



## Mosset Walk

4 Miles

A circular walk around Forres, taking in Sanquhar Loch, the panoramic view from the Nelson Tower at the top of Cluny Hill.

Note: The numbers in the text refer to the numbered notes at the end of the guide.



Geocaches on or near to this route include:

I've Been to Forres, Sanquhar Pond View, Cluny Hill and Water of Life Benromach



## Walk Information

### Terrain

Stiles-None  
Suitable for most abilities

### Planning

#### Start/Parking

Victoria Road (Free)  
Grid Ref: NJ043593  
Map OS Landranger 27 or  
Explorer 423

#### Refreshments

Various in Forres

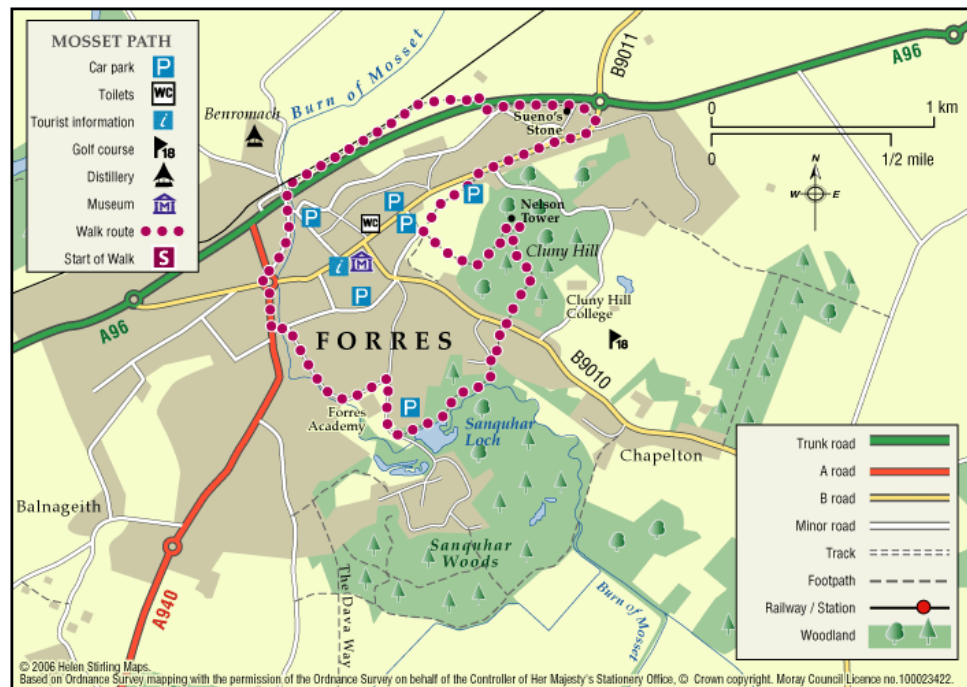
#### Public Toilets

Various in Forres

#### Public Transport

Buses from Inverness/  
Aberdeen to Forres

Trains from Inverness/  
Aberdeen to Forres



## Introduction

*This walk is waymarked with green 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 at the Forres Footpaths Trust Information Point in the Victoria Road car park (Free), follow the green arrows and turn Right along the pavement. At the Police Station stop and read the inscription in the low wall at the Witches Stone. **1** Cross the road and continue to the fork bearing left into Findhorn Road to Sueno's Stone. **2** Retrace your steps to junction with Croft Road and follow this down to the bottom where you continue straight ahead on a tarmacked track until it very shortly joins Bogton Road (no nameplate) where you turn Left. After about 100 metres turn Right into the track which leads to a kissing gate. As you turn, on your right is a bungalow - if you peep over the wall - you will see in the garden right on the corner the last remaining well in Forres and now a mere trickle (known to locals as Piggery Well). To your left you will see the entrance to Transition Town Forres.

Follow the track towards the by-pass and pass through the Kissing Gate. Cross very carefully and, directly opposite, go down a short lane and pass through a second Kissing Gate onto the track on the north side of the by-pass. Follow the line of trees, with the railway line on the right and you will pass the sewage works. To your left, across the by-pass, are glimpses of Forres and the Forres Mechanics football stadium. Arriving at the Mosset Burn, you will see the tall, red chimney of Benromach Distillery **3** on your right. Beside the path on your right, 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. Turn Left up the track and, once again, cross the by-pass with great care. Keep the Burn on your right and houses on your left cross the road and bear slightly right following the Burn along to the front of the Mosset Tavern. **4** A good stop-off point for refreshments. Leaving the Mosset Tavern continue along the path with low wall and seats on your left and then cross the lattice footbridge over the Burn into Invererne Road. Turn Left. At Castle Bridge, cross the road and turn Left into the middle of the bridge where you will see a plaque in the wall to the memory of Lord Strathcona. **5** Retrace your steps to the award-winning War Memorial and take the path beside the Burn to the next bridge. Turn Left, cross the Burn then cross the road. Turn Right immediately into Burdshaugh Road. The road curves Left becoming Burdsyard Road passing Forres Academy and Swimming Pool to the junction with Sanquhar Road. Turn Right and cross the road. Walk until you reach a small Parking Area with a Forres Footpaths Trust information point set in Moray sandstone. You are now at Sanquhar Loch (sometimes more correctly known as Sanquhar Pond). Before walking alongside the Loch, you may wish to pop over the road to the opposite side for a look at the Fish Ladder. From the Parking Area, go over the bank to be met by a lovely vista of the Loch and the surrounding woodland. **6** Follow the footpath, along the side of the Loch and the Burn, until you meet an upward climbing path on your left (with steps). Take the path until you find yourself alongside a high wooden fence on your left – this brings you out at the entrance to St. Leonard's Court. Turn Right on a path that leads to a broken tarmac track. Follow this down to St Leonard's Road. Immediately opposite is the way forward so cross with care and walk upwards between the houses to enter a broad avenue of trees. Bear Left at a Junction and as you approach the Cemetery follow the way marker on the right-hand side taking you up to the Nelson Tower. **7** After visiting the Nelson Tower retrace your steps to the junction of the tracks and bear right to follow the track downhill. Fork slightly Right to continue downhill and you will meet the track you were on earlier but now just below the Cemetery. Turn Right, follow the track round and into Grant Park. **8** Bear right and down into the avenue of trees which will take you down to the lovely Bowling Green which you pass on your right. Turn Right after the Bowling Green with the Sunken Gardens on your left and follow the main track back to the car park passing on your left the beautiful floral displays maintained by the Forres in Bloom volunteers.



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## SUPPORTING NOTES

### 1 Witches Stone

Situated in the wall at the front of the Police Station is a plaque commemorating the burning of witches on the nearby Cluny Hill. Legend has it that witches were placed in barrels and rolled down the hill. This spot being where they came to a halt.

## **2 Sueno's Stone**

This ancient monument is impossible to date accurately, but it is believed to have been carved in the ninth or tenth century. It is made of grey sandstone of the type found locally. The main faces show a large cross with Celtic interlace on one side and, on the other, a battle scene. The narrow sides are interlaced with patterns and human faces.

## **3 Benromach Distillery**

This distillery was designed in 1898 by Elgin architect Charles Doig, who was famous for designing the pagoda roof. Up until the early 1970's Benromach Distillery stood proudly with its pagoda roof over the malt kiln. Unfortunately, due to decay, the pagoda was removed by the owners as malting had ceased at the distillery in the late 1960's. Over one of the outbuildings at Benromach Distillery is a weathervane. Where the cockerel ought to be is the profile of a jaunty Highlander, kilted and brandishing a bottle. This is 'Old Angus', the original trademark of the Benromach brand. Charles Doig's plans included a revolutionary idea of taking cooling water out of the Sanquhar Loch and sending it back unpolluted - requiring a method of making water flow uphill. Nowadays the old fuel bond has been converted to receive the hot waters from the condensers for cooling to 30°C. From the Invererne Road you can see the wonderful display that the cooling water makes in the spray pond, before it is again safely returned to the Mosset Burn.

## **4 Mosset Tavern**

This hostelry stands on the site of the former Taylor Mills and Laundry. Part of the old building can be seen in Burn Green Lane at the rear of the inn.

## **5 Lord Strathcona's Plaque**

Born Donald Alexander Smith, at the age of seventeen he left Forres for Canada. There he became the resident Governor of The Hudson Bay Company. He created the Canadian Pacific Railway (completed in 1885). In 1886 he was knighted by Queen Victoria and was given the title Lord Strathcona.

## **6 Sanquhar Loch**

Sanquhar Loch is less than a mile from the High Street. Yet here is an oasis of peace and tranquillity where the walker can pause awhile to feast his eyes on this beautiful spot which was once part of the 2,000 acre Sanquhar Estate owned by distilling magnate, Alexander Edward. It is now much smaller than it used to be. It is estimated that 60% of the original water area has been lost to silting, progressing to colonisation by plants and trees which in turn has become a haven for birds and wildlife. As you walk round listen and watch for some of the inhabitants which include swans, wrens, moorhen, heron, dippers - they nest behind the cascading water at the waterfall - thrushes, blackbirds, mallards, redwing, great spotted woodpecker, wagtails, tits, warblers have all been seen and heard here. Walking round you will have noticed footpaths appearing and disappearing. The Loch is at the centre of a network of footpaths which invite you to return and sample the pleasures that await the walker prepared to explore a little further afield.

## **7 The Nelson Tower**

Standing on top of Cluny Hill the tower is a conspicuous landmark for miles around. It was built in 1806, the year after Nelson's victory at Trafalgar. The tower is now a museum and is open every afternoon from 2pm to 4pm from the end of March until the end of September. A magnificent viewing platform is available on the roof - you climb 99 steps inside the Tower - offering a spectacular vista of Forres and beyond. It is well worth the climb!

## **8 Grant Park**

Once the site of Forres House, the sunken gardens are now a peaceful oasis. Strolling amongst the floral displays you can appreciate the imagination of the designs that have brought numerous awards to this beautiful 32 acre park. Have a game of bowls, watch a cricket match, or see young football stars in the making. Youngsters will enjoy a visit to the play area. There is so much to do and see here or you could simply sit a while and watch the world go by. This park has been instrumental in the town's success in 'Beautiful Scotland' and 'Britain In Bloom' over the years. The floral displays are now all created and maintained by volunteers.