

# Rosemount Local Area Trail

Guide to Aberdeen's Rosemount



#aberdeentrails





### Other Guides

Several artefacts from Rosemount are now displayed in the Duthie Park.

These are covered in detail in the **Duthie Park Trail & Guide**.

### Accessibility

This trail is accessible but has occasional steep parts or uneven ground.

### Transport

This trail is intended to be walked or cycled. The following buses run between locations on the trail and central Aberdeen:

**First Bus 3** – South Mount Street, Rosemount Place

**First Bus 8** – Skene Square and Westburn Road



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Welcome to Rosemount, a bustling quarter of Aberdeen with shops, cafes and restaurants and an interesting history. Historically part of the area was gifted to the burgesses and people of Aberdeen by a grateful King Robert the Bruce in 1315. Until Aberdeen was extended in 1862, Rosemount was outwith the city boundary. Before Rosemount became part of the city, the area was open fields with a few substantial gentlemen's houses and farm buildings. Enjoy exploring Rosemount and discovering what the area has to offer.

**Above:** Rosemount Place from Watson Street.

### Picture Credits

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1: Courtesy of Patricia Newman, reproduced from her book *Old Rosemount* by Stenlake Publishers

3, 6, 10, 11, 12, 18, 21 (top right), 35, 36 Patricia Newman

8 Friends of Victoria Park and Westburn Park

1868 Ordnance Survey maps at entries 23, 28, 34 & 37 reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Scotland

Above, 2, 4, 14, 15 (lower), 16 (inset) 19, 21-23, 25-27, 29, 40-43:

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## 1 Victoria Park Lodge

At the entrance to Victoria Park in Watson Street stands a quaint lodge. It was built at a cost of £400 to house the head gardener, Robert Walker and his family. It was constructed in 1873, two years after the park was opened. The lodge is of granite with a grey slate roof. Of particular interest is the fish scale pattern of the roof slates and the ornate barge boards and chimney pots.



## 2 Victoria Park

This was the first formal public park in Aberdeen and was created by Aberdeen Council from 13 acres of wet pasture land called Glennie's Parks. Over £4,000 of the Common Good Fund was used to finance the park which was opened in 1871 to provide an area for recreation and to improve the quality of life for the townspeople. It continues to be a much loved area of peace and tranquillity for Aberdonians. Today it is still maintained by Aberdeen City Council Parks and Gardens ably assisted by volunteers from the Friends of Victoria and Westburn Parks.



## 3 Friends' Wildflower Site

The Friends of Victoria and Westburn Parks is an active volunteer group which works towards the improvement of these two greenspaces. Formerly the site of the glasshouses, frameyards and bothy, this area of the park has been adopted by the Friends' group with an emphasis on environmental and biodiversity management. The Friends have also been instrumental in suggesting a Rosemount area trail and helping bring this booklet into being.



## 4 Victoria Park Fountain

On the central path through the park stands a magnificent fountain. It is constructed of granite from fourteen local granite quarries and designed by John Bridgeford Pirie who was born in Aberdeen in 1848, the son of a sea captain. In 1881, the fountain was presented to the people of the City by the Granite Polishers and Builders of Aberdeen. It was estimated to have cost £500 (around £100,000 today). The outer basin is 45 feet in diameter with further basins above it reducing in size with the uppermost tiers made of copper. It is hoped that funds can be sourced to get water flowing through the fountain again.

## 5 Centenary Stone

To commemorate the park's centenary in 1971, Aberdeen's 36 councillors each planted a tree in the park following which a granite stone was erected to mark the occasion.



## 6 Trees and planting

As you walk through the park, you will see many fine trees including Copper Beech, Silver Birch, Horse Chestnut, Oak, Maple Yew Limes and Poplars among others. There are flower beds planted annually and ornamental shrubs of many varieties. A group of local volunteers help Council gardeners to maintain and improve the appearance of the park.

## 7 Tom's Well

This natural spring was used to water the livestock of the old pastures. Later, as a 19th century well, it was topped by a miniature castle on a small knoll above it and children believed that it was inhabited by little Tom Thumb himself! The water-sputting gargoyle from the front of the well is now in Duthie Park's Winter Gardens.



## 8 Sensory Garden

Next to the fountain and surrounded by an ornate fence lies a garden specifically designed for folk who benefit from the strong scents, colours and interesting textures of the plants there. Known as 'Sunny Valley', this garden was inspired by Madam Isabel Murray known to generations of Aberdonians who she taught to dance. Madam Murray received a Civic Trust Award following its completion in 1967. A statue, *Peace*, which used to stand here is now in the Duthie Park Winter Garden's Floral Courtyard.



## 9 Rhododendron Dell

Stimulated by a gift by Mr. Francis Edmond in 1890, the Rhododendron Dell became a notable amenity in Victoria Park in the 1960s. Incorporating dozens of varieties of rhododendron and azalea, this circular garden now displays numerous mature and elegant specimens and attracts many admirers, especially in late spring.

## 10 Victoria Park Faith Tree

Near the South West corner of the path, there is a maple tree with a granite plaque below it. The tree was planted in 1963 by people of the Baha'i faith to remember the creation of the Universal House of Justice. The Baha'i faith seeks to exert a positive influence on the welfare of humankind. The plaque reads 'Ye are the leaves of one tree'.





## 11 Argyll Place

This street was laid out in 1873 with the houses facing the park being built of grey and pink granite. John Bridgeford Pirie was the architect who designed many of these properties and the architecture is especially interesting with decorative paterae or rosettes on the pink granite friezes.



## 12 Mile End

At the top of Argyll Place at its junction with Rosemount Place is an area called Mile End, so called as the first milestone to or from Aberdeen used to be found here. Beechgrove Terrace is a continuation of Rosemount Place and it is the home of the BBC's original Beechgrove Garden. Loanhead Granite Quarry was sited near here which was one of the first organised quarries in Aberdeenshire and provided stone for the Auld Hoose at Robert Gordon's College and the Old Blackfriars in the Castlegate. The building at the junction was originally the Bank of Scotland but in December 2017 opened as a restaurant and gin bar.

## 13 Plaque to William Alexander

The writer and Journalist, 1826-1894, lived here. Born near Pitcaple, Aberdeenshire, in 1852 he joined the staff of the *North of Scotland Gazette*, later the *Aberdeen Free Press*, becoming editor in 1870. He published novels serially in that newspaper and is remembered as the author of *Johnny Gibb of Gushetneuk*. The house itself also takes the name Gushetneuk.



## 14 Craigie Loanings

This street running north west is part of the old road system and led to land once owned by Alexander Crag in the 15th century. Number 2 Hamilton Place used to be known as Craigie Bank. It stands on the land at the top of Craigie Loanings. A loaning is a local name for a lane and Craigie is a diminutive of Crag.

## 15 Mary Garden



Memorial garden dedicated to the opera singer, born 1874, at 35 Charlotte Street. Later, the family moved to 41 Dee Street where a commemorative plaque is located. Her parents, both from Aberdeen, moved the family to the United States when she was nine. Mary's talent for singing became evident and wealthy sponsors funded her training firstly in Chicago and then Paris. In 1900, she joined the Opera Comique as an operatic soprano and this was the start of an illustrious career in opera houses in France and the USA, becoming a citizen there aged 50. She returned to Aberdeen in 1940 and Belgrave Terrace, in 1943. Although still relatively little known in her native Aberdeen, Mary's US legacy is considerable – particularly in Chicago where her stewardship as director of the Opera Association is still remembered fondly. She died in 1967, aged 92, at Daviot near Inverurie where she spent her last 30 years. Her death was noted in poems by Hugh MacDiarmid and Allen Ginsberg.





## 16 Wallfield Crescent

This street is lined with four storey flats.

Originally, most of the blocks had WCs either outside in the 'backie' or in the lobby on the ground floor. Over time, brick full height extensions were built to accommodate WCs on each half landing. Nowadays, space has been found within each flat for internal plumbing. The inset shows the original Wallfield House on Rosemount Place, thought to date from the 18th century.



## 17 Rosemount Place

Formerly known as the Stocket Road, this popular local shopping area is a busy thoroughfare. This is the area's main high street of tenements, two storey houses, food shops, cafés and independent traders. There are big chain supermarkets as well as local butcher, fishmonger, sweet shop and Aberdeen's only cheese shop. There are a range of take aways as well as cafés and an ice cream parlour. The street also hosts gift shops, a comic shop, picture framer, music tuition centre and behind, a part time art studio/exhibition space.



## 18 Tenements

Victorian tenement flats are common here many having shops on the ground floor. Date Stones can be seen at the top of some indicating the year of build.



## 19 Rosemount School

Rosemount School was built in 1884 to serve the needs of the expanding population. During WWI, the building was used as a military hospital. It is now the thriving Rosemount Community Centre which runs various yoga and exercise sessions along with classes for languages, creative writing, arts and crafts.

## 20 Rutherford Church

Built largely by public subscription by the local residents, this church was named after Samuel Rutherford, a 17th century non-conformist preacher who was banished to Aberdeen because of his beliefs. It has been deconsecrated and now fulfils a variety of functions.





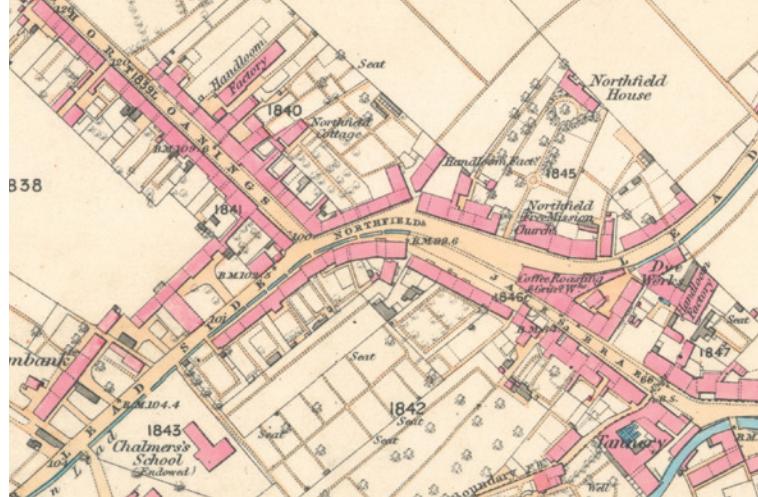
## 21 Rosemount Trams

High up on several tenement walls and the church can be seen tram rosettes. These held the tensioning wires for the electric tram cables. Above left is a Union Terrace, Rosemount & Mile-End tram and below its predecessor, a horse drawn Castle Street, Rosemount, Mile End omnibus. Hutcheon Street Station was also nearby (see entry 33).



## 22 Short Loanings

Short Loanings – so called because it is shorter than Craigie Loanings. Some of the original houses are seen below.



## 23 Leadside Road

This street ran alongside the mill lede or leet that powered water mills in the area. This was part of an extensive water management scheme that originated centuries ago. The lede is the thin blue line curving through this 1868 Ordnance Survey map and here named Gilcomston Lead. Below are some of Leadside's original tenements.



## 24 CR Stone

Harking back to ancient times, this is a March Stone. These were used to mark out the boundaries or marches of the city. CR stands for City Regality or



City Royalty. These inner stones mark the boundary of the medieval Royal Burgh of Aberdeen. Rosemount was just outside the burgh. The full story of Aberdeen's Freedom Lands and March Stones is told in the [Boundary Stones Trail](#).

## 25 Richmond Street

At the junction of Richmond Street and Leadside Road used to stand Richmond Knitwear (J & A Picken) a factory making suits, jumpers and dresses. As well as knitting new clothes, they even re-sleeved and re-cuffed garments to prolong their life. Richmond Street and adjoining Kintore Place are notable for retaining their original cassie stones (cobbles), most likely the same ones seen below.



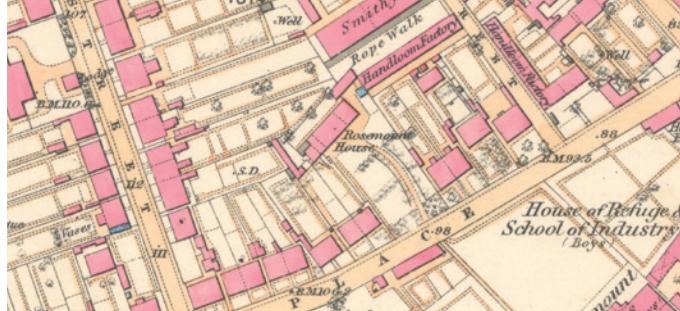
## 26 Rosemount Square

Also the former name of Mount Street and South Mount Street. Before WWII, this was the site of a preserved fish and meat factory owned by C & E Morton. Later occupied by Thomas 'Cocky' Hunter who sold second hand goods – 'anything from a pin to an anchor'. After a catastrophic fire, Cocky moved to Castle Terrace and the City Council built these modernist flats, completed in 1945. It is a marriage of continental design and Rubislaw granite with striking carved bas-relief sculptures *Wind* and *Rain* by Thomas Bayliss Huxley-Jones. See the Sculpture & Curios Trail for details.



## 27 Rosemount Viaduct

The viaduct by William Bolton, 1886, impressively bridges the Denburn valley. The street of the same name brings Rosemount into the city centre, leading down the hill to some of Aberdeen's best loved buildings. Part of the original Rosemount Footbridge today crosses the upper and middle lakes at Duthie Park.



## 28 Rosemount House (no access)

The area's name comes from Rosemount House which still stands behind the tenements on the north side of Rosemount Place, between Mount Street and Forbes Street.



## 29 Skene Square School

The school was founded in the early 19th century by Dr John Brown who built it in his garden. The current buildings show evidence of school design at the end of that century including, for example, separate entrances for boys and girls. A room has been reconstructed and equipped in the style of an Aberdeen classroom as it would have been in Victorian times. Please note this is not open to the public except on occasions such as Doors Open Day.

## 30 Plaque to John Phillip

Born at 13 Skene Square, since demolished, the plaque is at No.21, above head height. John Phillip, 1817-1867 came from a poor background and reputedly began as a house painter and glazier. He painted Scottish genre scenes, in the tradition of Sir David Wilkie. Queen Victoria favoured his work and he enjoyed many Royal commissions. In 1897 his painting *La Gloria: A Spanish Wake* became the most expensive picture ever purchased by the National Galleries of Scotland. Aberdeen Art Gallery holds almost 50 of his oil paintings and many drawings in its collection. Above: *John Phillip* attributed to John Philip © National Portrait Gallery, London.





### 31 Rosemount Terrace

This terrace, laid out in 1829, was the first to carry the Rosemount name. It still retains its original granite flagstones.



### 32 Rosemount Parish Church

This Gothic style church, which opened in 1877, was designed by William Smith, 1875-77. Smith was the City Architect for Aberdeen City between 1852 and 1891. He is best known for being the architect of Balmoral Castle. The church features an unfinished tower and sits distinctively on a prominent triangular island site. This was the former home of CLAN Cancer Support who moved next door to Westburn Park and is now the Father's House Church.

### 33 Hutcheon Street Station

This Great North of Scotland Railway station was opened in 1887 and closed in 1937. The next stations on the Denburn Valley Line were Kittybrewster and Schoolhill. The building has since been a drum shop and earlier a sharpening business, one possible source of the distinctive markings on the bridge parapet, also attributed to fish workers sharpening their blades while waiting for the train. The fancy 'lamppost' opposite is actually a ventilation shaft for the railway tunnel.



### 34 Mount Street (and South Mount Street)

These street names reference the hill or mount on which Rosemount is built. Mount Cottage at the Westburn Road end had a fountain which is now in the Tropical House of Duthie Park Winter Gardens.



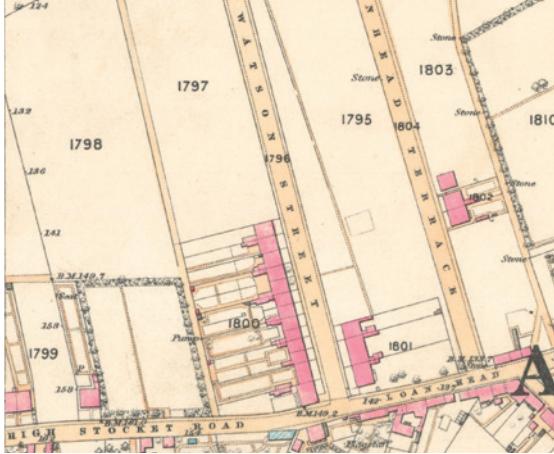
### 35 View Terrace

Aberdeen Council gave permission for the creation of this street in the 1870s. It was built on the garden ground of Viewplace House, a mid 19th century house still existing as a nursery. It is typical of its period – symmetrical, built of granite ashlar with more recent additions.

### 36 Loanhead Walk

At the foot of View Terrace is Loanhead Walk – another remnant of times gone by with houses predating the Victorian era.





### 37 Loanhead Place

Although the quarry which gave these streets their name is some distance away, in the 1869 map above, that part of modern Rosemount Place between Loanhead Terrace and approximately Wallfield Crescent was known as Loanhead – the top of the lane. The High Stocket Road ran westwards from this point.

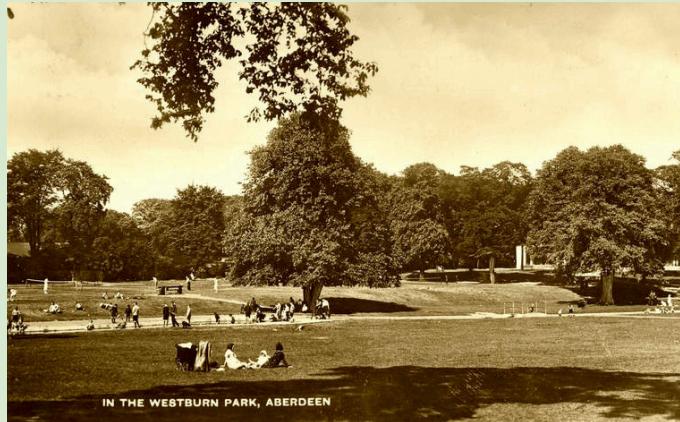


### 38 Watson Street

This street was built on land owned by the Shoemaker's Incorporation and was named after a prominent member of that trade.

### 39 Plaque to Christian Elizabeth Farquharson-Kennedy

Born in 1870 in Old Aberdeen, she trained as an elementary school teacher. She was an ardent socialist, becoming a director of the Northern Cooperative Society and member of the Scottish School Boards Association. She attended the International Socialist Congress in Paris in 1900. Her husband was the socialist politician Tom Kennedy. Latterly, she lived at 97 Westburn Road where she is commemorated by this plaque.



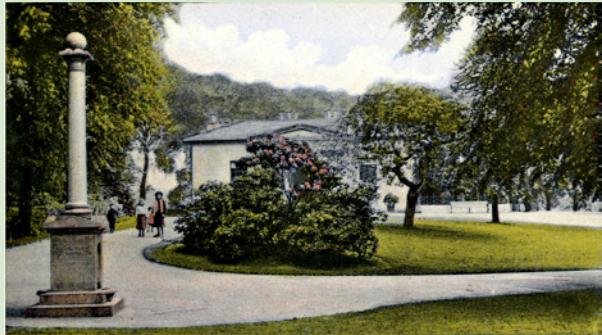
### 40 Westburn Park

The 25-acre estate was bought by Aberdeen Town Council in 1900. The lands, which had in early times been used for sheep grazing, were now converted into a public park. The vegetable garden became a recreation ground; the stables and carriage sheds now stored tools; the walled flower garden and orchard were laid out as a bowling green. From its beginning, the park has always featured active recreation, originally cricket, tennis, and croquet in the summer, and hockey and netball in winter. Today's park houses a number of sports facilities including an indoor and outdoor bowling pavilion which hosted the World Bowls' Championship in 1984. There is also a tennis centre with indoor and outdoor courts, a basketball court and a skate park. The park also has an adventure playground and a miniature road system complete with tiny traffic signs.

### 41 Gilcomston Burn

Historically known as the West Burn Of Gilcomstoun, it gave its name to Westburn House, Westburn Park and Westburn Road. The original narrow stream was widened into large pools where children could play and swim in the summer months. The area around the burn is designed to flood and hold the water to stop nearby houses from flooding.





#### 42 Temperance Drinking Fountain

This drinking fountain is engraved with quotes discouraging alcohol consumption. It was originally in Guild Street, approximately at today's taxi entrance/exit to Aberdeen Station. The wall behind – where The Station Hotel is now – was part of Hadden's Factory. The Criterion buildings, Tivoli Theatre, and beyond are still there.



#### 43 Westburn House

Westburn House (below) was designed in 1839 by the architect, Archibald Simpson, for David Chalmers of the printing family who published the *Aberdeen Journal* newspaper. It is a single storey building, with a portico of Doric pillars, constructed of brick with a stucco finish. The house was first used as refreshment rooms and the veranda, with its wrought iron columns, was added to allow people to enjoy their teas and coffees in the open air. Since then, it has had many uses including a clinic and meeting place for playgroups. There is currently a fund raising campaign to help restore it.



#### 44 Cornhill Hospital Grounds

The original building was a small hospital for psychiatric patients known as the Aberdeen Lunatic Asylum; later the Aberdeen Royal Lunatic Asylum and the more modern name of Royal Cornhill Hospital. It is the main treatment and training psychiatric hospital in the North-east of Scotland. Parts of the site have been developed for housing but the grounds still retain an open aspect with lawns, wildflower fields and mature trees.

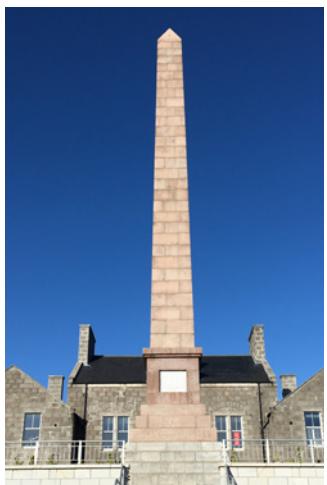


#### 45 Elmhill House

This grand building was part of Aberdeen's then asylum and has now been converted to flats.

#### 46 Forbes of Newe Obelisk

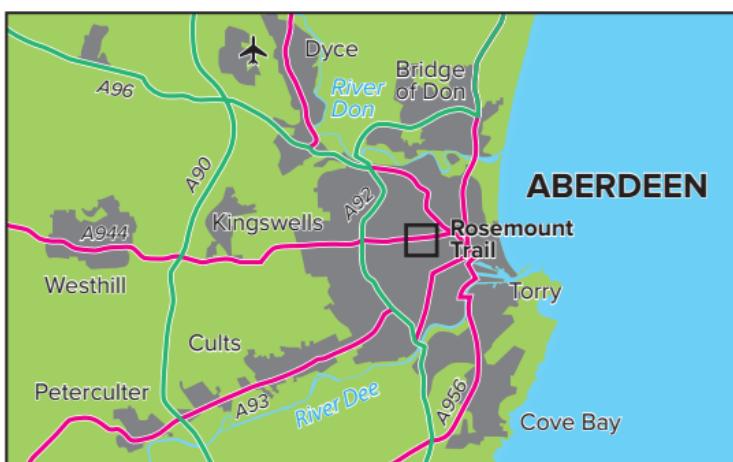
Moved slightly from its original location and dedicated to Sir Charles Forbes, Baronet of Newe in Strathdon, 1773-1849, who bequested £10,000 to the building of the asylum. Erected by public subscription of the inhabitants of the city and county of Aberdeen. The building behind the obelisk was part of the original hospital.





# Rosemount

## Guide to Aberdeen's Rosemount



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This is one in a series of themed trails in Aberdeen City, visit the website to see more: [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/trails](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/trails)

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