



AIRCRAFT AND MILITARY MEMORIAL WALK 8 miles/ 13km can be shortened to 6 miles

This varied, circular walk on easy footpaths around the fringes of Forres includes a section along the banks of the River Findhorn. It visits a variety of memorials and aircraft models that reflect the military contribution of the Forres area and the significant part that the RAF, in particular, has played in this area. The walk is not way marked but for some sections follows the Forres Footpaths Trust's Purple and then Yellow way marking arrows.



Geocaches on or near to this route include: I've Been to Forres and Water of Life-Benromach

Walk Information

Terrain

Stiles-None

Suitable for most abilities

Planning

Start/Parking

Victoria Road Car Park (Free)

Grid Ref: NJ043593

Map OS Landranger 27 or
Explorer 423

Refreshments

Town Centre and M&C Garden
Centre.

Public Toilets

Grant Park, also off High Street

Public Transport

Buses from Inverness/
Aberdeen to Forres
Trains from Inverness/
Aberdeen to Forres



The Walk

From the start point by the Victoria Road Car Park, near to the police station, stand by the plinth enclosing the Forres Footpaths Trust (FFT) map, and follow the Purple FFT arrow into the park past the children's play area on your left. Continue on the path flanked by mature trees, curving Left as you pass the cricket pavilion to your left and follow the path as it goes behind the bowling green pavilion. Immediately after the pavilion you come to a cross path. Here, you turn Right and almost immediately Left to follow a path through an avenue of trees. It curves right and you then take the pavement by the road (South St) down towards a roundabout: before you reach the roundabout, cross the road. At the roundabout turn Right up Tolbooth St and almost immediately Left towards a car park. As you reach the car park on the corner of the building on your left is a plaque commemorating those who died in a Whitley aircraft crash. Note 1

Turn Left and walk through the car park until you reach Orchard Road with Applegrove Primary school in front of you. Turn Right and then cross over the pedestrian crossing and continue along on the other side. You will soon come to a large model of a Nimrod placed in the centre of a garden in front of the War Veterans Cottages. Note 2.

Continue along Orchard Road and as you cross the bridge over the Burn O Mosset, cross the road and follow the Burn downstream with the water on your right. You are passing a lovely open grass area and will shortly come to a memorial to the 15 personnel who died in a RAF Nimrod accident over Afghanistan on 2 September 2006 and next you will see the very impressive War Memorial. Note 3.

Cross over St Catherine's Road opposite the Nimrod memorial and veering slightly left go down Little Crook, turning Left after about 50 yards. Continue to the end where you turn Left into Meikle Crook and shortly afterwards turn Right into Thornhill Road. At the end of Thornhill Road go straight across and into the narrow lane entrance just to the right of the Councillors Walk sign. As the lane emerges into the open turn sharp Right and then left into Randolph Lane. Continue to the end with the play area on your left. At the end, turn Left and follow the path as it forks Right into woods and just after it emerges into an open area take the metal gate on your Right. Walk along the hard core path with the drainage channel of the flood alleviation scheme on your left. Come out onto the road and turn Left walking alongside the Forres Thistle football ground. At the end of the football ground turn Right through a wooden fence and again walk along with the flood alleviation channel on your left which swings around to the right. Continue on the track past the pumping station until you come to a gate by a roundabout on the A96. Cross the main road to the tarmac pavement on the other side heading towards Inverness. You will see a stone pillar and information boards describing the River Findhorn Flood Alleviation scheme which are well worth a read. Now continue along the tarmac path besides the main road heading away from Forres. You will soon come to a memorial garden with a stone pillar and a large model of a Whitley. Note 4

After studying the model and memorial, resume the walk by continuing towards the Findhorn Bridge along the pavement beside the A96. Immediately after crossing the bridge, turn Right marked by a FFT Purple arrow following the path that descends steeply down to the river side: the path and steps are uneven and can be slippery. At the bottom, turn Left to follow the River downstream passing a fishermen's hut and then walking through a delightful area of woodland. As you leave the woodland the path underfoot becomes hardcore. As part of the River Findhorn Flood Alleviation Scheme, completed in late 2014, large areas of sand and stones were cleared in this area to allow increased water flow. Pass under the railway viaduct



built in 1858 with three spans, each of 150 feet (46 metres), and continue along beside the River as the path becomes much narrower until you reach the Bailey bridge at the Broom of Moy. Turn Right to cross over the bridge. The first section was built by Royal Engineers shortly after WW2 with the much longer section being added in 2014 as part of the Flood Alleviation Scheme. Over the bridge turn Left and follow the Purple way markers downstream and as you come through a gate onto a tarmac road look left to see the Waterford waste collection station. This, as its name suggests was the old crossing point of the Findhorn River before the bridge was built. You turn Right towards the tall red chimney of Benromach Distillery. As you approach an area of industrial units, turn Right up the wide footpath beside the new road that leads you up and over the railway line. Cross this road and as you pass over the railway bridge look to your left to see the new Forres railway station opened in late 2017. There are excellent views of Forres as you cross the bridge. Walk down to meet the main road, the A96, and turn Left walking along the footpath beside the main road and passing the road entrance to Forres station until you cross the Burn O Mosset. Almost immediately after crossing the Burn turn Left again down a track towards the railway and then turn Right to walk along a path that runs along beside the railway. Beside the path on your left, you will see some delightful wood carvings of a snail, owl and squirrel. These are carved from stumps after the trees were felled when a second rail track was added as part of the new Forres station project in 2017. Continue straight ahead as you pass the sewage works and you will have glimpses of Forres Mechanics football ground and the Forres skyline on your right. The track continues through an avenue of trees before eventually curving right through a kissing gate and up to the Forres by-pass. Cross the road going straight ahead through the kissing gate on the far side with Forres Community Gardens on your right. At the T junction turn Left. As you turn, you will see in the garden by the wall on your left the last remaining well in Forres and now a mere trickle (known to locals as Piggery Well). Continue to the end and then turn Right into Croft Road and proceed through the houses to the top. Here you turn Left. (If you want a shorter walk, turn Right and follow the road around and it will bring you back to your starting point). Continue past Sueno's Stone and at the end take the narrow track down to the A96 and continue along this track to the roundabout where you follow it Right. As the tarmac path ends, cross the road, and turn Left almost immediately along Drumduan Road. Continue straight ahead joining a cycle way that emerges alongside the A96. After about



300 yards turn Right up a tarmac track passing through zig zag metal gates and up a hill. Shortly after the crest turn Left onto a narrow path into the Enterprise Park. Turn Left and stay on this path, ignoring all paths to the right until the path itself turns Right. You will then come out of the trees with an impressive curved wall and seat up a slope to your left. Walk up and enjoy the superb view over Findhorn Bay and the hills surrounding the inner Moray Firth. Retrace your steps along the path and it continues up to a roundabout with a large model of a Tornado aircraft in the centre. Note 5

Cross the road and continue for a short distance along the pavement and then just after a high walled feature which contains an electric transformer, turn Left to continue along the narrow pathway curving around for about half a mile. Ignore all paths to the right and you come out onto the minor road. Cross the road and turn Left and, when the tarmac pavement ends, continue long beside the minor road. After about 300 yards and opposite Easter New Forres turn Right into a grass tracked lane. Continue straight ahead along this lane entering the woods and then passing

the Forres golf course on your left. As you come to the houses turn Left and follow the FFT Yellow arrows passing the Clovenside cemetery on your left before passing the car park and joining a tarmac road to go uphill. At the top, you turn Left onto a track into the woods and after about 50 yards turn right signed with the Yellow arrow as Return route. Initially the path climbs uphill and you then turn sharp Right as the Yellow arrows take you around the hill (alternatively you could climb up to enjoy the view from Nelson's Tower) before descending via two sets of wooden steps that lead you back to the start of the walk.

NOTES

Note 1: Whitley Bomber 1440 Plaque The brass plaque was erected in 1989 to commemorate the death of the 6 aircrew that died when their aircraft, a Whitley Bomber No 1440 crashed on the town, near this spot, on 7 Nov 1940. The plaque is a little tarnished.

Note 2: The Nimrod model was made by apprentice engineers of Varis Engineering of Forres. The model sits in the centre of small stones of red white and blue to reflect the RAF roundel. This Nimrod commemorates all those personnel who have died in accidents involving the Nimrod. There were 3 Nimrod accidents in which people died. In November 1980, the two pilots of an aircraft of 206 Squadron that struck birds whilst taking off from RAF Kinloss were killed when it crashed into trees just off the runway: 16 crew members survived. All seven members of a 120 Squadron crew died when a Nimrod crashed into Lake Ontario, Toronto during an air display in September 1995. There is a memorial window to them in the Church of Scotland church in Kinloss village. The 15 personnel on board a Nimrod of 120 Squadron died when it exploded over Afghanistan in September 2006. A memorial to them, paid for by public donations, is visited shortly on this walk.

Note 3: The Forres war memorial which was unveiled on Wednesday 23rd August 1922 by Mrs. Grant of Edinburgh, the wife of one of the fallen, features the statue of a Seaforth Highlander by Edinburgh sculptor Alexander Carrick which is 7'9" high and stands on a 13' high cairn type pedestal constructed of blue whinstone from the Califer Quarry. The overall concept and design of the memorial was by the Aberdeen architect L. Marshall MacKenzie who was also responsible for the City of Aberdeen war memorial. The sculpture was based on Carrick's bronze statuette of 'Jock' which was exhibited at the R.S.A. in 1920. Carrick however was a stickler for detail and wrote to the Forres war memorial committee requesting a kilt as worn by the local Forres battalion, the 6th Seaforths, to ensure that the kilt hung exactly right on his model.

Note 4 Balnakeith Memorial and Whitley Model

The Royal Air Force satellite airfield at Forres was constructed at Balnakeith in 1940. The Whitleys of No 19 Operational Training Unit RAF Kinloss used this site until late 1944 and during that period trained thousands of aircrew for Bomber Command. This cairn was erected in memory of the airmen and airwomen who served here and especially those who gave their lives while flying from Forres. The cairn also commemorates the presence of the Polish Army forces who were billeted on the site between 1945 and 1947. The nearby commemorative model of an Armstrong Whitworth Whitley was made by apprentices of Varis Engineering and erected in 2010. There is also an information plaque with more details of the airfield and aircraft.

Note 5 Tornado model

The work was commissioned in 2009 when RAF Lossiemouth was home to three operational squadrons of Tornado GR4s and the Tornado GR4 Operational Conversion Unit. However, its erection was delayed during the period of uncertainty of the RAF presence in Moray and was finally put in place in 2013. The £47,800 sculpture was designed and created by Scotland's leading fine art foundry, Black Isle Bronze, based in Nairn. It was viewed by The Princess Royal, HRH Princess Anne, when she visited the business park in 2014.

