

Portlethen Moss
www.portlethen-moss.org.uk

My wife and I have lived in Portlethen for over six years and in that time we have been intrigued by the area of trees and rough vegetation at the western fringes of our town.

Every now and then there is an article in the Clochandighter from Denise Martin asking for volunteers to help clear up this area and advising that it is hoped that it will get Local Nature Reserve status – but I have never been one to volunteer for anything, so I thought I would try to help out in the best way I can, create a website for the “world” to visit!

I contacted Denise, asking whether or not there was a map or layout of paths through the Moss. I received one back almost immediately! So my next task was to get out there ... with a camera of course !



That evening the four of us headed out, me, my wife and our two boys (ages five and three). Heading into the Moss from Bruntland Road (just after the last house on the right as you head towards the dual carriageway) you go through a “weedy” area followed by small conifers and gorse. The path leads onto an area where the gorse and trees were on fire a few months ago – but it is truly startling the regenerating ability of these plants! A large area was simply black skeletal bushes, but small green gorse “sticks” were poking out of the sooty soil and at the base of some of the black angular trees were bright green leafy formations.

Heading onwards we came to a peaty, heather covered, expanse. A lot of the Moss is like this, so it is possible to get good views all around. The houses of Portlethen can be seen to the east of the Moss and the vehicles travelling on the dual carriageway on the other side can be heard – this amazing juxtaposition of old (the Moss) and new is great!

Continuing around (always heading clockwise) we pass the Boswell estate. This estate was built in the late ‘90’s and swallowed up around a third of what little remained of the Moss. We may only have a quarter left of the Moss when comparing what was available a century ago! Yes the houses needed to be built – but hopefully what is left now will be there forever ... we just have to keep it in good condition!

Once past the Boswell estate, the path deteriorates somewhat – but if more people access the area, the paths will open up quite nicely! A second entrance to the Moss appears here, to the left, at a bridge, but this is quite closed up by large weeds and nettles. Struggling onwards, over another bridge and through more vegetation we come to a real, laid, path and third entrance. This is beside an area containing possibly the largest houses in Portlethen – which is possibly why there is a nice path running here – but what is really disturbing is that this is a spot where there is dumped household waste. Concrete, tree roots and linoleum are some of the items here – not nice! I must point out that this location would appear to be the only one where there is this problem of dumped waste. There are the occasional drinks can or polystyrene “chipper” tray, but on the whole the Moss is remarkably “clean” – apart from everyone’s worst nightmare ... doggy poo! I guess this whole area is a haven for dogs and dog owners? They can go for a nice walk just a couple of minutes from home – well, for goodness sake, clean up after yourselves! My youngest was looking at this great environment all around, so wasn’t really looking where his feet were going, so fell over numerous times, I shudder to think what would have happened if he had squelched into yuck !

We eventually came to the last bridge and soon after this re-joined the original path, close to Bruntland Road. The whole “adventure” had taken 50 minutes – travelling at three year old leg pace (plus falling down time) ... and both boys thought the whole thing was “fantastic” and my wife jokingly complained about my never having brought her along to this wonderful place.

My thoughts on the Moss? I cannot believe that such an amazing amenity hasn't been given Local Nature Reserve status yet and I do hope that once this happens, members of the public will respect the area for posterity! Vandalism of any sort should not be accepted! If this habitat is ruined there will be no going back, let's enjoy what we have here on our doorstep!

Ken Watson, September 2006



For further information, there is an action group called the Moss Preservation Group, contact is Denise Martin - d.martin@abcol.ac.uk