

4-3 Lossiemouth to Buckie

52 53 58 59

Distance 16·0 miles 25·7 km

Terrain long sandy beach, paths through dunes, vehicle track, quiet roads, footpath, tracks, roadside and woodland paths

Grade minimal rise and fall

Food & drink Lossiemouth, Spey Bay, Portgordon, Buckie

Side trips Lossiemouth Museum; Scottish Dolphin Centre

Summary long beach walk and through sand dunes (B road and forest on the detour), then beach to Kingston & Garmouth; cross River Spey by impressive viaduct, then woodland, farmland, shore and roadside paths



Detour until new bridge is open

The crucial bridge across River Lossie (mile 21·4) was found unsafe, and closed in 2019. Until its replacement is built (due in 2022), follow the inland detour marked above to rejoin the main route at mile 23·8. The 4-mile (6·4 km) detour crosses River Lossie inland at Arthur's Bridge. For a detailed map visit www.rucsacs.com/books/mct and click *Updates*.

The offroad official detour minimises road-walking and joins the B9103 about 1 km short of Arthur's Bridge (which could also be reached by road from Lossie). Follow the B9103 across the river, and within 300 m leave it by turning left into the Forest car park. Follow a mixture of wide forest road, track and path north-east to the coast. Resume directions from page 54 bullet 3.

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B9103

Longhill Burn



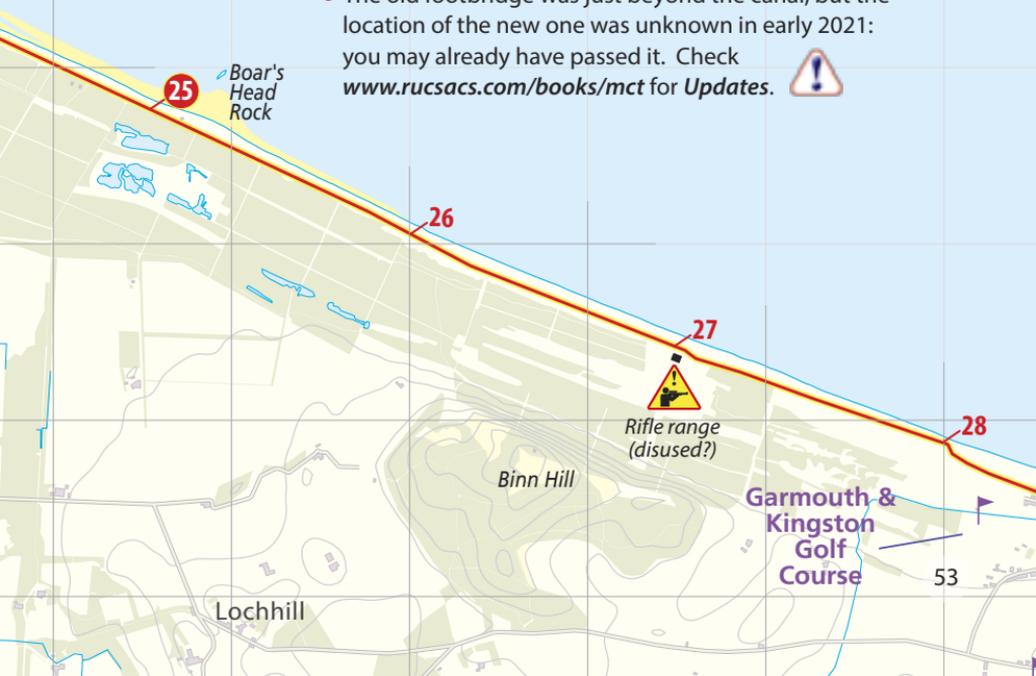
Lossiemouth Marina



Check tide times before setting out: the first stage of this walk is best done on an outgoing tide: see page 71

- From the Stotfield disaster memorial walk up the road; go first left along a road then a track past houses to a minor road with houses and a playground.
- Continue straight on across an intersection; turn left, descend to Shore Street and turn right with an MCT sign.
- At a T-junction make a left-right dogleg to the marina and after 90 m turn right to follow Pitgavenny Street past moorings and the Harbourmaster's office – where you can check tide times.
- The road passes Pitgavenny Quay, a row of shops and the Lossiemouth Fisheries and Communities Museum: see the panel on page 54.
- Continue beside the marina and past a play area. Opposite the Lossie Inn, bear left beside Seatown Road. Pass toilets and houses, then turn left across Spynie canal. Designed by Thomas Telford, it was built 1808-12 to drain Loch Spynie. The canal is 8 miles (13 km) long and sluices under the bridge prevent flooding at high tide.

- The old footbridge was just beyond the canal, but the location of the new one was unknown in early 2021: you may already have passed it. Check www.rucsacs.com/books/mct for Updates. 



- Except at high tide, the beach provides wonderfully easy walking for at least 2 km. Look east for a forested hill on the skyline, the Bin of Cullen, just inland from your final destination: see photo on page 56.
- Further on, the shingle bank shelves more steeply, and the distance between bank and sea narrows. If need be, you can retreat inland to a path below the sand dunes or, later, between the line of concrete blocks and the forest edge.
- The detour rejoins the main route at mile 23.8. The main route sticks to the beach if the tide isn't high. Boar's Head Rock may become visible on a falling tide. Continue along the grass and shingle path alongside the blocks.
- At mile 27 pass some derelict buildings, relics of the former MOD Binn Hill Rifle Range. In case firing is ever revived, note that a red flag flying means live ammunition: do not proceed. Check our web page www.rucsacs.com/books/mct for *Updates*. The concrete blocks eventually come to an end near a grassy mound.



Lossiemouth Museum

Located in a former fishing net-mending building, the Lossiemouth Fisheries and Communities Museum highlights the history of fishing in Scotland and Lossiemouth in particular. There's a detailed record of the Stotfield disaster of 1806 and a memorial to the men who died. Lossiemouth's most famous son, James Ramsay Macdonald, is remembered in a reconstruction of his study in his home. A controversial figure, he became Britain's first Labour Prime Minister in 1924, and again 1929-35. The museum was open in 2019. For visit info tel 01343 813 772 or consult www.morayconnections.com.

Lossiemouth from its east beach





Wartime coast defences between Lossiemouth and Kingston





East across the beach to the Bin of Cullen

- About mile 28, at an informal parking area, follow a gravel track which bends to the right. Soon, from a larger parking area, continue more or less straight on, within a few metres along a minor road, towards Kingston and Garmouth.
- Here you'll find information boards about local paths and the Spey Bay Wildlife Reserve, managed by the Scottish Wildlife Trust. Since the 1970s when shingle extraction ceased here, the area has reverted to its natural grassland and marsh.



- Continue past a formal car park. Just past a playing field, turn right down a lane between houses in Kingston.
- Cross Lein Road and continue along a track and then a path. Follow the MCT signs via School Brae (¾ mile): keep to the path, cross a footbridge then follow a path to a minor road. Turn right and go straight on, past junctions on the right.
- At a fork near farm buildings, bear left along a path marked 'Pedestrians Only'. The path traverses a grassy ridge with views of Spey Bay and Garmouth Viaduct ahead.
- Where the path begins to lose height, a narrow path on the right leads to two interesting features. Browlands standing stones have an information board, and beyond is an old water tower with excellent views and an indicator plate.
- Descend to a road and turn right in Garmouth. Soon you pass a house on the left on the corner of The Loanie where, according to a wall plaque, King Charles II signed the Solemn League & Covenant in 1650.
- Keep ahead at the war memorial, and after 100 m, turn left along Church Road.
- About 50 m after the last house on the left, descend steps to the tarmac track of the old railway. This takes you on to the impressive Garmouth Viaduct across the River Spey on a route shared with National Cycle Route 1.
- Continue for 250 m along the track through leafy woodland to Garmouth junction, marked with an MCT fingerpost.

Garmouth Viaduct across the River Spey





Dolphins near Spey Bay

- Turn left to join the Speyside Way heading north along a vehicle track. Continue to a car park near the grass-roofed ice houses and the Scottish Dolphin Centre: see the panel and visit if possible.
- To continue the Way, follow a path past the ice houses and turn right to cross another car park passing various information boards. Follow the minor road past a caravan park.
- After about 100 m, turn left to follow a tarmac driveway, then a waymarked path past a fenced area.



Scottish Dolphin Centre

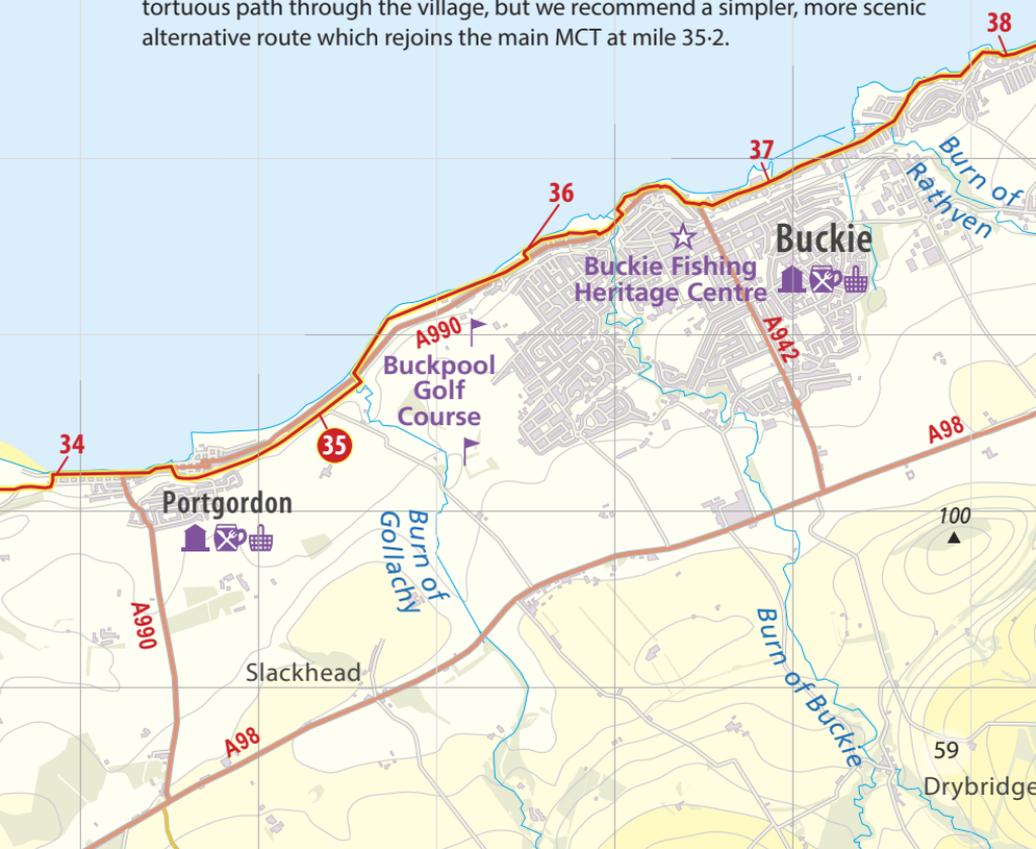
Spey Bay, the largest vegetated shingle complex in Scotland, is a haven for wildlife, including otter and seal, and a location for sighting bottlenose dolphin and possibly osprey. The centre's displays feature the area's diverse wildlife, and the former salmon fishing and boat-building industries at Spey Bay. It makes imaginative use of the restored Tugnet Ice House, built in 1830 as part of a large salmon-fishing station. It is run by the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society and includes Café Wild. The centre hopes to re-open in spring 2021; for more info see dolphincentre.whales.org or tel 01343 820 339.





Mouth of the River Spey

- Descend steps to a path that leads through gorse then woodland. After a few hundred metres, bear left at a fork.
- From the eastern boundary of the forest, turn right along a path between a vehicle track and field, then left along the railway track. After 900 m cross the Burn of Tynet by footbridge and continue.
- Go through two gateways, under a road bridge and on to another gate. Turn right along an informal path, then a road verge. Cross the road on the bend and follow it to the coast.
- Turn right into Portgordon along Stewart Street, and follow it – its name changes twice – for 750 m into the village centre. The official MCT now takes a tortuous path through the village, but we recommend a simpler, more scenic alternative route which rejoins the main MCT at mile 35.2.





Storm, Buckie harbour

- After the bus stops ignore Cross Street and turn next right (up Richmond Place), to pass the village hall on your right.
- Turn left at a National Cycle Route waymarker onto a path across an open grassy area, now following the former railway with good views of the nearby coast.
- Follow the cycleway for 1.1 km. At an MCT waymarker, turn sharp right to go down a track, turning right again to go under a road bridge and rejoin the main route at the A990.

North-east over Buckie towards Portessie



- Cross directly and turn right beside the A990 for 120 m. Then bear left along a path across open ground, past a house, to walk parallel to the coast for about 1 km.
- At a path intersection turn right to join the roadside path beside Great Western Road into Buckpool. At the second open area on the left, turn left to a vehicle track between houses and the shore.
- The track becomes a road leading to Buckpool Harbour and picnic area. At the far end of the small park, pass an information board for the harbour, and continue along the roadside footpath.
- Go left to a shoreside path, leading to a minor road. Back on the roadside path, pass the coastguard and ambulance stations to a major junction. Take the road to the right, North High Street, which leads to Buckie town centre with Heritage Centre: see panel above.



Buckie Fishing Heritage Centre

Buckie's history as a fishing station dates from the mid-17th century; the industry flourished during the 19th century and survives to this day. The centre houses more than 8000 photographs featuring fishing and local history, and a collection of model fishing boats.

There are also records of interviews with local fisherfolk, some in their own dialect. The shop sells reproductions of some photographs.

The centre is behind the library, near Cluny Place, just west of Cluny Square. It expected to reopen in spring 2021. For updated visit info, consult www.buckieheritage.org.

