

Fantastic map of Forres inside

# Forres Connected - Culture and Heritage

Information about our amazing culture  
and heritage, plus an exciting programme  
of local activities and events



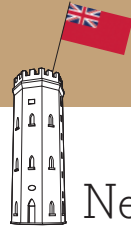
## The Tolbooth on Forres High Street

Forres Tolbooth, like its ancestors, has been right at the centre of this ancient Royal Burgh. There is evidence that the building has evolved through many variations, dilapidations, reconstructions and expansions over the best part of 800 years. Historical paintings in the Court House include a portrait of Sir Alexander Grant, citizen and great benefactor of Forres. The Tolbooth was in the care of Moray Council until 2014 when ownership was transferred to Forres Heritage Trust.

When you visit the Tolbooth you can delve into the past. Have your fingerprints taken, see the old police cells and have your picture taken up against the "mugshot wall". Then, you'll be taken to the historic court room and will finish your tour at the clocktower where you will step out on to the parapet to enjoy the beautiful views across the town of Forres.



The Forres Heritage Trust is the custodian of the Forres Tolbooth and Nelson's Tower on Cluny Hill.



## Nelson's Tower

Standing high on Cluny Hill, Nelson's Tower looks down over Forres. Erected by public subscription, it was built as a memorial to Admiral Lord Nelson. The foundation stone was laid by James Brodie of Brodie in 1806 with coins and a parchment placed beneath it. The Forres Heritage Trust operates and manages the Tower on behalf of Moray Council.

Climbing the 97 steps to the top of Nelson's Tower will reveal magnificent views over the town, the Moray Firth and the Black Isle. On a clear day, the Highland and Assynt hills some 50 miles away are visible.

The Tower is open to the public from 2pm to 4pm every day from the beginning of April to the end of September. When open the Red Ensign will be flying from the Tower mast.

Visit our website for details on the Tolbooth and Nelson's Tower.



Forres Town Hall is a Category B listed building prominently located on the High Street.

Originally built between 1827 – 1829 as a Masonic Lodge

to a design by the eminent Aberdeen architect Archibald Simpson. It has played a significant role at the heart of the local community, including time as an Auxiliary Hospital during the First World War.

Forres Town Hall is now owned and run by Forres Area Community Trust (FACT) for the local community and visitors.

Currently FACT are trying to raise £5M to make this well-loved building fit for the 21st century.

## The Mercat Cross

The Mercat Cross is modelled on the much grander Scott Monument in Edinburgh. The Category B listed structure was built in 1844 by Thomas Mackenzie and, although now sitting on a paved area in front of the Tolbooth, it once stood in the street. Recent extensions of the paving have created a market square between the Mercat Cross and Tolbooth. In recent years there has been steady progress toward returning this B listed structure to its full architectural excellence.





## Falconer Museum falconermuseum.co.uk



This "Victorian gem", which opened in 1872, houses treasures which Forres-born Hugh Falconer, geologist, botanist, palaeontologist and friend to Charles Darwin, collected during his years of research in India and Europe. The Falconer also showcases collections of art, social history, ethnography, botany and natural history. The exceptional working library comprises several hundred antiquarian books.

Part local museum, part museum of national importance, this cultural highlight in Moray is currently not open to the public; however, work is ongoing to establish a new operating model.

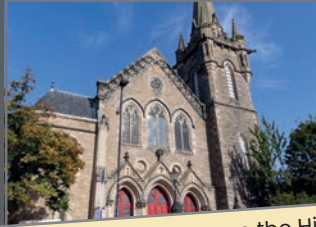


## Sueno's Stone

Sueno's Stone is a gigantic Pictish cross-slab measuring 7m tall. Its carvings are ornate and unique with rare and complex narrative depictions of a battle, and a unique scene interpreted as a royal inauguration. The stone would have once overlooked the marshy floodplains of the rivers Mosset and Findhorn. Unusually, it is still located in the area it was first erected, though little is known of its wider context.



## Local Churches



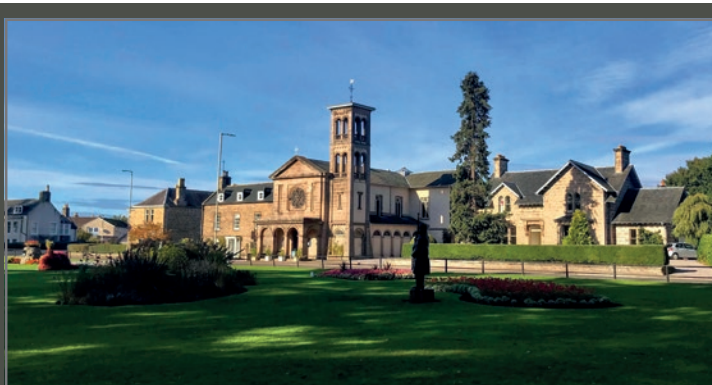
Of the churches on the High Street, three have interesting architecture, history and heritage.



St John's Church, opposite Grant Park, was built in 1840. The church is one of the three A Grade Listed Buildings in Forres. It has unique architectural characteristics, exquisite murals including wall-size originals by William Hole, well-crafted windows, and the magnificent Bevington Organ.

St Leonard's is named after the now overgrown medieval Chapel of Chapelton, located on the eastern outskirts of Forres and dedicated to St Leonard. It opened in 1903. The congregation owes its origin to the famous Disruption of 1843 when many across the land broke away from the established church to form The Free Church.

St Laurence Church stands on a site used for Christian worship since the 13th century. The original church was erected by Scots King Alexander III in honour of St Laurence as a memorial to his late wife Margaret. The foundation stone for the current Church was laid in 1904.



## Leancoil Hospital leanchoiltrust.org

Find out more and explore our heritage exhibition online



Leancoil Hospital is a fine example of a traditional cottage hospital set in beautiful grounds which together with the Gate Lodge and Fountain are Category B listed.

Opened in 1892, it served the communities of the area for over 125 years before being closed in 2018. Leancoil was funded by donations and subscriptions from local benefactors. Of note was £5000 donated by Donald Smith, 1st Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal, a son of Forres who was instrumental in the creation of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Leancoil Trust is working to bring Leancoil back into community ownership and create an innovative health and wellbeing facility, breathing new life into this special place.



## The Witches Stone



The Witches Stone lies at the foot of Cluny Hill, just metres from the police station. It is a stark reminder of Scotland's brutal witch-hunting past. It marks the site where a suspected witch met a violent and excruciating end.



# Programme of Events, Talks and Activities in Forres

## May – September 2024

The programme of activities and events will be subject to change and for further information on other activities contact the Forres Heritage Information Hub at Forres Town Hall.

info@forresarea.org / 01309 674388

## May

### 5 Forres Theme Day

Showcases vintage, veteran, and classic vehicles.  
**Grant Park. Opens to the public at 10.30am**



## June

### 1 Sir Alexander Grant and his gifting of Grant Park to the people of Forres

Historian Molly Carmichael speaks about the famous creator of the digestive biscuit.  
**Tolbooth Courtroom. 7pm**  
www.falconermuseum.co.uk  
www.forresheritage.co.uk

A Talk



### 1-9 Forres Scottish Week

A week-long celebration of all things Scottish. A huge array of events in and around Forres including a concert, walks, talks, and shows.

### 6 Colourful Cluny Run

An event where the joggers get totally covered in coloured powders.  
**Grant Park. 4.30pm**



### 7 Toun Mercat

A town market where the High Street becomes an entertainment centre of music, food and fun.  
**High Street. 6pm-9pm**

### 8 MacPiping Hot - The British Pipe Band Championships

4000 pipers, 120 pipe bands, Bars, Stalls and Fun Fair.  
**Grant Park. 9am-6pm**



MACPIPING  
HOT

20  
&  
22

### Legally Blonde the Musical

This production is the result of eight months of hard work by 32 Young people aged 12-18 years from all over Moray. Tickets and further information available soon.

**Forres Town Hall. Doors Open 7pm**  
www.highlandyouththeatre.co.uk



## July

### 6 Forres Highland Games

The Highland Games offers a fun afternoon for all the family. From caber tossing to hammer throwing enjoy a traditional Scottish experience. The day commences with a Pipe Band procession through the centre of Forres. Events include highland dancing, solo piping and massed pipe bands. Visitors can also enjoy craft and artisan food stalls and fairground attractions. Unique to the Forres Games is the Message Bike Race where spectators can turn participants and race on an old traditional message bike.

**Grant Park Forres. Gates Open 11am**  
Tickets can be purchased online or on the day.  
www.ticketsource.co.uk/forreshighlandgames

Free parking



### 17 Hugh Falconer's mysterious sabre-toothed cat: "Megantereon" from the foothills of the Himalaya

Dr Chris Stimpson, Oxford University Museum of Natural History, speaks about some of Hugh Falconer's most exciting finds.

**Tolbooth Courtroom. 7pm**  
www.falconermuseum.co.uk  
www.forresheritage.co.uk

A Talk



Forres  
Highland  
Games

## August

### 1 Celebrating 152 years since the Falconer Museum first opened its doors to the public

Tea with Hugh Falconer: Guest speakers, copious amounts of tea and other nourishing contributions to a festive morning.

**Town Hall. 11am**

### Birthday Bash

Cutting and sharing of the birthday cake, refreshments, live music, games for children of all ages. Including a **Historic Costume Competition**. Come as a persona from the era of Hugh Falconer (1808 – 1865).

**Museum Square between the Falconer Museum and the Tolbooth. 3pm-5pm**

**Awards show at 5pm**  
www.falconermuseum.co.uk

### 9 & 10 Annie the Musical

The Summer Theatre School of 40 children and young people aged 8-18 years, will take this musical from script to stage in just 5 days. Tickets and further information available soon.

**Forres Town Hall. Doors Open 7pm**  
www.highlandyouththeatre.co.uk

### 24 Grant Park 100

100 years since the gifting of Grant Park to the people of Forres, join us to celebrate the centenary of Grant Park and experience have-a-go activities, games, music, crafts, demonstrations, talks, performances, funfair and competitions including some featuring the beloved digestive biscuit.

**Grant Park. 11am-5pm**  
Full details at www.grantpark100.com

Free Entry



Free parking



## September

### 7 Pride in Moray

Parade down the High Street to Grant Park where there will be further events and activities.



### 7 Doors Open Day

Doors Open Days is Scotland's largest free festival that celebrates places and stories, new and old. Various buildings in and around Forres will be open.  
www.doorsopendays.org.uk



### 20 & 29 Findhorn Bay Festival

Music - Theatre - Dance - Exhibitions - Tours - Talks - Family Events. A spectacular 10-day celebration of arts and culture that challenge, inspire and delight radiating from the heart of Moray in the towns and villages around the bay of Findhorn.

Programme and booking at www.findhornbayfestival.com

Findhorn  
Bay  
Festival



## Other Activities Planned

FILM  
FORRES  
PRESENTS

A dedicated film club for cinema enthusiasts offering access to rare, unusual, and non-mainstream screenings. Monthly, midweek offerings in the Town Hall and Tolbooth Courtroom.

For further information [www.filmforres.co.uk](http://www.filmforres.co.uk)

For more specific event information please visit the specific event website.





Nelson's Tower



Town Hall



Grant Park



St Laurence's Church



Thomson Monument



Dallas Dhu Distillery



Falconer Museum



Leancoill



War Memorial



Mercat Cross



Forres in Bloom



Tolbooth

### FINDHORN BAY FESTIVAL

20 - 29 SEPTEMBER 2024

A spectacular 10-day celebration of arts and culture, radiating from the heart of Moray that challenge, inspire and delight

Programme and booking at [findhornbayfestival.com](http://findhornbayfestival.com)

Presented by **FINDHORN BAY ARTS**

MUSIC  
THEATRE  
DANCE  
EXHIBITIONS  
TALKS  
CIRCUS  
FAMILY EVENTS

Image: Benjamin Franklin Bay Festival 2022, Photo: Mike Reynolds

SUPPORTED BY LOTTERY FUNDED

### THE HOUSE OF AUTOMATA

MAGIC & MECHANICAL LIFE

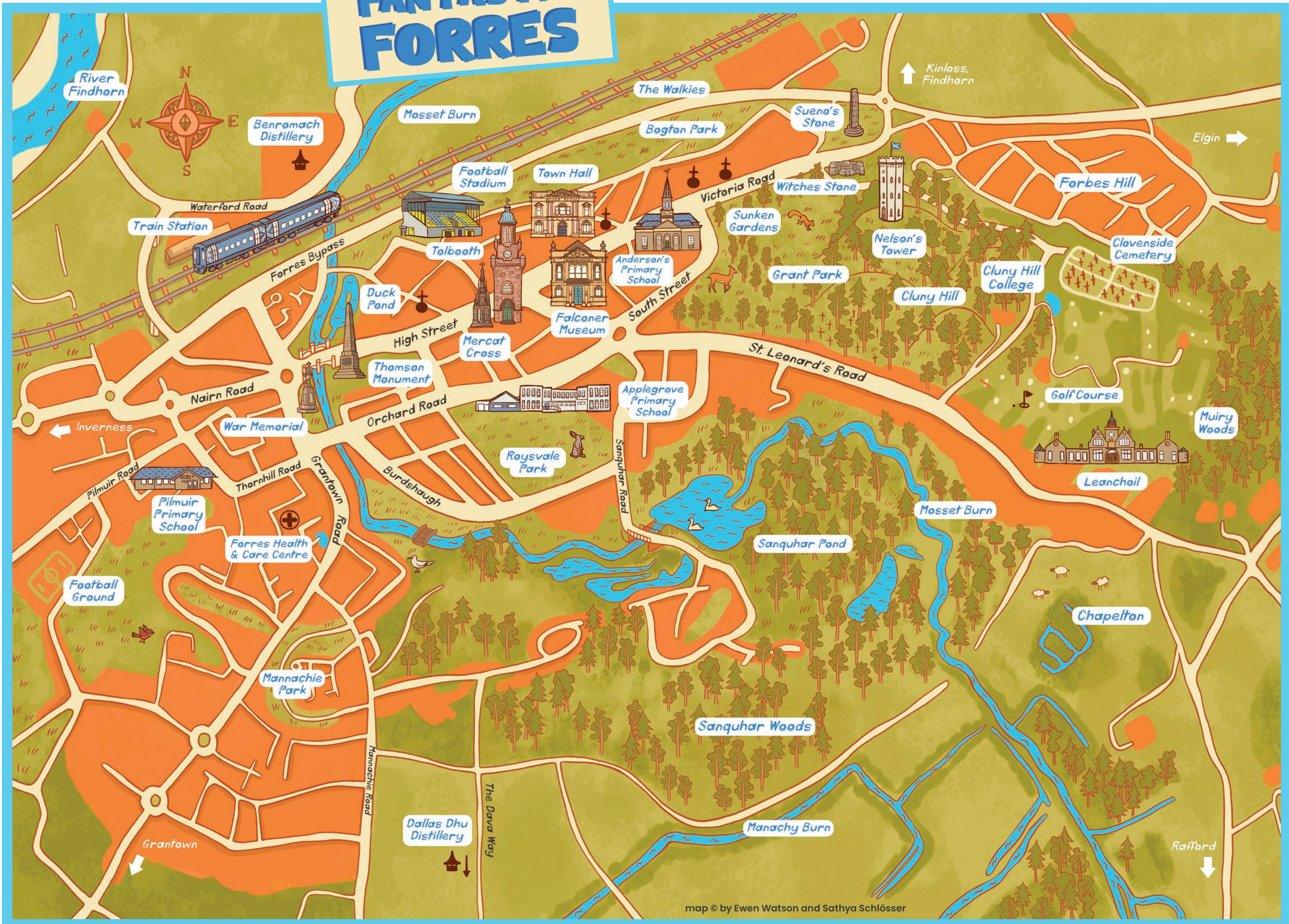
MOVING FIGURES FROM THE PARISIAN GOLDEN AGE, MODERN MAKERS & MECHANICAL MARVELS THE UK'S LARGEST COLLECTION OF AUTOMATA

EXHIBITION - GIFT SHOP - RESTORATION WORKSHOP

OPEN TIMES  
THURSDAY & FRIDAY 10 - 4pm,  
SATURDAY 10 - 1pm  
times may vary check website  
[WWW.THEHOUSEOFAUTOMATA.COM](http://WWW.THEHOUSEOFAUTOMATA.COM)

THE HOUSE OF AUTOMATA  
32 HIGH STREET, FORRES, IV36 1DB  
(ENTRANCE JUST OFF THE HIGH STREET)

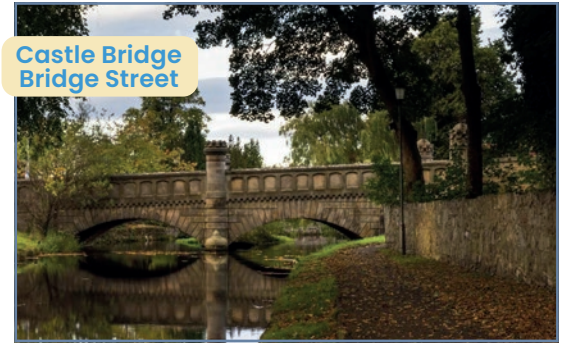
[magic@thehouseofautomata.com](mailto:magic@thehouseofautomata.com)  
07790 71097



map © by Ewen Watson and Sathya Schlösser



Sueno's Stone



Castle Bridge Bridge Street

### FORRES HIGHLAND GAMES

Saturday 6th July, Grant Park, Forres  
Gates 11.00am

Traditional Heavy Events | Massed Pipe Bands | Solo Piping  
Solo Drumming | Cycling | Track & Field | 10k Road Race |  
Licensed Bar | Highland Dancing | Side Stalls

Early Bird Adult £5, Children 5 to 17 years £4,  
Price from June 1: Adult £10, Children 5-17 years £5  
Children Under 5 FREE | Free Parking

A fun day out for all the family

Competition under UKA, SAS & SCU rules  
More info, tickets and entry forms from: [www.forreshighlandgames.com](http://www.forreshighlandgames.com)

Forres Highland Games is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation with Registered Charity No. SC046899

HIGHLAND YOUTH THEATRE SENIORS Present

## LEGALLY BLONDE JR

Book by Heather Hach  
Music & Lyrics by Laurence O'Keefe Neil Benjamin

TICKETS ON SALE SOON!  
Tickets on sale from [www.highlandyouththeatre.co.uk](http://www.highlandyouththeatre.co.uk)

FORRES TOWN HALL  
20TH- 22ND JUNE 2024

Based in Moray and Inverness we work to provide a safe, fun and creative environment for 3-18yrs to shine!

[info@highlandyouththeatre.co.uk](mailto:info@highlandyouththeatre.co.uk)  
[highlandyouththeatre.co.uk](http://highlandyouththeatre.co.uk)

07729 858445



# Acknowledgements and Contact Information

The Forres Connected – Culture and Heritage Project is led by Forres Area Community Trust (FACT) and the Forres Heritage Trust (FHT) in collaboration with other groups in Forres. The aim is to bring you an exciting programme of activities including guided walks, tours, talks, traditional entertainment events and information on our amazing culture and heritage.



- The Map and Illustrations are taken from the Fantastic Forres Book by Ewen Watson and Sathya Schlösser. **fantasticforres.com**
- We would like to thank Visit Moray Speyside and Forres Local for the use of some of their photographs.
- We'd also like to thank **tailormadeitineraries.com** for 'The Witches Stone' photo.

As part of the project a Heritage Information Hub has been established at Forres Town Hall.

Opening times 10am to 3pm, Monday to Friday.  
01309 674388 / [info@forresarea.org](mailto:info@forresarea.org)

[forresarea.org](http://forresarea.org)

[forresheritage.co.uk](http://forresheritage.co.uk)



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NEWS AND EVENTS ON OUR  
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ForresConnectedCultureandHeritage

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Funded by  
UK Government

