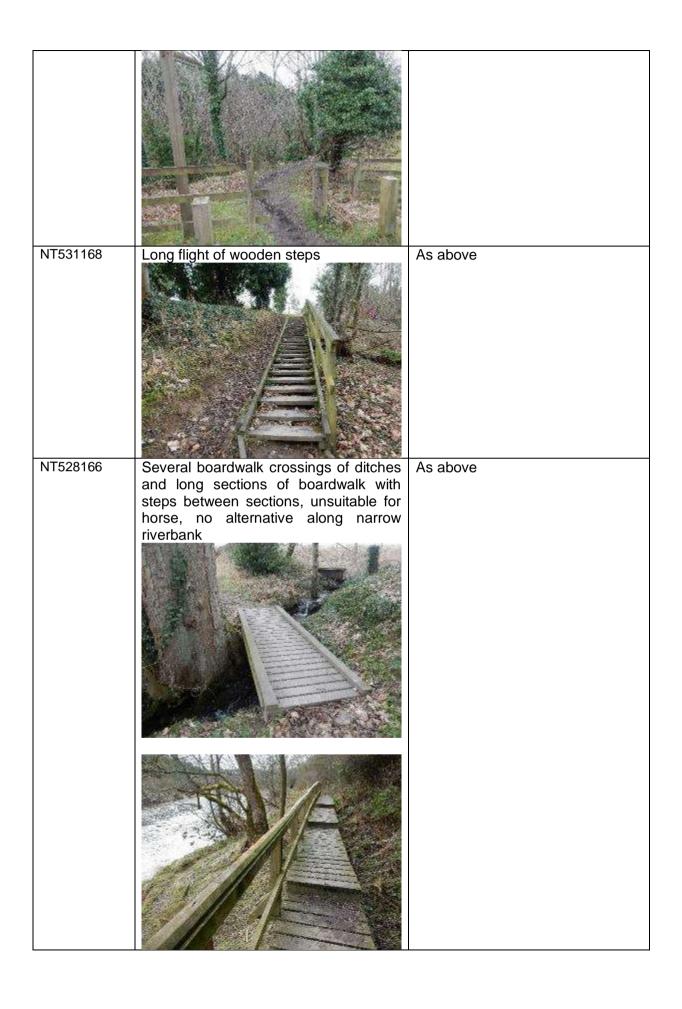
Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NT567187 north side Teviot Bridge	Steps with gate part-way down leading onto riverside path	Double field gate 20 m to north on B6405 leads into same field, riverside path unfenced, but note restrictions further along this section

NT566186	Stile in fence across waymarked riveside path	Use track along field headland to north of waymarked path (but note restrictions further along this section
NT560184	Stile in fence across waymarked riverside path	Use track along field headland which runs parallel on north side of hedge, which riverside path joins west of stile
NT559185 south-west of Hassendean Bank	Stile in fence across waymarked path	None. Gate adjacent leads into field to north of path (fenced through riverside woodland strip) but no way out of this field or to rejoin path and further restrictions on path
NT557185 South of road junction south- west of	Steep flight wooden steps up steep bank	None other than using road past Hassendean Bank

Hassendean Bank		
NT557185	Flight of shallow steps (passable with horse but previous flight definitely not)	
NT544182 Hassendean Burn	Flight of 8 relatively narrow steps leading down steep bank to 1m wide footbridge Ramp at southern end	None other than quiet lane/public road parallel to north, originally signed as Borders Abbeys Way
	Narrow riverside path with steps in places	

NT543181	80 cm wide footbridge, steps at	None
Burn south of Hassendeanb urn	southern end	
NT542181	Wooden step stile over fence across path	None other than road
NT540176	Wooden step stile over fence across path	None other than road
NT538172 East of Midshiels	Wooden step stile over fence across path	

Midshiels to	Narrow, uneven riverside path with	Use road to west
Hornshole Bridge	some very tight constrictions around rock/trees, unsuitable for horses	
NT535169	Long flight of shallow steps	
NT533168 north side Hornshole Bridge	Wooden chicane barriers 70 cm gap	
NT532168 south side Hornshole Bridge	80 cm gap around end of fence – but note further restrictions on this section	Use road or disused railway



Hawick to Ashkirk

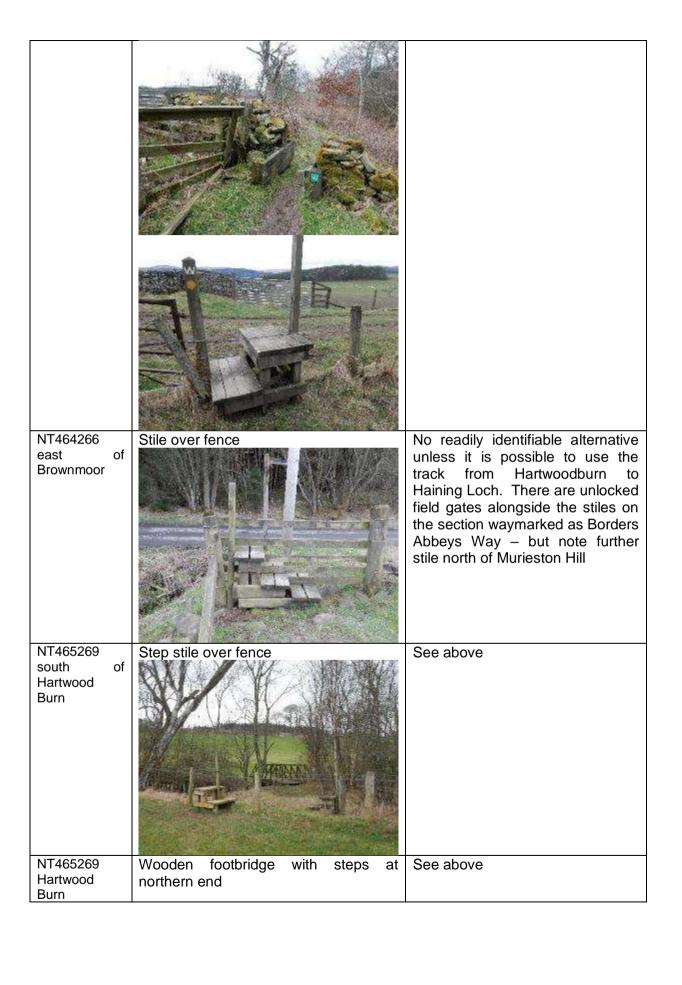
See comments above re. alternatives to riding through the middle of Hawick and be aware of the one-way system in Hawick town centre: B6399 is southbound only from Morrisons roundabout. The Borders Abbeys Way is fully multi-use accessible from Sunnybank to Salenside, with unlocked field gates alongside each of the stiles. North of Drinkstone Hill the Borders Abbeys Way coincides with the waymarked link between the Hawick Riding Route and Buccleuch Country Rides.

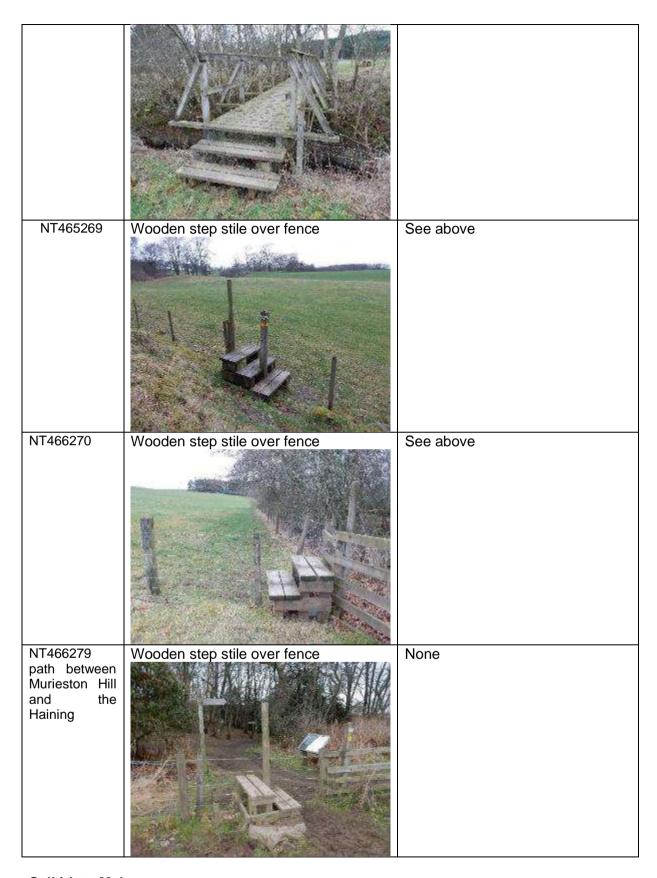
The path/track between Salenside and Wollrig is passable with care with a horse or bike but riders would only be within their legal access rights using the old thieves' road across the golf course if they avoid causing any damage. The waymarked Buccleuch Ride via Woll and The Floss involves more roadwork but is a better option during or after wet weather.

Ashkirk to Selkirk

The Borders Abbeys Way coincides with the Buccleuch County Ride along forest roads to the northern edge of the forest between Hartwoodmyres and Middlestead, where the two routes braid into a pedestrian route south of the fence, and equestrian route roughly parallel through the field to the north, the two routes reuniting at NT445255 from where a farm track runs east to Middlestead.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NT442253 Middlestead Burn	Two long flights of wooden steps with central boardwalk over Middlestead Burn	Waymarked equestrian route follows path through field crossing bridge over burn. Be aware that there are often lively cattle in this field.
NT445255	Narrow squeeze through dyke with stile over fence to south leading back onto farm track	Use waymarked Buccleuch Ride through field to north





Selkirk to Melrose

The majority of the Borders Abbeys Way between Selkirk and Melrose follows paths or tracks ideal for multi-use, either with bridlegates or unlocked field gates next to the stiles or

kissing gates. The only restrictions to multi-use are identified below. Horse riders and cyclists need to be particularly careful to avoid causing damage and respect other users on the section around the edge of Selkirk golf course. The narrow riverside path between Abbotsford and the disused railway north of Tweedbank is impassable with a horse because of several flights of steep steps.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NT479280	Wide kissing gate	
NT485287	Side gate 1.1 m wide. Main gate difficult to open	
NT510326 Track around West side of Cauldshiels Hill	Wooden kissing gate	Continue along right of way past Upper Faldonside
NT510346 A6091 underpass alongside River Tweed	Steep narrow steps either side of restricted height underpass, impassable with a horse	Follow B6360 via Tweedbank – take particular care negotiating busy roundabout

NT515350 Narrow footbridge with steep narrow	
riverside path west of Tweedbank steps on eastern side	
NT516352 Railway underpass multi-use accessible but steep steps linking Borders Abbeys Way with Southern Upland Way impassable with a horse At time of survey no link between disused riverside path	
NT531348 Shallow steps, possible to bypass to	



Melrose to Newtown St. Boswells

Kissing gates make the narrow path which runs below the houses at Priorswalk, east of Melrose, impassable with a horse. Other than this, there are no restrictions on multi-use on the waymarked route between Melrose and Newtown St. Boswells.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative restrictions	access	to	avoid
NT556341 East of Priorswalk	Kissing gate across narrow path	Follow B6361			
NT553341	Narrow wicket gate	Use B6361			

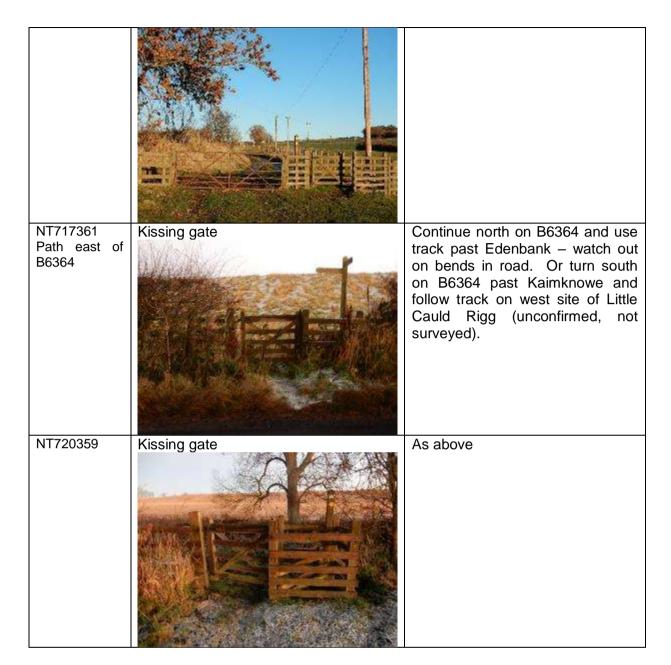
Newtown St. Boswells to Kelso

The narrow riverside path between Newtown St. Boswells and the bridge over the Tweed west of Dryburgh is impassable with a horse because of steps, boardwalks and narrow bridges. East of Dryburgh, there are bridlegates or field gates alongside stiles and kissing gates, or gaps of sufficient width to make the Borders Abbeys Way multi-use accessible through to the two locked gates and very narrow kissing gates near Old Dalcove. The only

other restrictions on this section of route are two kissing gates on the path between the surprisingly fast and busy B6364 and Berryhill.

Location / OS Grid Ref.	Feature/description	Alternative access to avoid restrictions
NT582318 Bowden Burn north of Hawkslee Farm	Narrow wooden footbridge	Continue on B6398 and use minor road north-east from Holmes Farm – but see restrictions on bridge over River Tweed below
NT584318 East of Hawkslee Farm	3l flights of steps too steep for horses, no space to pass alongside	As above
NT586319	Narrow insubstantial footbridge	As above
NT587320	Successive flights of steep narrow steps impassable with a horse	As above

NT588321 Bridge over Tweed west of Dryburgh Wobbly suspension bridge. Sufficient space for a horse to pass bollards either end but structure not designed to carry horses			
Bridge over Tweed west of Dryburgh space for a horse to pass bollards either end but structure not designed to carry horses			
	Bridge over Tweed west of	space for a horse to pass bollards either end but structure not designed to	
NT644319 west of Old Dalcove Locked gate across track, narrow kissing gate adjacent Whitehouse but not confirmed Locked gate across track, narrow kissing gate adjacent Whitehouse but not confirmed		Locked gate across track, narrow kissing gate adjacent	
NT646321 Old Locked gate across track, narrow As above kissing gate adjacent		Locked gate across track, narrow kissing gate adjacent	As above



VWG January 2017