**Introduction**

Please note that this is a description of the 50-mile circular route from the Forres Cricket Pavilion in Grant Park. The route has been extended slightly from previous years, to allow for the use of an additional indoor checkpoint, and is now somewhere between 52 and 53 miles. Please take the time to appreciate this beautiful part of Scotland you are travelling through! You will need a compass and map (O/S Explorer Map 423) to help you follow this description.

1. **Grant Park start to Findhorn CP1 (7.9 miles)**

Section length 7.9 miles.

**Cluny Hill** (0.8 mile long)

From the pavilion (NJ040590) head ENE to the corner of Grant Park by the squash courts and go into the woods, following the yellow way markers up steps. This will take you up the hill under massive beech trees on a wide path that runs parallel to the minor public road below. Follow this path up to the highest point where there is a yellow way marker at a path junction with a path that cuts back to the right. From here you need to go on an indistinct trod path that goes steeply up the hill, behind the big tree opposite the way marker, in a SW direction. At the top of the hill, continue along the ridge to Nelsons Tower (NJ044590) and walk around it for some fantastic views of Findhorn Bay, the Moray Firth and the hills beyond. Be sure to spend a moment taking in the view. From here take the vehicle track heading SW and at the first path junction swing left to a southerly direction. Keep to the track until you get to the cemetery corner and then turn left onto a tarmac tract. Follow tarmac track SE then SW until it brings you to a public road (St Leonard’s Road, B9010).

**Sanquhar Woods** (0.8 mile long)

Cross over the road (**PUBLIC ROAD – TAKE CARE)** and follow the yellow way markers up the pebble access track then follow the narrow path at the top that swings right. Just before you get to a housing estate road, go left and take the trod path behind a low wall. Follow this to long steps down to the Mosset burn and at the path junction, turn left and go upstream until you get to a bridge.

Go over the bridge, turn left and follow the Mosset burn upstream. You will pass an information board, followed by long steps uphill with the burn still on the left, but barely visible through the trees. Keep going on this twisting, undulating path until you see a rough trodden path going half left, with a bit of a step up off the main path. Take this narrow path until you come to a path junction and then go left.

(Note: it is easy to miss the path going half left off the main path. If you go past it, you will get to a path junction with a wide path cutting back to the left – take this path to rejoin the route). Follow this much wider path that goes past a clearing with a large timber bench on the left until you get to another path junction. Go left down three steps then across a bridge. Turn right (S) along the level path and come out of the woodland. Turn sharp left (NNE), then half right (NE) at yellow marker post and head for a double field gate.

**Flood Alleviation and Council Woods** (1.5 mile long)

Beside the double field gate there is a smaller pedestrian gate that is easier to go through unless you fancy hurdling the big gate! Go left after the gates and follow the track which heads NE. Follow this until you come to a road (B9010) (**PUBLIC ROAD – TAKE CARE)** There will be a marshalled clipper post at the gates. Cross the road then turn left (WNW) walking on the narrow path at the side of the road, followed by a right turn (NNE) into the Council Wood car park area (NJ053580).

Walk straight through the car park and onto the path passing the barrier (NNE) through the woods, keeping the boundary wall to your left. At the corner of the wall, turn left (WNW) and at the next ‘Y’ junction bear right (NW) onto a narrow winding path. At the next junction, go straight on (NNE) until you come to the Golf course boundary rabbit fencing. Follow the path near the fence (NE) and continue to keep the golf course boundary fence to your left. The boundary fence changes direction a couple of times and eventually heads west towards a housing estate.

When you get to the housing estate stay left between the brown fence and the rabbit fencing until you are walking by a tall evergreen hedge on the left. Continue on this path until you come to a tarmac road at the cemetery entrance. Turn right here and follow this to a road and go straight on (**PUBLIC ROAD – TAKE CARE).**

**Drumduan School Grounds to Sueno’s Stone** (0.3 mile long)

Follow the road beneath overhanging trees, until you get to the entrance of Drumduan School on the right. Go into the grounds and follow the main track until you come to a right hand bend just past the play area. On the bend go straight on, down a grassy path between two fields. This will take you down to a road where you need to turn left and then right following the street signs to Sueno’s Stone and Kinloss (**PUBLIC ROAD – TAKE CARE).**

**Sueno’s Stone to Findhorn CP1** at 7.9 mile point (4.5 miles long)

From Sueno’s Stone, take the tarmac cycleway and footpath over the A96 to Kinloss then left (NW) and continue to follow the cycle route for the 4.5 miles to Findhorn. At Findhorn, keep the shoreline of the bay to your left until the start of the one way traffic system at the fork junction. Take the right fork and then the first right turn, keeping the church on your right. The Findhorn Village Centre is the stone building just ahead of you. Please use the entrance on the right side of the building, by the wooden fence. **Checkpoint 1** at 7.9 mile point (NJ041641)

1. **Findhorn CP1 to Burghead CP2 (15.2 miles)**

Section length 7.3 miles.

From the Findhorn Village Centre, go back to the fork junction and follow the shoreline road towards the harbour. Come off the tarmac road opposite the Kimberly Inn and walk along the shoreline tracks until the coastal path fingerpost pointing inland, turn right here and take the road past the Royal Yacht Club, then left at a crossroads junction. Follow the public road NW to the Ice House, then onto the beach car park where the beach is accessed via wooden steps. The tide will be sufficiently out along Burghead Bay to walk the 7 miles along the beach to Burghead. Alternatively the Moray coastal trail runs parallel to the beach through the adjacent woodlands and is well signed.

At Roseisle, half way to Burghead, there is a forestry picnic area with toilet facilities that is on the way marked coastal trail, but is also easily accessed from the beach. You can of course use a combination of both options of beach and coastal trail.

Go up the slipway at the end of the beach and keep left close to the rocky beach on left. Turn left at the main sea defence wall as you enter Burghead, then take the first tarmac road to the right which is signposted the Moray Coastal Trail and go about 100yds NE, then left onto Granary Street and after 100yds go right onto Seller Street where you’ll find **Checkpoint 2** (NJ112689) in the community hall.

1. **Burghead CP2 to Lossiemouth CP3 (25.7 miles)**

Section length 10.5 miles.

From the Burghead Community Hall, backtrack to the harbour area and walk WNW to the tall main harbour back wall, where you’ll find stone steps in a corner going north up to the high ground of the headland cliffs. After the steps keep to the right of a retaining wall and then go left up a narrow flight of stone steps. There will be a marshalled clipper post at this point. Follow the cliff top path around the headland, passing the lookout post on the seaward side and then down to a gravel car parking area. Continue SE along the coastal path past the large maltings building that dominates the town. From here, follow the coastal trail way markers to Hopeman along the disused railway line and then towards Lossiemouth along cliff top paths. At Covesea, well before Lossiemouth, the path goes close to a sandy beach near the Covesea Lighthouse, go along the beach from here because it is much easier to walk on than the overgrown coastal trail, which goes through the dunes slightly inland. At the end of the beach, go up the slipway and follow the sea wall to the end of the parking area. Follow the coastal trail to the seaward side of houses and over a rough grassy area to meet a road. Turn right (SSW) before the petrol station and go up King Street (Unsigned). Continue up King St and cross over Commerce St and Queen St to the grass park on your right. The Lossiemouth Baptist Church is on King Street opposite the top corner of the park. This is **Checkpoint 3** at 25.7 mile point (NJ236709) and is the halfway feeding station where you will be served with your evening meal.

1. **Lossiemouth CP3 to Elgin –Bishopmill Hall CP4 (32.0 miles)**

Section length 6.3 miles.

**Lossiemouth to Disused Railway Line** (0.4 miles)

After a good feed at the Lossiemouth Baptist Church continue SSW up King Street until it meets Prospect Terrace. Turn right and go SW and look for a path going downhill opposite St James’ Church. Before descending this, take in the magnificent views to the east and south. Go down the path and cross over Quarry Road and go down Queen’s Lane (Unsigned) in a SSE direction, and at the bottom, cross over Clifton Road and then Church St. Where it meets Macduff St, go slightly left (SE) onto the disused railway line path known as the Imlach Way. Look for the tarmac path that goes through a gap between two stone walls.

**Disused Railway Line to Elgin Cathedral** (4.9 miles)

You are now on the unsigned old railway line to Elgin which heads south. It soon turns into a dirt track when it leaves Lossiemouth and then crosses the busy B9103 road (**PUBLIC ROAD – TAKE CARE).** After the road crossing, walk down this very straight disused railway line for about 3 miles to where it comes to a minor public road (**PUBLIC ROAD – TAKE CARE**). Go left here in an east then SE direction, before taking a right turn (SW) and walking about a mile on a minor road to the outskirts of Elgin. At the T-junction, cross the road and turn right to meet a main road (**PUBLIC ROAD – TAKE CARE**) turn left (S), then follow the main road on pavements and turn right (NW) onto a tarmac path just before the big road bridge. This will take you to a footbridge over the River Lossie. Go over the bridge and straight on to the Cathedral side road.

**Elgin Cathedral to Bishopmill Hall CP4** at 32.0 miles (1 mile long)

Walk past the Cathedral grounds to the west entrance where there is an entrance to Cooper Park. Walk west through the park and past the Elgin Library, then NW along the west side of the big pond until you get to a footbridge across the river Lossie. Cross the bridge and walk up the road until it meets the busy Lossiemouth road. Continue (N) up the main road for a short way to a pedestrian crossing and cross over. Continue for a few steps up the hill then take the next left turn (W) onto Blantyre Place where the first building on the left is the Bishopmill Community Hall, **Checkpoint 4** at 32.0 mile point (NJ214635). The Hall entrance is at the west end of the building.

1. **Bishopmill CP4 to Miltonduff Hall CP5 (37.6 miles)**

Section length 5.6 miles?

**Elgin to Quarrywood/Quarrelwood** (1.2 miles)

From the Bishopmill community Hall, go left (W) along Blantyre Place and straight on at the junction until the T-junction. At the school grounds turn left (S) and follow the school boundary fence for a short distance to the fence corner. Go right (SW) along the narrow trod path that goes down to a riverside path. Follow this to the tarmac path junctions where there is a fingerpost indicating the path to Quarrelwood. Turn right (W) to follow a wide tarmac track (Cycle Route 1) that is signed to Quarrelwood. The tarmac path zig zags uphill to come out on Morriston Road. (**PUBLIC ROAD – TAKE CARE**) Cross the road carefully, turn left (W) and walk down to the start of Brumley Brae. Take the road on the right up the Brae (WNW). Keep to the pavement on the right but look out for a small path after about 150yds on the LH side. Cross the road carefully and take the trod path running on the right hand side of a concrete post and wire fence, just after the yellow grit bin. At the last concrete post bear left. This is a good path that traverses the slope in a westerly direction.

**Quarrywood/Quarrelwood** (2.1miles)

Quarrywood/Quarrelwood has a network of criss-crossing paths, which can make navigation tricky. If you think you may have deviated from the route, keep the noise of the busy A96 on your left and high ground on your right. Head west until you reach a minor road. Turn left on this road and rejoin the route.

For the first mile, the traverse is mostly level then slightly up hill on wide trod paths. Pass a blue/green painted bench on your right. When you reach another bench immediately on the edge of the path (not the bench set well back from the path) keep right on the higher traversing path (SW then W). When you reach a path crossroad junction, turn uphill to the right. The path climbs uphill passing the upturned roots of a fallen tree shortly before meeting a wide forestry track. At the forestry track, go left and after a short distance join a post and wire fence on the left. Follow this wide forestry track SW and then in a westerly direction that trends downhill for a mile, until a minor road is reached (NJ171631) (**PUBLIC ROAD – TAKE CARE**). Go left down the minor road to where it meets the busy A96. (**MAJOR ROAD – TAKE CARE**).

**Quarrywood to Miltonduff CP5** (2.3 miles)

Go straight across this major trunk road at the junction, following the instructions of the marshals for your safety, and go over the low embankment. On the other side of the embankment you will find a narrow path which continues to a disused tarmac road and a gate near a cottage, which may be padlocked. . Go through, over, or around the gate and continue SW for about 200yds, until a minor road is reached. (**PUBLIC ROAD – TAKE CARE**). Go left (S) along this road for about 1.2 miles. Look out for a metallic cockerel on the RHS and just after the house called Whiteoaks at the top of a rise, on the right is a single track road. **DO** **NOT** take this turning (but **remember it** for the return journey after the CP). Continue along the road down past the Primary School, joining the pavement on the left hand side of the road, to the road junction. Turn left and after 100yds cross the road, just after the War Memorial junction (**PUBLIC ROAD – TAKE CARE)** to the Miltonduff Hall **CP5** at 37.6 miles (NJ178603). Walk through the car park to the entrance.

1. **Miltonduff CP5 to Rafford Church CP6 (48.1 miles)**

Section length 10.5 miles.

**Miltonduff Hall to Torrieston Picnic Area** (1.9 miles)

After the CP, retrace your steps by crossing the road (**PUBLIC ROAD – TAKE CARE)** and in 100yds turn right at the road junction and back up the minor road. After passing the Primary School, take the single track road on your left. Walk west and turn left after about 400yds onto a forestry track next to a house (Glendale) (NJ169602). Go SW along and up the wide forestry track for about 550yds, following green way marker posts and go half left at a track Y junction just after the 5th post. Look out for the green way markers as you go left onto a wide grassy path. Follow these until you reach a t-junction with markers going both ways and go right (W). This path will take you above and past the Torrieston car park/picnic area (NJ164588).

**Torrieston to Califerhill Viewpoint** (6.2 miles)

Continue on this forest path for 1/3 mile until it meets a public road access point. From here, bear right in a westerly direction up the steep forestry track for about 1.5 miles until a fork and take the uphill track to the right (W) for a further half mile up hill until it meets a very long straight track at a t-junction, shortly after the entrance to a quarry. Head left (SW) on this wide vehicle track for over 1 mile and then turn right down hill (N), then next left after about 350yds and go SW, still on a less prominent vehicle track.

The forestry track ends after 1 mile where it meets a single-track public road. (**PUBLIC ROAD – TAKE CARE**). Turn right here (NNW) and go downhill to a t-junction, then left up the gentle sloping public road 1 mile to the Califerhill Viewpoint access point. Go into the small carpark and continue walking the short distance to the viewpoint, where there will be a marshalled clipper post (NJ084571).

**Califerhill VP to Rafford CP6** (2.4 miles)

Go back to the Califerhill Viewpoint access point, turn right (SW) and go down the road for about 350yds and take the sharp left turning onto a farm track signed Laverock Height and Burnside. Keep right and follow this to a junction and take the right fork south, leading to the converted steading at Burnside. Go straight on past the house and then after a short distance and **before** you go through the gate, follow the woodland path right (SW) down the hill that has a fingerpost signed Sourbank.

This path can be a bit rough and muddy in places, but after about half a mile, it comes to a gate at a public road end. Continue down hill on the road for a short way, to where the road bends sharply to the left. Go slightly right here, down a rough track/driveway (Parkview) that goes in front of the house, to a rough trod path, heading west. Follow this slightly overgrown path between hedges and turn right (WNW) where it eventually meets a wide farm track.

Keep to the right on this track to go round farm buildings and then over the Rafford burn wooden bridge. The track swings left after the wooden bridge then eventually downhill and left to the Rafford Church Hall, which is **Checkpoint 6** at 48.1 mile point (NJ060563), the last one before Forres.

1. **Rafford Church CP6 to Grant Park Finish (52.7 miles)**

Section length 4.6 miles.

Directly opposite the church door a narrow dirt path leads down a slope then right to join a track that turns left (S) to a road junction (**PUBLIC ROAD – TAKE CARE**). Cross the road junction to the minor road to the left, running in front of the burial ground, and walk about 200yds SSE down this quiet village road that runs parallel to the B9010 road. Where the road bends to the left, take the second turn right at the end of a tall hedge and a lamppost. It looks more like a private driveway, but it does lead onto a wide grassy track at a big acorn shaped bush.

Follow the grassy track south then SW to woodland and keep to the main track without turning off until you come to a large wooded shed on the right side of the path, if you come to the gates of a house called Skene Meadows you’ve gone slightly too far. At the wooden shed turn half left (SSE)through woodland on untrodden grass (no path) keeping a stream to your right (you might hear it at night). This bears rightward after about 50m where it meets a well trod path. From here go SW on trod path and cross the stream on a new concrete bridge. Bear right after the bridge and go through a gap in the fencing. Keep right (SW)at path junction just after the bridge on well trod path through woodland. After a short uphill section, take the right path onto a new rough path that goes downhill in a NW direction. When this new track meets a vehicle access track, follow it westerly until it comes to a parking and bin area junction and another vehicle track.

Go diagonally right across this junction then turn left onto a footpath just before the tarmac road and houses start. Follow this path SW for about 350yds until it meets the Dava Way, indicated by a fingerpost pointing to the right. Follow the Dava Way right then right again for 2.2 miles towards Forres, until you get to a residential road on the outskirts of the town.

Turn right onto Manachie Avenue and when the road bends to the left, go straight on between houses, as indicated by Dava Way marker posts. On re-joining a road, go straight and follow this road into the town centre, passing Forres Academy on the left. When you get to the roundabout at the British Legion (building on your right) go steeply uphill to the right on South Street, then right into Grant Park at the top of the short rise. Walk NE to the Cricket Pavilion which marks the end of the Laich o’ Moray Challenge and the start of a well deserved breakfast after completing about 52 miles!