



River Findhorn Walk (Via Sanquhar, Dallas Dhu and Mundole)

10 Miles

A circular walk through and around the town of Forres, following the banks of the River Findhorn for much of the route. With some fine views of the surrounding countryside it explores some attractive, yet less frequented, environs of this pretty Moray town.



Geocaches on or near to this route include:

I've Been to Forres, Cluny Hill, Sanquhar Pond View, Caley's Highland Caches #1-3 and Water of Life Benromach



Walk Information

Terrain

Stiles-None

Suitable for most abilities

Planning

Start/Parking

Victoria Road

Grid Ref: NJ043593

Map OS Landranger 27 or Explorer 423

Refreshments

Various in Forres and M&C Garden Centre

Public Toilets

Various in Forres and M&C Garden Centre

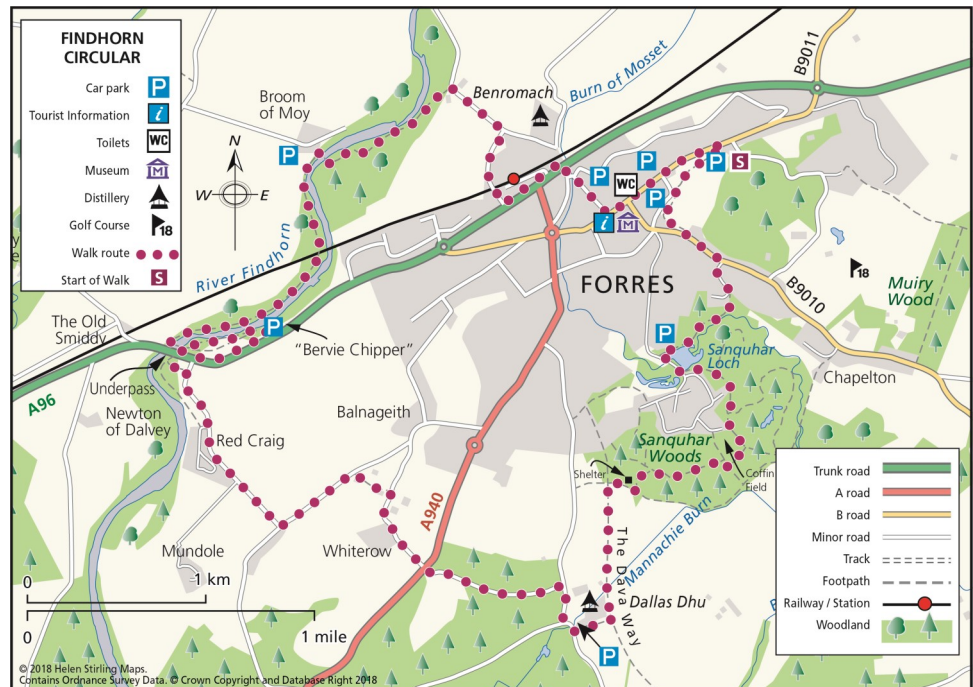
Public Transport

Buses from Inverness/

Aberdeen to Forres

Trains from Inverness/

Aberdeen to Forres



Introduction

This walk is waymarked with purple arrows on lampposts, waymarkers and, occasionally, fencing. Walkers are responsible for their own navigation and use of the tracks and footpaths under the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

From the start point by the Victoria Road Car Park, next to the old filling station, stand by the plinth enclosing the Forres Footpaths Trust (FFT) map, and facing Grant Park, 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 then just before it meets the road turn Left behind the houses until you come to an opening in the wall on your right. Pass through the opening into St. Leonards Road.

Turn Left and proceed up the road until you come to the FFT Purple arrow on a lamp post ahead of you. Cross the road and walk into St Leonard's Drive curving around to the left. At the top of the slope continue straight ahead along the path with the houses behind the fence on your right. Descend steeply down to the Mosset Burn and turn Right, keeping the burn on your left, until you come to Sanquhar Loch now badly silted up. The loch was created in 1900 by Mr Alexander Edwards of Craigellachie, Speyside to provide the cooling water for the Benromach distillery in Forres. At the road turn Left: there is a FFT information point here. Walk the short distance along the road until the end of the loch embankment and turn Left onto a narrow track leading up through woods, with properties on your right. The path curves right at the top of the slope and then joins a wider path. Follow this path crossing a tarmac road at Woodend. Note the older property on your right which was once the gardener's cottage when this area was part of the Sanquhar Estate.

Here you enter Sanquhar Woodlands managed by the Forres Community Woodlands Trust. A large, clear map shows the many paths within the Woodlands. Your path passes houses on your right and you continue ahead and an open field will appear on your right, known locally as the Coffin Field, in the middle of which is a stand of Scots pine. Here was once situated the Sanquhar Estate Offices. About half way along the field turn Right to cross the field on a clear footpath. Then turn Right and almost immediately Left onto a wider path with a notice advising about the Woodlands' Trust's Mountain Bike Trails on your left. Continue on this wide path climbing then descending through the trees, following the Purple markers and eventually curving left. You will pass an open wooden shelter on your right and drop down to a wide track. Here you turn Right and soon Right again as you join a surfaced track and leave the woods. Shortly you will see some low walls ahead which are part of the bridge taking the road over what used to be the main railway line from Inverness to London from 1863 to around 1898, when the current main line over Slochd Summit was opened. This line was used by troop trains and naval supply trains during both World Wars and continued in service until 18th October 1965 taking passengers and freight from Inverness via Forres and Grantown to join the Highland Main Line at Aviemore.

At the bridge take the steps on the right down onto the old track bed, which is now part of the Dava Way. At the bottom turn Left under the bridge and continue along the Way, crossing over a hump in the track which forms a barrier as part of the Forres Flood Alleviation scheme. At Dallas Dhu Historic Distillery turn Right and descend to the car park and picnic area – the picnic benches are removed in the winter. From the picnic area, pass out through the main gate onto the public road and turn right shortly going straight ahead through a small area of woodland. After passing a farm on your right, turn Left down a narrow tarmac road. Follow this road until you descend rapidly to the main road for Grantown-on-Spey. Take great care as you cross over the road into an avenue of mature trees. Continue ahead past Whiterow Farm on the left until you reach Balnageith Cottages where you turn Left onto a non-tarmac track. At the back of the garden of the house called 'The Bothy' on your left you will see an old wartime building with small, square windows high up where unwanted secret papers from the airfield were taken to be burnt. Before turning Left, just past Cherrybank, you will see ahead of you a flat open area. This farmland, between you and the A96, was RAF Forres, used by the Whitleys of No. 19 Operational Training Unit (OTU) from 1941 to 1945.

After turning Left, follow the road for about half a mile and as you approach houses on your left turn Right. Follow this road passing Redcraig on your left and at the Give Way sign approaching the A96 turn Left climbing a slope and continue to follow the FFT marker as you descend and then go straight ahead. Approaching the River Findhorn turn Right and pass under the wide span of the A96 Findhorn road bridge. With the river on your left continue on the clear path through pleasant woodland and you will end up walking on the old road surface which will bring you to the car park of a building. On the Forres side of the building is a cairn erected in 1997 to commemorate the personnel of 19 OTU and those members of the Polish armed forces who were billeted at the airfield between 1945 and 1947. There is also a large model of a Whitley, the aircraft flown by 19 OTU. Resume the walk by heading back towards the Findhorn Bridge but now walk along the pavement beside the A96.

Immediately after crossing the River Findhorn bridge, turn Right following the path that descends steeply down to the river side. Take great care as 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 have been 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. Once over the bridge turn Left and follow the 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 Forres with the tall, red chimney of the Benromach Distillery in the distance.

Walk along the footpath and as you approach the industrial site cross the road at the junction and immediately turn Right to follow the wide footpath beside the road as it climbs gently and curves left to cross the railway lines with the new Forres railway station below you to the left. 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 road and passing the road entrance to Forres station. On reaching the bridge over the Mosset Burn, taking great care, cross the A96 to a gap in the fence on the opposite side with the Mosset Burn on your right. Proceed up Gordon St with the imposing St. Laurence Church on your right. At the top turn Left along Forres High Street, eventually passing the Community Centre and Library (toilets here). Cross over the road towards the sunken gardens where Forres House used to stand. Just after the gardens, take the path into Grant Park following it round to the left, back past the children's play area to the car park where you started. There are public toilets in the building next to the car park.