# JOHN MUIR WAY - NOTES FOR HORSE RIDERS

The 134 mile John Muir Way runs coast to coast through Scotland's central heartland. Named after the world-famous conservationist who inspired North America's national parks, the route links Helensburgh, from where John Muir set sail to North America, and Dunbar, where he was born. The changing character, views, topography, and the way in which the route reveals the diverse countryside, wildlife and historic features within easy of Central Scotland has something to appeal to everyone. Although the route was originally designed, promoted, and is currently signed for walkers and cyclists, under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act, horse riders enjoy equal access rights with walkers and cyclists, provided those rights are exercised responsibly. Some sections of the route have a long history of equestrian use, or can easily and sustainably accommodate shared use, for example the Strathkelvin Railway Walkway and some of the tracks which the route follows around fields in East Lothian. Other sections, such as the River Avon walkway and the coastal path around Dunbar, are impassable with a horse and never likely to be suitable for multi-use because of numerous steep steps.

These notes have been produced by British Horse Society (BHS) Scotland to help anyone interested in using part or all of the John Muir Way to identify location and brief details of features which may restrict multi-use of the waymarked walking and cycling route. These notes are intended to supplement the detailed route guide and other information already available from the route website <a href="https://www.johnmuirway.org">www.johnmuirway.org</a>.

Only those restrictions 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. Horse riders should also be aware that the John Muir Way passes through the middle of Edinburgh and various other towns, and various sections include stretches on busy public roads. 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. The information included in these notes was correct at time of survey in November and December 2015. The notes will be updated as and when notification of subsequent changes is received, but neither BHS, the route managers or access authorities can guarantee accessibility or the accuracy of information provided.

Suggestions for parking and alternative routes to avoid restrictions on multi-use are included where possible, 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 the abilities, skills, fitness and experience of themselves and their horse(s), as well as season, weather conditions etc. Event organisers, groups or commercial operators considering using the John Muir 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 means Scottish Outdoor Access Code defines what this on http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/. Specific guidance for horse riders can be downloaded from http://www.bhsscotland.org.uk/responsible-riding.html. 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 may be less readily visible, so make sure you have a map with you and know how to read it.

## **Helensburgh to Balloch**

A waymarked cycle lane runs parallel to the main road most of the way from Hill House at Helensburgh to Arden, linking onto disused road which runs parallel to the A82 down the western shore of Loch Lomond. The cycle lane provides safe multi-use access but signage suggests horse riders may not be legally entitled to use it. The off-road waymarked walking route over Bannachra Muir is likely to be more appealing to many riders but is currently obstructed by a locked gate with adjacent stile at the western end. More details of restrictions are summarised below.

There is limited parking on the seafront car park at Helesburgh at the start of the John Muir Way, and spacious parking at Loch Lomond Shores, Alexandria. Parking at Balloch Country Park before the height restriction barrier is very limited, usually without space for a trailer or box.

Location OSGR	issue	Alternative option(s)
NS373837 Junction path from Hill House and A818	Wooden rails 1.15m apart with 2no. offset wooden barriers 70cm high restricting width to 80cm. Cyclists and pedestrian only sign.	Unfenced "desire line" path 10m to west of barrier
NS328842 Junction A818 and forest track	Padlocked gate with adjacent narrow 3-step wooden stile. No alternative access onto track otherwise entirely suitable for sustainable multi-use	No alternative at present other than cycle lane alongside road or Three Lochs Way from Helensburgh which links with Stoneymollan Road
Path from Bennachra	Several sets of stone steps in line of path, passable with care with a horse	

Muir to Daleith Muir NS347827		
NS348825 Eastern end of path immediately before felled area and final two steps, west of culverted burn	As at January 2016, two fallen trees across line of path caused by windblow following harvesting of adjacent trees. Difficult to negotiate on foot, impassable with a horse, tricky with a bike.	
NS380816 Footbridge over A82	Narrow metal barriers either side of footbridge over A82, impassable with a horse	Follow road down to roundabout on main A82 – BEWARE THIS IS A VERY BUSY ROAD
NS392317 Entry to riverside path below bridge over	1.2m high metal barriers 1.5m apart with restricted gap 1.3m wide, passable with cycle but tight for horse.	Use waymarked National Cycle Network route 50m east accessed

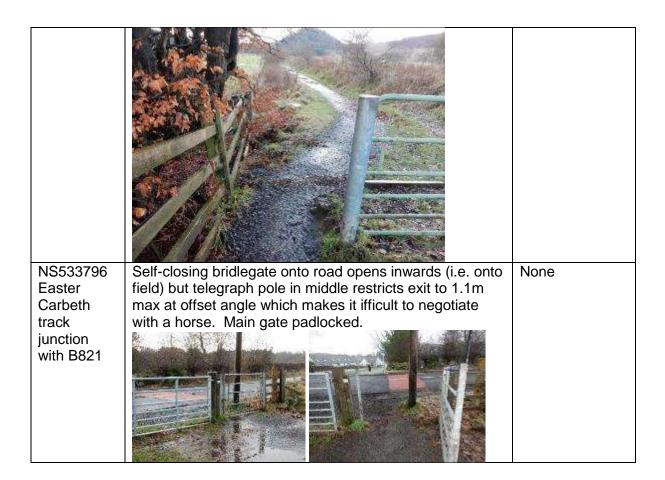
River Leven	through car park which links onto John Muir Way along shores of Loch Lomond

#### **Balloch to Strathblane**

There are no restrictions on the waymarked route through Balloch Country Park, but the park is very well used, particularly by walkers, many with dogs, young children or buggies so riders should take particular care to respect other users if riding through the park. The disused railway west of Croftamie is multi-use accessible, as is the West Highland Way south from Gartness, but the bridge over the River Endrick on the disused railway between Croftamie and Gartness is impassable with a horse and the river is too deep and steep-banked to ford. The new section of John Muir Way being opened in April 2016 promises to be multi-use accessible and would avoid this section.

Location	Issue	Alternative
OSGR		option(s)
NS484865	95cm wide metal footbridge over pipe supported on	None other than
Pipe bridge	pillars. Bridge span, narrow width and insubstantial open	busy roads.
over River	metal mesh decking considered insufficiently robust to	The track south
Endrick	support horse.	of Cameron
		Muir may
		provide an
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	A STATE OF THE STA	not surveyed.
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NS513847	Heavy wooden gate across line of path with weighted	
south of		
NS513847 Laighparks, south of	Heavy wooden gate across line of path with weighted self-closing mechanism, wire on top with barbs stripped back only for first 50cm, opening width restricted to	

1.25m. Passable with care Gartness on West Highland Way NS526822 On north side of road gate across track with narrow gap to east side. Stay wire on strainer post alongside gap restricts width Gate on east side of track with 1m gap on east side. Gate unlocked but overgrown and very heavy



<u>Strathblane to Kirkintilloch</u>
The Strathkelvin Railway Walkway which links Strathblane and Kirkintilloch is entirely multiuse accessible, although there are several bollards, barriers and bridges which restrict width in places.

Location OSGR	Issue	Alternative option(s)
NS564793 Junction Strathkelvin Railway Path and A891	Gap between central bollard and side posts 1.04m	
NS610785 Footbridge south of Kilwinnet	Narrow wooden footbridge 1.04m wide, passable with horse if dismounted but slippery when wet, decking worn in places.	

NS615786 Footbridge over river south of Clachan of Campsie	Narrow wooden footbridge, passable with horse if dismounted, but slippery when wet
NS628776 Bridge over Glazert Water, Lennoxtown	Concrete bollards in middle of path either end of bridge, max 1.06m gap either side
NS656743 Junction of railway walkway and A803	1.2m gap between offset metal barriers at junction of path and public road. Passable with care but difficult to negotiate with horse due to kerb along grass and low metal railing around grass outside funeral parlour which restricts functional gap and turning space to max 1m.

## **Kirkintilloch to Falkirk Wheel**

The John Muir Way braids into separate walking and cycling routes for much of this section. The waymarked walking route along the Antonine Wall is potentially suitable for multi-use but is currently obstructed by various kissing gates and barriers as detailed below. The waymarked cycle route mainly follows the canal towpath, which is passable with a horse other than immediately east of the M80 underpass (see below). The cycle route alternative

around Rough Castle is entirely multi-use accessible, but riders should be aware that in places the fenced track runs immediately alongside a railway line. Although there are various car parks along the Forth and Clyde Canal, most are too small to accommodate or allow sufficient turning space for trailers or horse boxes. There is usually spacious parking at the Falkirk Wheel, but please check in advance.

Location OSGR	Issue	Alternative option(s)
NS702759 Track east of Bar Farm, Twechar, leading up to Bar Hill	Locked field gate across track with narrow wooden kissing gate adjacent, impassable with horse	Use canal towpath
NS706758 end of track west side of Bar Hill	Locked field gate across track, heavy duty metal fixed kissing gate adjacent impassable with cycle or horse.	Use canal towpath
NS707758 east end of track leading onto scheduled monument on Bar Hill	Locked metal field gate across track with heavy duty fixed metal kissing gate adjacent, impassable with cycle or horse.	Use canal towpath

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NS714761 Forest boundary east side of Strone Plantation	Metal field gate across track usually padlocked. Adjacent narrow wooden kissing gate very restricted space, impassable with cycle or horse	Use canal towpath
NS720762 forest/farm access track between B802 and Bar Hhill	Field gate across track unlocked at time of survey but appears may be locked at other times. Adjacent narrow wooden kissing gate impassable with horse	Use canal towpath
NS721762 Path junction east side of B803	Narrow heavy duty metal kissing gate impassable with bike or horse	Use canal towpath (this and the next barrier can be avoided by using the B802 and minor roads through Croy but barrier on west side of Croy Hill still presents obstruction to multi-use access along John Muir Way)
NS723762	Padlocked metal gates across track, fixed heavy duty	,
Track at Croy	metal chicane adjacent impassable with cycle or horse	

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NS725762 west side Croy Hill	Metal kissing gate with fixed metal barriers/railings either side. Impassable with horse, difficult with cycle (cyclists lifting bikes over and horses accessing Croy Hill from east side)	None other than canal towpath
Auchinstarry Canal Basin (access between road and towpath)	1m wide gap between barriers on link between road and towpath very narrow for horses	None – but no restrictions if following towpath without linking onto road
and towpath) NS737774 Craigmarloch drawbridge - east of road between Kilsyth and Dullator	Main barrier providing access onto canal towpath locked. Adjacent offset barriers too narrow and too tight turn for horse. Horse stile potential trip hazard	None

NS766787 Wyndford (west of Banknock)	Succession of barriers across towpath, varying in width between 0.83m and 1.2m.	Use alternative track running parallel to towpath
NS789785 M80 underpass Castlecary	Two metal barriers alongside locked gate leading onto towpath from road, narrowest 0.66m wide, widest 0.94m, impassable with a horse.	Follow road north through Haggs and Longcroft rejoining canal towpath at Underwood
NS838798 West side of Rough Castle	Metal kissing gate adjacent to locked metal gate impassable with a horse	Use waymarked cycle route
NS845800	Staggered metal barriers, too narrow for horse to pass.	Use waymarked cycle route

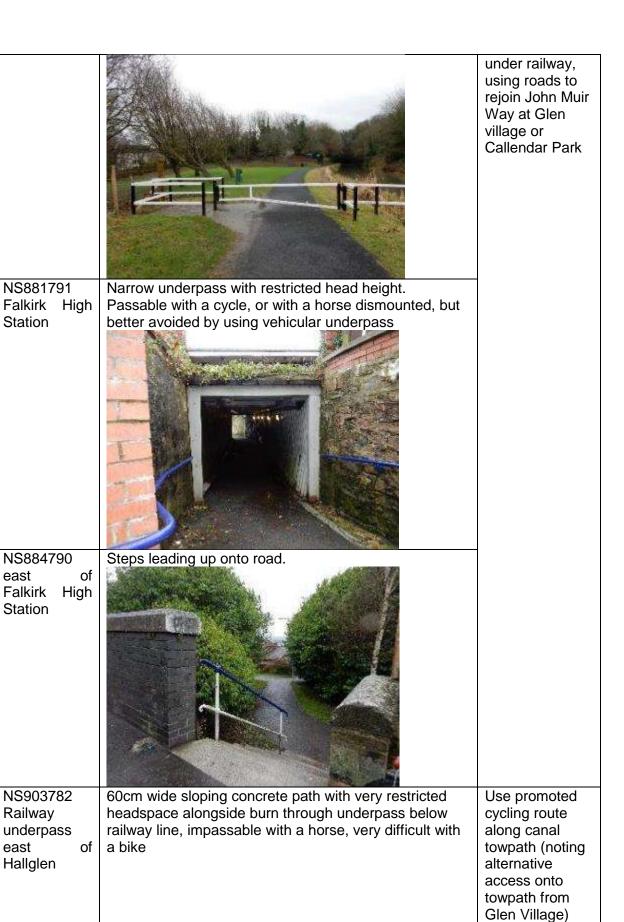


#### Falkirk Wheel to Linlithgow

This section is again mainly split into separate walking and cycling routes. Although alternatives can easily be identified to avoid steps and other restrictions on the waymarked walking route through Falkirk (see below for further details), the promoted cycling route is a more suitable and straightforward option for horse riders. The only restrictions on the cycling route are a metal chicane barrier at Glen Village where the waymarked cycle route leads back down onto the canal towpath from the B8028 at OSGR885782. This can be avoided by continuing north on the B8028 – beware as this is a busy road – then turning first right. At the end of this lane, beyond the last house, a wide path leads south down to the canal towpath. There are two 1.2m gates across the towpath west of Polmont, immediately north of the young offenders institute, but these are passable with care with a horse.

The new car park at Canada Woods (south-west of Falkirk) next to the café and bike hire centre has been designed to include space for horse trailers, with direct access onto the John Muir Way cycle route and other multi-use tracks, but this car park can get very busy with mountain bikers, particularly at weekends.

Location OSGR	Issue	Alternative option
NS880792 Waymarked walking route west of Falkirk High Station	Locked metal barrier across towpath, metal chicane pedestrian barrier adjacent too narrow to allow horse access.	



Station

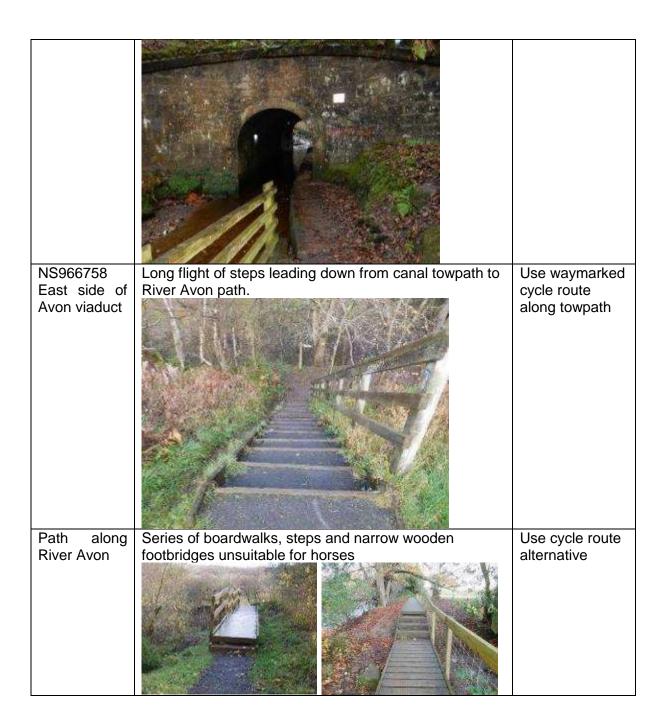
east

Station

Railway

Hallglen

east



#### **Linlithgow to Bo'ness**

All of this section is multi-use accessible, width restrictions are noted below.

NS986798	Gap between dyke and fence 1.1m, functional width	
southern end	further restricted by fingerpost	
of track		
through		
Kinnell		
Wood,		
Bo'ness		

NS982805 Kinneil House	Waymarked JMW goes through 99cm gap in wall in front of castle and across garden.	Easily avoided by following alternative path around outside of buildings and walled garden, waymarked as Antonine Wall path

# **Bo'ness to Queensferry**

This section of the John Muir Way follows broad paths and tracks which in theory are suitable for multi-use but multi-use is obstructed by a barrier near Carriden House, and kissing gates either side of Hopetoun Estate.

Location	Issue	Alternative option
NS985811 Access from car park onto public park, Castleloan	Two gaps either side of locked vehicle barrier, widest in theory 1.3m, but accessible width of both gaps restricted to 1m by dog and litter bins attached to post adjacent, protruding across gap.	

NS986813	Metal chicane barriers either side of level crossing over railway line. Metal kissing gate 1.2m wide, 2m width between long sides of enclosure, 2.8m long. Tight turn for horse	
NT012817 path around foreshore alongside works, Grangepans	Beware metal struts protruding out from wall which restrict usable width and height	
NT026809 northern boundary of wood by	Metal chicane barrier, 90cm width between internal barrier 68cm high, 38cm gap between that and 42cm cycle barrier –too narrow and too tight turn for horses. Main gate adjacent padlocked.	None other than busy road
Carriden House		

NTOFFOODI	Malking route passes through parrough soned matel	Use alternative
NT055802BI ackness Castle	Walking route passes through narrow hooped metal kissing gate leading onto steps along outside of castle wall	waymarked cycle route
NT081792 track into Hopetoun Estate east of Midhope Burn	Padlocked wooden deer-height gate across stone track, adjacent deer-height wooden kissing gate impassable with a horse	
NT094787 Track east of Hopetoun House	Narrow gateway in dyke leading into wooden railed enclosure on east side of dyke, 2m long x 95cm wide, impassable with horse. Main gate locked.	



## **Queensferry to The Meadows, Edinburgh**

Most of this section should be multi-use accessible but at present a narrow metal barrier just north of Cramond Brig presents an obstruction to horses. The waymarked walking route over Corstorphine Hill is better suited to pedestrians but the only physical restrictions on use are narrow gateways and steps.

Location OSGR	Issue	Alternative option
NT144787 Long Craig Gate – western access to Dalmeny Estate	Main gate padlocked. Kissing gate to side removed but remaining gap only 84cm wide with further gap 90cm wide at right angle with no turning space between. Impassable with a horse, track beyond wholly suitable for sustainable multi-use.	
NT178756 eastern entry to Dalmeny Estate north of Cramond Bridge	Main 12' gate across hard stone track padlocked. Adjacent metal offset barriers 1.2m long set back 1m from 1.05m gap between gatepost and further metal barrier in line with gate. Too narrow and too restricted turning with horse, yet track beyond wholly suitable for sustainable multi-use.	

NT207737 north side Corstorphine Hill	Long flight of shallow steps with single metal handrail.	Use waymarked cycle route on road or beaten earth path which runs parallel to steps
NT211735 Corstorphine Hill path on east side of Edinburgh Zoo	4 relatively shallow stone steps alongside metal fence around zoo	Use waymarked cycle route
NT211733	90cm wide stone doorway with 90cm wide gap at right angle beyond through dyke	Use waymarked cycle route or beaten earth path
NT215730 Path junction with A8	1m wide metal self-closing gate. Passable with cycle or horse	Use waymarked cycle route
NT213727 Link onto disused	Walking route includes steps up onto railway line path.	Continue on road under bridge and use

railway Saughtonhall		and ramped path north of underpass to link onto railway path
NT219724 Saughton path up to tram station	Ample width for multi-use but unclear if signs are mandatory resriction to pedestrian and cycling only use	
NT220708 East side of aqueduct of Union Canal over Water of Leith	Long flights of steep steps with wooden gutter alongside for cycle wheels, Impassable with horse	Use waymarked cycle route or avoid this section by linking through on public roads

#### **Edinburgh (The Meadows) to North Berwick**

Most of the John Muir Way between Edinburgh and North Berwick is passable with a horse, although in places this may mean a minor deviation or usingn the cycle route along the road. There is usually unrestricted parking at the public car park near the shore between Prestonpans and the old power station. All of the other car parks along the coast road between Prestonpans and Gullane have height barriers which exclude trailers and horse boxes.

Location OSGR	Issue	Alternative option
NT313726 Brunstane	Foot/cycle bridge over railway line.	Follow road/cycle path

Station		around north side of The Range, linking back onto John Muir Way on Brunstane Burn Path
NT370738 West side of car park near Morrison's Haven, west of Prestonpans	85cm gap between offset metal barriers 1m high. through car park	Use road and access coast path again through car park
Waymarked walking route around Prestonpans	Various sets of steps, impassable with horse	None – follow cycle route along road
NT396756 East side of power station Prestonpans	6 shallow concrete steps either side of bridge, passable with care with a horse	Use waymarked cycle route along road
Cockenzie to	Technically horses are not allowed on the signed cycle path parallel to the road. Beaten earth path which runs	At low tide use beach

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	parallel through scrub is passable with care with a horse.	
NT441771 immediately north west of junction of B1348 and A198	1.1m wide wooden footbridge on waymarked pedestrian route, step either end onto/off bridge. Passable with care with a horse if dismounted	At low tide use beach
NT449789 Burn from North Wood into Gosford Bay	Step either end of 1.2m wide wooden footbridge	
NT498834Pa th junction with A198 east of Gullane	Narrow 90cm wide gate alongside locked main gate, passable with care dismounted, track beyond through Halfmoon Plantation entirely suitable for multi-use.	Use cycle route alongside road – but be aware this is a busy road
NT513840Ea st end of track between Archerfield and Dirleton	1.1m gap alongside locked gate across track, signed for multi-use.	

NT524852 field boundary NW Invereil House	Bridlegate from field onto fenced path, opening one way onto field. Step slightly set back from line of gate with electric cable over. Step makes it very difficult for horses to negotiate this gate in either direction due to trip hazard and difficulty manoeuvring to use opening mechanism	
NT539854	Stay for telegraph post restricts path height and width  Metal gate in stone dyke 1.1m wide, gate usually	
Gateway onto West Links from path west of North Berwick	propped open	



#### **North Berwick to Dunbar**

The waymarked John Muir Way cycle route between North Berwick and Dunbar mainly follows the road, or tarmac cycle tracks running parallel to the old A1. Much of the waymarked John Muir Way walking route on this section is multi-use accessible, some parts being regularly used by horses, but the initial section south from North Berwick is not currently passable with a horse, the only alternative being public road, linking back onto the John Muir Way south of North Berwick Law, west of Bonnington Farm.

There is limited parking for trailers and boxes at John Muir Country Park, although bye-laws require a permit, obtainable from East Lothian Council. Information boards near the car park identify other routes promoted for horse riders.

Location OSGR	Issue	Alternative options
NT553842 car park onto North Berwick Law	Locked gate across track with narrow stone squeeze stile adjacent accessed behind metal railing alongside burn, leading into small fenced wooden enclosure max 2m square with bridlegate opening outwards onto hill. Impassable with a horse or bike.	None other than public roads – beware fast traffic and blind bends on B1347

NT553840 Fence around south west of North Berick Law	Padlocked metal field gate with adjacent new wooden kissing gate, difficult with cycle, impassable with horse	See above
NT555834 Track junction west of Bonnington	Double metal gates on north side of track, open at time of survey. If closed would be tricky to open as off hinges and fastened with string. Further wide span double metal gates on south side of track, off hinges, broken rails, fastened with rope. Narrow stone squeeze stile adjacent	Passable with care
NT584779T track junction with B1377 south of Drylaw Hill	Wooden steps lead from fenced pedestrian path down onto road, impassable with horse	Use metal gate across track before fingerpost which links directly onto road

NT594778 Burn/leat west of Preston Mill	1.09m wide bridge with 2 side rails, 2 steps off bridge at southern end	Use track from East Linton via Phantassie Farm to rejoin John Muir Way at bridge over River Tyne (see below)
NT594778B ridge over River Tyne south of Preston Mill	Steep steps either end of weak wooden decked bridge, impassable with horse	Use track from East Linton via Phantassie Farm to rejoin John Muir Way over multi-use bridge over River Tyne at NT600775
NT634785 Path along south side Hedderwick	Wooden boardwalk with some rotten decking planks	Use waymarked cycle route

Sands		
NT640788H	1.1m wide wooden bridge with two side rails and bottom	Passable with
edderwick	kick rail, eroded on eastern end	care or use
Burn crossing		waymarked cycle route
o. coog	ATT	oy one reduce
NT657784	Metal footbridge over Biel Water, concrete steps either	Use waymarked
Biel Water bridge	side, impassable with horse	cycle route
between West Barns andBelhave n	Numerous flights of congrete stops with two parrow stops	Use alternative
N1667792 Belhaven	Numerous flights of concrete steps with two narrow stone archways	Use alternative waymarked
Bay to Dunbar		cycle route along Back Road



VWG 1.2.16