

Caithness Riders Access Group



Lybster

Maximum Distance : 5 - 6 miles Surface : Varied - fields, track and minor road

The information contained in this pack is correct as of 03/03/2006

Lybster Ride

Some of the Lybster riders have worked out a nice circular route that we ride from home, but it is open to others with parking by arrangement. The ride is quite varied with lovely views, but is not suitable for winter use as some of the ground becomes too boggy. It includes fields, tracks and the fording of a burn, although the majority of the route is on quiet, minor roads. The route takes you quite close to the edges of Rumster forest in two places and CRAG hope that eventually the Forestry Commission will develop new tracks to link with those that are already in place in the forest.

Access From: - Croft at Upper Smerlie, Upper Lybster- turn up Norland Road beside the Portland Arms Hotel from the A99 (Wick to Latheron trunk road) and continue straight up that road to the top of the hill, ignoring a small turn-off to your right. You will pass a new bungalow on your left and then after going round a corner, will very shortly arrive at the parking area in front of a byre on your left but you must pre-organise this with Cath Whittles.

Distance from A99 to Start of Ride: - ¾ mile

Parking: - A wide area of hard standing in front of a byre with room to turn. There are free-range hens, ducks and turkeys about!

Contact Telephone Numbers: -

Cath Whittles: - 01593 741391

Landowners: -

Mrs Liz Joiner (croft owner)
Mr Harold Stewart

Terrain -

This track can not be ridden winter as track becomes too boggy

General Information

www.caithnessridersaccessgroup.co.uk

www.bhsscotland.org.uk

www.outdooraccess-scotland.com

Access officer, David Barclay: 01955 605858

Ride Report

The ride begins in Upper Lybster, from where you cross through some fields down to the Rumster road and turn right. After a short distance on this road you turn left onto a track, which leads down to a cottage (Burnside of Reisgill). Although this looks like a private track, it is in fact a Right of Way and it passes beyond the cottage down to the Reisgill Burn, which you have to ford. A rough track then takes you uphill to a new metal gate which has now been installed and we are grateful to the Highland Council and the landowner, the late Mr Harold Stewart for enabling this to happen. Turn right through the gate and skirt the bottom of the field before passing, for a very short distance, through some rough, boggy ground to reach a metal gate. The 1 mile section of the ride that you have just completed, from the Rumster road to this gate, is the most adventurous part of the route and the rest is quite straightforward!

Once through the metal gate, you turn left onto a track that eventually brings you out onto the very minor Achow road where you turn right. (There is one more gate to go through before you reach the road). You then follow this road down to its junction with the Rumster Road at Osclay, where you turn right again. Shortly after the junction, there is an attractive cottage called The Kennels set back from the road on your left. A lovely up-and-back track can be ridden here which goes up to a ruined croft on the top of the hill- a distance of about a mile. There are 3 gates that you may need to open to ride this track but it is well worth the extra effort! This Osclay track, although not used at present, is an access point for the Forestry Commission, going right to the edge of the forest before veering away. In the next few years, the Forestry Commission plan to develop a track into the forest from here to link with existing paths on this side of Rumster.

There is now quite a long stretch of the Rumster road that has to be ridden before you complete the circuit back to the fields and the starting point. You can encounter every type of vehicle on this road but the good news is that there are plenty of passing places and we find that most drivers are very considerate and do slow right down. If anyone would like to try this ride, please get in touch with Cath Whittles on 01593 741391. Some of the CRAG riders have tried it already and found it to be enjoyable!

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.

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.

The attached map shows how to get there

