

Caithness Riders Access Group



Loch Stemster

Maximum Distance - 5 ½ miles

Grassy Surface

Information contained in this pack is correct as of 03/07/2005

Loch Stemster

A track passing through typical moorland countryside with beautiful open views.

Access From: - The Loch Stemster track is located at the Achavanich end of the minor, single track Rumster road which links the A99 just south of Lybster to the A9 (Causewaymire), Thurso to Latheron trunk road. Travelling from Thurso, turn left onto the Rumster road at Achavanich just after you have passed a two- storey farmhouse with out buildings on your right hand side. The road is signed to Lybster and there is a prominent, two- storey white house on the left hand side just beyond the junction. Drive up the road for about ½ a mile. You will pass the entrance to the track and Loch Stemster on your left hand side and then come to the lay-by where you park, also on your left hand side. This is long enough to take a horsebox and is situated opposite a passing place so the road is a good width at this point. The lay by is next to the Achavanich stone circle and some of the upright standing stones can be seen immediately on the other side of the wire fence, close to the road. Travelling south from Wick along the A99, travel through Lybster past the Portland Arms hotel on your right and then turn first right almost immediately after leaving the 40mph zone onto the Rumster road. It is signed to Achavanich. If you are travelling north along the A99 from Latheron, it is a left hand turn just before you enter the 40mph zone for Lybster village. Travel along the Rumster road for about 6 ½ miles and you will come to the lay- by where you park on your right hand side. It is situated along a straight stretch of road running downhill and you can see the Achavanich stone circle and Loch Stemster ahead of you, on your right hand side.

Please see map on page 5

Landowner- Mr Palmer, Latheronwheel Estate.

Distance from A9 to Start of Ride: - about ½ to ¾ mile.

Parking: - The only parking is the lay-by at the Stone Circle, which is just above the loch and entrance to the track, on the Rumster road. There is only room for one box and it means unloading on the road.

Contact Telephone Numbers: - John Anderson - 01593 741230 to ensure that it is convenient to ride.

Ride Report

The track goes from Loch Stemster at Achavanich to Munsary cottage, which belongs to the Munsary Plantlife Nature Reserve.

The first part of the track up to Ballachly cottage is very stony but from there, it is a grassy track. There are two cattle grids that are by-passed by side gates. Riders need to turn at the boundary of the Plantlife reserve that is before you reach Munsary Cottage marked by a fence and gate.

Crag recommend that you 'phone the keeper, John Anderson on 01593 741230 to let him know that you would like to ride, in order to find out what is happening on the estate that day. He can be difficult to get hold of so it is probably best to 'phone the night before.

This area is a haven for birds and you can expect to see a variety of species, depending upon the time of year. The loch is visited by ducks and waders and the occasional osprey and in spring and summer, there are many moorland species to look out for while you are enjoying your ride.

General Information

Please note that the loch is popular with fishermen and there may be vehicles parked up beside the track at the start.

Access Officer, David Barclay: 01955 605858

www.caithnessridersaccessgroup.co.uk/

Caithness Riders Access Group Code of Conduct

We would advise anyone planning to ride any route to walk it and assess if it is suitable for them to ride before taking their horse out on it.

Riders should always proceed with courtesy, care and consideration for all other users and landowners.

Do not stray off the designated route.

Remember that hooves can damage surfaces in wet conditions and after frost. Always try to ride on the middle of the track or the verge.

Be aware that others can be frightened of horses; stop, or proceed with caution, and do not canter past them. Whenever possible acknowledge courtesy shown by other users, especially to drivers of motor vehicles.

Leave all gates as you find them.

Park horseboxes carefully and always leave access points clear.

Clear up all droppings from parking areas.

Take your rubbish and litter home.

Ensure that you and your horse are clearly visible to others.



Know the Code before you go

Enjoy Scotland's outdoors. Everyone has the right to be on most land and inland water for recreation, education and for going from place to place providing they act responsibly. These access rights and responsibilities are explained in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. The key things are:

When you're in the outdoors:

- take personal responsibility for your own actions and act safely;
- respect people's privacy and peace of mind;
- help land managers and others to work safely and effectively;
- care for your environment and take your litter home;
- keep your dog under proper control;
- take extra care if you're organising an event or running a business.

If you're managing the outdoors:

- respect access rights;
- act reasonably when asking people to avoid land management operations;
- work with your local authority and other bodies to help integrate access and land management
- respect rights of way and customary access

Find out more by visiting www.outdooraccess-scotland.com or phoning your local Scottish Natural Heritage office.

Loch Stemsler

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