Welcome to the forests of Ross and Cromarty

A Sunday stroll? An all-day adventure? Find the trail that’s right for you...

Starting in the west, follow the famous Blackwater trail to take in historic bridges of Silverbridge and Little Garm, keeping an eye out for Rogue Falls and great views near Contin.

Step back in time as you head east, from the historic Royal Burgh town of Tain. Explore the ancient drovers’ route! These well-loved woodland trails are full of interest:

- **Pond Trail**: 1 mile / 1.6 km. Allow 1 hour.
- **Burn Trail**: 1 mile / 1.6 km. Allow 1 ½ hours.

**Alphabet Forest**

Did you know that the Gaels named the eighteen letters of the alphabet after eighteen trees and shrubs? Letter ‘b’ was named beith and ‘f’ was named beithe. Here are some of the woods of Ross and Cromarty.

**Beanachd is Mallaichte**

*Area an t-seann aimsir, bith-eas na Gaidheal a’ chaonachd. Le caidheal beinn ‘beanachd’ agus ‘fheannan’ eile ‘mallaichte’.*

**Blackmuir Wood**

A geological maze and a ridge walk to an Iron Age fort at Monadh Mòr, a survivor from Scotland’s earliest Iron Age.

**Silverbridge**

...suspending the salmon. If you’re very lucky, you just might spot an otter.

**Tain Hill**

Spectacular views over the Dornoch Firth. Breathtaking views from the top of Tain Hill above the historic Royal Burgh town of Tain.

Breathtaking views from the top of Tain Hill above the historic Royal Burgh town of Tain.

**Little Garme to Silverbridge**

Peaceful circular trail with historic bridges. Routes open all year.

**Rogie Falls**

Impressive waterfalls and the chance of seeing leaping salmon. (Routes open Apr - Oct.)

**Contin**

Great views down Strathconon. (Routes open Apr - Oct.)

**Blackmuir Wood**

A geological maze and a ridge walk to an Iron Age fort.

**Monadh Mòr**

Unique restored bog woodland habitat.

**Strathroy to Scotsburn Drove Road**

Hike along this ancient drovers’ route!

**Aldie Burn**

Easy trails past wildlife ponds and a pretty burn.

**Tain Hill**

Spectacular views over the Dornoch Firth.

**Staithes**

A lichen-encrusted, ancient wall.

**Inverlael**

Scenic views of Loch Achilty.

**Loch Achilty**

Peaceful riverside trail with views of Loch Maree and Slioch mountain.

**Learnie Red Rock MTB Trails**

Mountain bikers of all levels will revel in the singletrack Red Rock Trails of Learnie.

**Forestry and Land Scotland**

Contact details:

For more ideas of great days out in the forest, explore and discover.

For information on public transport services contact Traveline Scotland, 0871 200 2233 or www.travelinescotland.com

© Crown Copyright 2019.

© Crown copyright and database right (2012). All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number [100021242].
**Little Garve - Silverbridge**

A tale of two bridges

The Blackwater river is known in Gaelic as An t-Sàilean Baile ('the bridge') and is the subject of a famous hunting song written by Donald Fraser in the 'Panachair Ballad'.

As you stroll by the Blackwater river, you're walking in the footsteps of soldiers and cattle. Silverbridge is part of an ancient route used by drovers herding their cattle to Maol Dhu and the markets to the south. The high-arched bridge at Little Garve was part of a military road which was built between Contin and the west coast at Poolewe around 250 years ago. It's known as Wade's Bridge, but it was actually built by Wade's successor, Major William Caufield. Look out for brown trout in the pools below the bridge.

**Rogie Falls**

Home and dry

Did you know that Rogie Falls is one of the best places in Scotland to watch salmon as they 'sal' upstream? From July to October salmon can be spotted leaping up the waterfalls as they make their way up the river to find a mate and lay their eggs. The fish are returning to the same spot where they themselves were hatched. If they look tired, it's no wonder: the salmon have travelled huge distances from cold northerly seas to return to their home river. A fish 'ladder' gives salmon a helping hand to reach the top of the falls when the river level is low. Cheer them on – they're nearly home!

**Blackmuir Wood**

A-maze-ing views!

From the outskirts of Strathpeffer, trails lead to a geological labyrinth, and on to an exhilarating ridge and Iron Age fort at Knockfarrel. At the Touchstone Maze over 80 boulders are laid out in a labyrinth, based on ancient designs. The stones represent the range of rocks which make up North Scotland, and include 3,000 million-year-old Lewisian gneiss, among the oldest rock types in the world. Along the any ridge known as the Cat's Back you'll reach the site of the fort at Knockfarrel, built around 2,500 years ago. There are signs of vitrification here, where stones have fused together because of great heat. Archaeologists are still arguing about the cause.

**View Rock Trail**

You may see red kites floating above you here, and the views east down the Cromarty gully as well as more tranquil stretches of river. Out you know that Rogie Falls is one of the best places in Scotland to watch salmon as they 'sal' upstream? From July to October salmon can be spotted leaping up the waterfalls as they make their way up the river to find a mate and lay their eggs. The fish are returning to the same spot where they themselves were hatched. If they look tired, it's no wonder: the salmon have travelled huge distances from cold northerly seas to return to their home river. A fish 'ladder' gives salmon a helping hand to reach the top of the falls when the river level is low. Cheer them on – they're nearly home!

**Monadh Mòr**

Rare survivor

Explore this unique bog woodland, a rare survivor from the end of the ice age, on a well-marked level trail. Around 14,000 years ago, as the glaciers retreated they left ridges and hollows here which gradually filled up with pools of water. On ridges between these boggy areas pine and birch trees took root, growing slowly because of the poor quality of the soil. Monadh Mòr is the largest remaining bog woodland in Scotland. In the 1960s this area was planted with commercial forestry, which made the bog dry out. Recent conservation is restoring the bog woodland, by removing planted trees and allowing the bog to fill up with water again. Today Monadh Mòr is a beautiful woodland, home to a range of wildlife, darting dragonflies and damselflies, crossbills, and even ospreys.

**The Drovers Trail**

In summer the strath is alive with birds, butterflies and wildflowers. Listen for the 'chat!' of the stonechat and darts, and keep alert for peat-bordered triturill butterflies. This is also a good place to spot finny native red efted red squirrels. You can report any sightings at www.redsquirrelsofthehighlands.co.uk

**Salmon Trail**

There's something for everyone in the oak and birch woodland to the west of Contin. A short, flat, easy trail loops from the car park, while the more energetic can enjoy great views up Strathconon by following the trail up to the 'low rock'. Look out across the Glen and you'll see the falls called Craigmairig (Craig an Dorchais). This name is for the dorchais, the oak tree, a species fondly-dubbed 'rich na casle', the king of the forest, by the Gaels.

**Monadh Mòr Trail**

There's a lot of boggy country in the Highland landscape, and this is reflected in the richness of Gaelic vocabulary. Did you know there are almost forty words in Gaelic for 'bog' or 'marsh'? Among the most common are làpach (bog) and type of conditions. Archaeologists are still arguing about the cause.

**Strathconon**

Kings of the forest

A few minutes from the bridge at Silverbridge, the oak trees along the drove road are 'the king of the forest' to the Gaels. Look west across the glen and you'll see the hill called darach 'the king'. For centuries, the oak trees were owned by the Scotland's kings, and the Gaels were forbidden to fell them. In summer the strath is alive with birds, butterflies and wildflowers. Listen for the 'chat!' of the stonechat and darts, and keep alert for peat-bordered triturill butterflies. This is also a good place to spot finny native red efted red squirrels. You can report any sightings at www.redsquirrelsofthehighlands.co.uk

**Trail grading**

Trails in this booklet are graded according to the degree of difficulty, gradients, type of surfaces and type of conditions.