

## SOUTH LANARKSHIRE SUGGESTED RIDING ROUTES

### South Lanarkshire Routes (Left Hand purple menu button)

South Lanarkshire offers easy and quick access from the M74 as well as beautiful and varied countryside. There is a good choice of riding routes with many being suitable for riding all year round. Riding routes in South Lanarkshire are ideal as taster rides of 1-3 hrs to get a bit of practice in and prepare for half and full day rides in more challenging terrain. The Differick route is great for getting your horse fit with a long stretch of path for a faster pace.

#### 1. Corehouse Farm - The Differick Circular

This circular route is 12km long and will take you 1-2 hrs depending on how fast you go. This route can be ridden all year round. The route follows quiet country roads with beautiful views to Tinto Hill and the Clyde Valley. The Differick is a 2 km track that offers long stretches for a good canter, ideal for getting your horse fit. Larger scale maps should be used to follow routes on the ground, such as OS Landranger Map 1:50,000 no. 72 (Upper Clyde Valley) or OS Explorer no. OL 335.

You can park at Corehouse Farm ( <http://www.horseswelcome.org/members/corehouse.html> ), a lovely Horses Welcome B&B and livery yard near Lanark. Treat yourself to a relaxing weekend break and try out different routes in some of the most beautiful parts of South Lanarkshire. Please phone Faye Hamilton on Tel: 01556 661377/Mob: 07802 890907 to arrange parking. There are some steep hills on the way to Corehouse Farm. The following alternative route avoids these steep sections: Follow A73 through Lanark to Hyndford Bridge. Take a right turn onto A 70 after driving over the bridge. After approx 4km take a right turn shortly after passing Hecklebirnie. Drive past Sandilands and take a right at the T-junction and straight after a left turn passing Wellshields. Corehouse Farm is signposted on your right.

#### Route Description

Leaving Corehouse Farm take a right turn after passing houses on your left. Ride along quiet country road for 1 km and then turn left onto a grassy track (gate should be open - if it is closed, please make sure you fasten again behind you). At the end of the track (approx 500m) take a right turn onto a quiet road. After another 1 km take a left turn following signpost 'Greenrig road'. Pass the Old Smiddy House (Kirkfield Smiddy) and follow single track road uphill enjoying good views of the Clyde Valley. After another 1km on this road you will pass 3 semi detached Council houses, turn right between them and a cream bungalow.

#### The Differick

You are now on the 'The Differick' - a 3 km track that allows for a good canter uphill for 1-2 km before descending again. This track is ideal for getting your horse fit. Enjoy fantastic views of the Clyde Valley and Lesmahagow at the top of The Differick. Ride past big mast on your left and Boreland Farm on your right along a lovely tree lined alley through farmland.

### Hawksland - Corehouse

At crossroads turn left to make your way back to Corehouse Farm. (if you continue straight on you can extend your ride by linking up to the 'Broken Cross Muir' route). Follow single-track road for 1 ½ km and turn left at T-junction at Hawksland Farm. Ride past row of 3 semi-detached houses on right and after 500m turn right at the fork with a sign for Greenrig Road. After another 1 ½ km turn right onto stony track signpost Langside Farm. There are good views towards Lanark and Tinto from here. Pass farm on your left. At T-junction turn left and shortly after turn right at Corehouse Farm sign back into farm yard.

### Option: Retrace your steps along The Differick

Once you leave The Differick the route is mainly on quiet country roads. If you prefer you can retrace your steps before you get to the crossroads after Boreland Farm. You have also got the option to ride a little loop near the end of The Differick on your way back to Corehouse Farm.

## **2. Lesmahagow - The Differick Circular**

This route is 13.5 km long will take you 1-2 hrs depending on your speed and can be ridden all year round. Starting the route from Lesmahagow has the advantage of easy access and parking right off the M74 on a dual carriageway (A74/B7078). After a short section along the dual carriageway the route follows quiet country roads and will give you long stretches for faster work on The Differick. There's a small loop at the end of this track and the route returns via The Differick with long grassy tracks in the other direction. Larger scale maps should be used to follow routes on the ground, such as OS Landranger Map 1:50,000 no. 72 (Upper Clyde Valley) or OS Explorer no. OL 335.

Please note that there is usually little traffic on the dual carriageway (other than on the rare occasion when the M74 is closed due to an accident when the dual carriageway is used by lorries). However, as on any road, you need to be confident that you can safely control your horse in traffic. If in any doubt, consider riding the route from Corehouse Farm instead or check if there's space in front of houses in Brocketsbrae Road (see description below).

There are no formally agreed parking arrangements on this route and riders need to clean up after themselves and show respect for other users. Come off the M74 at Junction 10 from south, Junction 9 from north and follow signs for Lesmahagow at the roundabout turning onto a dual carriageway. Ignore sign for Lesmahagow and stay on dual carriageway. Look out for a garage type business on your left and there is sufficient space on the grass for around 12 boxes/trailers right opposite on the other side of the dual carriageway signed "Pathfoot Smiddy/ Craighead Football Stadium". This car park is used for football tournaments at some weekends. Please phone 01555 892545 during office hrs in advance to check.

### Route Description

Ride up the footpath with the barrier right next to the dual carriageway on the same side you parked at. After 500m you need to cross the dual carriageway to take a left turn into a tree lined path just after a sign for Woodpark. At the end of this short path take a left turn onto a road leading over a bridge above the M74. Turn right at sign Hawksland and after 500m turn left at sign Hawksland into Brocketsbrae Road. There might be parking space for a trailer or horsebox in front of the houses here if you would like to avoid riding along the dual carriageway. After 750m and turn left at crossroads into a lovely tree lined alley.

### The Differick

You are now on the 'The Differick' - a 3 km track that allows for a good canter, ideal for getting your horse fit. Enjoy fantastic views of the Clyde Valley and Lesmahagow at the top of The Differick. After approx 2.5 km along this track you can do a short circular loop on a lovely grass track.

### Short Loop (North end of The Differick)

Look out for a gate on your left (you need to dismount to open gate, please make sure you close it securely behind you) just after a row of trees. You can see the old quarry, a farm and Black Hill from here. After passing through gate, follow grassy track across the field and join tree line. Go through another gate and follow grassy track downhill. There's one more gate you need to pass through. Pass sheep pens then white cottage on your left and follow stony track with a grass verge downhill. There are lovely views of Lanark and down the Clyde valley from here. Keep to the right leaving the white farmhouse and some cottages on your left and at the end of the farm track turn right at T-junction going uphill. Shortly after turn right again at another T-junction. Follow this road round for approx 500m round a sharp left bend and you will pass 3 semi detached Council houses, turn right between them and a cream bungalow.

### The Differick (going South)

You are back on the 'The Differick' now and have the chance for another good canter uphill for 1-2 km from the other direction before descending again. Ride past Boreland Farm on your right along the lovely tree lined alley. At crossroads turn right into Brocketsbrae Road and after 750m turn right again retracing your steps. Turn left at T-junction crossing the bridge again over the M74 and shortly after turn right into little tree lined path. Take a right following footpath along dual carriageway back to your parking spot.

## **3. Broken Cross Muir**

This circular route is easily accessible just off the M74 near Lesmahagow and can be ridden all year round. The route is 18 km long and will take you 3-4 hrs depending on how fast you go. The route follows an old drove road, which runs parallel to the M74 and offers good grassy stretches especially near Tofts Gate. Please note that this gate is usually locked, please phone Mr/Mrs Moffat on 01555 880325 in advance who will be happy to unlock it for you. Larger scale maps should be used to follow routes on the ground, such as OS Landranger Map 1:50,000 no. 72 (Upper Clyde Valley) or OS Explorer no. OL 335.

You can park near Lesmahagow on the wide grass verge alongside the dual carriageway. Please note that there is usually little traffic on the dual carriageway (other than on the rare occasion when the M74 is closed due to an accident when the dual carriageway is used by lorries). However, as on any road, you need to be confident that you can safely control your horse in traffic.

Please note that there are no formally agreed parking arrangements on this route and riders need to clean up after themselves and show respect for other users. Come off the M74 at Junction 10 from south, Junction 9 from north and follow signs for Lesmahagow at the roundabout turning onto a dual carriageway. Ignore sign for Lesmahagow and stay on dual carriageway. Look out for a garage type business on your left and there is sufficient space on the grass for around 12 boxes/trailers right opposite on the other side of the dual carriageway signed "Pathfoot Smiddy/ Craighead Football Stadium". This car park is used for football tournaments on some weekends. Please phone 01555 892545 during office hrs in advance to check.

### Route Description

Ride up the footpath with the barrier right next to the dual carriageway on the same side you parked at. After 500m you need to cross the dual carriageway to take a left turn into a tree lined path just after a sign for Woodpark. At the end of this short path take a left turn onto a road leading over a bridge above the M74. Turn right at sign Hawksland and follow this road straight ahead passing the little village of Devonburn.

### The Old Drove Road (from Devonburn)

You are now on the old drove road, a 5.5km track that runs parallel to the M74 and offers some good grassed over stretches. The track is easy to follow, you will pass a woodland on your left after 2 km and come to a crossroads after another couple of km. Cross straight over and go through a couple of gates, this is a beautiful part of the ride leading to a lovely grass track through a small woodland until you get to Tofts Gate. You have now got the option to retrace your steps or to ride a loop that rejoins the old drove road at a later stage (please see below). Remember that the gate at Tofts Gate is locked and you need to phone Mr/Mrs Moffat on 01555 880325 in advance to get it unlocked. In an emergency you can try to bypass the gate by turning right between two trees into rough ground, about 50m from gate. Emerge about 20m to right of gate. We recommend you get off and lead your horse.

### Tofts Gate Loop

Take a left turn onto quite country road following cycling sign. After 2km you will reach a bridge over a burn, turn left at next junction. Follow this road for 2km passing Tower Farm and Folkerton Mill until you reach the old drove road again. Take a right turn onto the track and retrace your steps back to Devonburn.

### The Old Drove Road (from Tofts Gate)

The old drove road from Tofts Gate starts off with a good grassy track running within and along the edge of a woodland. Follow the path and go through a couple of gates until you get to a crossroads. Pass the Scottish Coal sign on your right and follow the track straight ahead along another woodland. The track continues uphill, running parallel to the M74, and there is a long grassy stretch for some faster work ahead. After passing the wood on your right hand side the path continues for another 2 km until you get to the little village of Devonburn.

#### Devonburn - Parking Spot

Continue on this road for just over a km and take a left turn at the T-junction, turning onto the B7018. Cross the bridge over the M74 and shortly after look out for and turn right into a little tree-lined path. This is a very short path (100m) that will lead you back to the dual carriageway A74/B7078 where you parked. Take a right at the end of this footpath, cross the dual carriageway and follow the footpath with the barrier for another 500m back to your parking spot.

#### Option: Link to The Differick

If you would like to extend your ride by 1-2 hrs you can link the Broken Cross Muir ride to the Differick, which adds 12 km to the total length of your ride. Take a right turn onto a quiet country road 250m after you reach the little village of Devonburn. After 750m you will get to a crossroads, go straight across. You are now on the track we call 'The Differick' and need to follow directions from Route 2: Lesmahagow-The Differick.

### **4. Day Ride from Corehouse Farm**

This ride combines two of the routes featured separately - The Differick and the Brocken Cross Muir - with the old railway line at Douglas Water and makes a fantastic day ride through beautiful parts of South Lanarkshire. The route is 21 km long and provides plenty of opportunities for faster work on grassy tracks like the Differick, the old Roman road or the old railway line.

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#### **Route Description**

Leaving Corehouse Farm take a right turn after passing houses on your left. Ride along quiet country road for 1 km and then turn left onto a grassy track (gate should be open). At the end of the track (approx 500m) take a right turn onto a quiet road. After another 1 km take a left turn following signpost 'Greenrig road'. Pass the Old Smiddy House (Kirkfield Smiddy) and follow single track road uphill enjoying good views of the Clyde Valley. After another 1km on this road you will pass 3 semi detached Council houses, turn right between them and a cream bungalow.

#### **The Differick**

You are now on the 'The Differick' - a 3 km track that allows for a good canter uphill for 1-2 km before descending again. This track is ideal for fittening up your horse. Enjoy fantastic views of the Clyde Valley and Lesmahagow at the top of The Differick. Ride past big mast on your left and Boreland Farm on your right along a lovely tree lined alley through farmland. At cossroads continue straight on to extend your ride to the 'Broken Cross Muir' route. At the T-junction after 750m turn left direction Devonburn.

### The Old Drove Road

You are now on the old drove road, a 5.5km track that runs parallel to the M74 and offers some good grassed over stretches. The track is easy to follow, you will pass a woodland on your left after 2 km and come to a crossroads after another couple of km. Cross straight over and go through a couple of gates, this is a beautiful part of the ride leading to a lovely grass track through a small woodland until you get to Tofts Gate. You have now got the option to retrace your steps or to ride a loop that rejoins the old drove road at a later stage (please see below). Remember that the gate at Tofts Gate is locked and you need to phone Mr/Mrs Moffat on 01555 880325 in advance to get it unlocked. In an emergency you can try to bypass the gate by turning right between two trees into rough ground, about 50m from gate. Emerge about 20m to right of gate. We recommend you get off and lead your horse.

### Tofts Gate - Old Railway Line

At Tofts Gate, take a left turn onto a quite country road at the end of the old drove road following a blue cycling sign. Follow this road for just under 3km until you get to a sign for Douglas Water. Turn right and cross a large wooden bridge (10t weight - suitable for horses crossing) to get to the village. You will pass a small football field on your left and just after the 30mile speed limit sign turn left into a path through rough grassland. Just a few steps on turn right along embankment onto lesser-used track heading towards large bush.

### Old Railway Line

Turn left following this track, you are now on the old railway line. Watch out for some wire on your left hand side just before you get to the small children's playground (also on your left). Go through wooden gate, it opens easily but the catch might be too low down to open from horseback (please make sure you close the gate behind you). You are now on a good wide track, stony in parts, and you can see the river Douglas Water winding its way through the countryside on your left. You will get to a metal gate, go through and you can enjoy a good canter on the fantastic grass track that follows with beautiful views to the rolling hills and surrounding farms. After a good stretch of track you will get to another gate, which looks difficult to open but the wire is actually easy to entangle. You will get to the closest point to the river and shortly after on your right you will see a rusty metal gate leading to Sandilands farm buildings at the top of the hill. Go through that gate (the wire is easy too undo) and head across the field towards the tower next to the farm buildings. One more set of metal gates to go through and then you get to a quiet country road. Turn left and follow this road for 1km until you get to a T-junction at the village of Sandilands.

### Sandilands - Corehouse Farm

Turn left into Kirkfieldbank Road (opposite direction from red phone box) and follow the road taking a left turn downhill. Follow white sign "B&B 2 miles" and blue cycling sign. Ride over bridge and follow road uphill. At T-junction turn right direction Kirkfieldbank, you are 2km away from Corehouse Farm now. The white B&B signs are easy to follow until you get back to Corehouse Farm.

## 5. Biggar - Broughton - Skirling Circular

This is a very attractive circular route with two-thirds of the ride being off-road on a combination of disused railway and old drove road. The route is 17 km long and ideal for a lovely half-day or summer evening ride. How long the ride takes will depend on how fast you go, how often you stop for a picnic, to look at a map, etc but 3hrs is a good guideline. Larger scale maps should be used to follow routes on the ground, such as OS Landranger Map 1:50,000 no. 72 (Upper Clyde Valley) or OS Explorer no. OL 336 (Broughton and Biggar).

Please note that there are no formally agreed parking arrangements on this route and riders need to clean up after themselves and show respect for other users. We advise you to turn your trailer/box when you arrive in case the car park fills up while you are out riding. You should be able to park by the golf course in Biggar (turn down by the Biggar Little Theatre) with space for one or two trailers or alternatively at the Biggar Cattle Market.

**\*\*\*Check out - disused railway might be closed/blocked west of the golf course, not sure if you can now get through to the cattle market\*\*\***

### Route Description

From the car park next to the golf club house, take the red stoned track between the golf course and the boating lake. Where the track meets the burn, turn left, which will take you onto the disused railway through a gate before the sewage works.

### Biggar - Broughton

Follow the disused railway line from Biggar leading right the way through to Broughton. There are some gates along the way, most of which you should be able to open from horseback. Wooden railings have been erected across the culverts and burn crossings but please take extra care when negotiating gates next to the railings. The railway line provides a 7 km stretch on a level track that allows for a faster pace (beware if your horse is likely to jump the gates!). Please note that cattle and sheep graze parts of the disused railway - please leave all gates as you find them. At the Broughton end of the disused railway, immediately past the service centre on your right, you will reach a gate, which restricts access to the coal yard. Follow the way marked path around to the left (i.e. north) of the coal yard fence, across the bridge over the Biggar Water to Broughton Brewery. This bridge has recently been rebuilt specifically to accommodate walkers, cyclists and horse-riders and most horses will cross it without any difficulty but if in doubt, please dismount and lead your horse over the bridge. On the brewery side of the bridge, turn right and continuing along the tarmac brewery access road to the A701.

### Broughton - Skirling - Biggar

Turn left (north) onto the A701 through Broughton. Turn left at café on road towards Biggar and almost immediately right, just before a new house with a turret, following the track uphill past an old house on the right to the grass drove road which is enclosed by dykes/hedges on either side as it climbs up the hill in front of you. Take care to close the gate or fence, which is usually fastened across the lower end of the track, and **beware of rabbit holes** and occasionally loose horses through the next gorse section. Once through the gorse, carry on around the contour of the hill to a gate across the track which you pass straight through - watch out for live electric wire adjacent to this gate. Note that this route from Broughton to Skirling was not included in Tweed Trails so is not signed and gates require dismounting. Carry on along the clear firm grass track, parallel to the dyke on your left, heading northwest towards Skirling. After 5-10 minutes you will be crossing open rough grassland but the track is still easy to discern. Depending on the weather and time of year, there may be several boggy patches but it is usually quite easy to pick your way through without any problems. When you come to a small shelterbelt on the right, follow the track through a gate. Continue downhill, with the dyke/fence now on your right, through another gate and across the burn through another gate to climb up the hill through the shelterbelt following the old drove road through to Skirling. You will come out in the corner of the village green in Skirling. Turn left, around the village green, and then left again along the A72 for a short distance before branching off to the left on a minor road past Spittan Farm and Skirling Mains. At the B7016, turn right (west) and follow this road back into Biggar. The first left at the puppet theatre takes you back down to the golf course.