



SPRING NEWSLETTER 2011

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

For many years now, the club has carried a small bag of first-aid items on the bus each outing. I don't recall a great deal of use being made of it apart from the occasional plaster or blister pack. No one has been allocated responsibility for carrying the bag on walks and indeed, if an accident occurred on the hill, the probability of the person with the first-aid bag being around would be minimal. After discussion, the committee took the view that most members either carry their own first-aid kit or will have access to fellow members' kits, and we should therefore discontinue taking the first-aid bag with us on outings. The bus has a first-aid box on board.

At the start of the new season, we have the opportunity to check our personal equipment, including the need for a first-aid kit. Many outdoor retailers stock a variety of first-aid kits containing the basic requirements, i.e. different sized plasters, sterile dressings, triangular bandages, eye pads, safety pins and disposable gloves for good hygiene. Brand names such as Gilert and Lifesystems sell ready-made first-aid kits and St John Ambulance and the British Red Cross offer good advice online.

The committee recommend you to carry a first-aid kit in your pack, so why not take advantage of discounts available at various outlets mentioned below to purchase what could be an important item of gear.

Annual General Meeting

Around 25 attended the AGM on Wednesday 9 February 2011 in the Sportsman's Club, 11 Queen's Road. The following were elected:

President Frank Kelly
Vice President Graham Sangster
Secretary Heather Eddie
Treasurer Rosemary Kelly
Booking Secretary Gilbert McCurdy
Committee Members

Hamish Clunas, David Garwood, Kris Howard,
Janet Rickard, Alan Wallace, Fiona Wallace.

Auditors Grace McCurdy, Margaret Cameron

The treasurer presented the year-end balance sheet, showing a healthy surplus of almost £700 on the year's activities, compared to a small loss the previous year. Last year's AGM recommendation to ensure a gain on every bus outing last year except those charged at the maximum fare, helped the overall situation. Admin costs are likely to rise in the coming year, as we no longer benefit from association with BT.

Bus costs for the 2011/12 season had again increased but were considered reasonable in view of rising fuel costs. There was no recommendation to change annual subscriptions, £13 for adults and £6 for under-sixteens. Members were reminded to book early to ensure a seat, and to contact the booking secretary with any cancellations so as to free up seats for anyone on the waiting list. Discussion followed on the program of outings, which were approved with minor amendments to grid references.

The meeting approved our affiliations to North East Mountain Trust and the Ramblers' Association, and donations to Braemar Mountain Rescue Team and the Mountain Rescue Association for Scotland.

Discounts

Discounts are available at the following retailers on production of your 2011 membership card, which you receive on paying your annual subscription:

Blacks, George Street 10%
Craigdon Sports, 5 St Andrew Street 10%
Millets, Union Street 10%
Nevisport, 186 George Street 10% (selected lines)
Hilltrek, Aboyne 10%
Graham Tiso, 1 John St..... Up to 25% on Tiso club evenings only. The next will be on Tuesday 10 May, 6:00pm - 8:30pm. Details will circulate on buses.

Dates for your diary:

Thursday 28 April 2011—Claik Night, 7:30pm, Sportsman's Club, 11 Queen's Road (stovies, tea & coffee, a short quiz and some photoes). Tickets £5 from the secretary or committee member.

Saturday 21 to Saturday 28 May 2011—Week's hike at Ratagan Youth Hostel.

June 2011—informal meal and social evening—details later.

October 2011—informal meal and social event, probably at the Royal Hotel, Bath Street—details later.

November 2011—picture and video show of club outings—details later.

Frank

EDITOR'S CHAT

We hope all enjoy this Newsletter, and if you've any interesting articles or stories with a hillwalking theme, please send details to Editor Kris Howard or Secretary Heather Eddie for the next issue. We thank all contributors to this edition. The photoes were supplied by Graham, Frank and Kris or borrowed off the Internet.

For brevity, we reserve the right to edit submitted texts, but make every effort to retain the author's meaning.

Weather Forecasts

Met Office (Tayside) 09068 505323
Mountain Call East 09068 505324
Mountain Call West 09068 505325
Mountain Call Caithness/Sutherland ... 09068 505326
AA Roadwatch 09003 444900
BBC1 about 6:58pm
Radio Scotland Mon - Fri 7:05pm
Sat 7:04am, 10:04pm
Sun 7:04am, 8:04pm

Mountain Weather Information Service
www.mwis.org.uk/areas.php

Scottish Avalanche Information Service
www.sais.gov.uk

Midges www.midgeforecast.co.uk

Finally, if you have a good source, let us know.
krisbhoward@gmail.com

Ed.

REPORTERS' NOTES

10 October 2010: Drumfergue to Grouse Inn

The forecast was for overcast and light-wind conditions but basically dry for most of the day. We left Aberdeen with 27 (after three late cancellations and three no-shows) and stopped at Alford for a

comfort break and to collect Margaret Leslie. Gordon, our driver, soon had us at Drumfergue on the east edge of Clashindarroch Forest.



On Allt Deveron Path

Five remained on the bus till the pick-up point for circular walks from the Grouse Inn. There is always an alternative for those who don't fancy doing the route sheet walks. Wendy Suttar, a non-walker who came with Jim Henderson, painted a beautiful picture from the Grouse Inn looking towards the River Deveron—she has a real talent!

Initially we navigated Clashindarroch Forest's maze of tracks with little difficulty, soon emerging onto open ground to the west. A certain amount of heather-bashing and navigating overgrown paths was needed to follow our route over remote hills west of the forest. After some real *break-an-ankle* terrain in deep heather and tussock, we eventually took a welcome rest over lunch at Black Hill summit (505m).



**Christine, Alistair, Willie, Richard
Grouse Inn Footbridge**

Little blinks of sunshine kept our spirits high and we eventually descended on a good track to the Allt Deveron for a charming walk through delightful autumnal birch forest along the river to the Grouse Inn.

Tea & coffee were taken at the bus, as well as refreshments in the Inn. The Inn claims to offer over 200 different whiskies. Various drams were indulged in, but surprisingly, we departed on time and Gordon had us home on schedule.



Boarding the Bus after the Grouse Inn

Most thoroughly enjoyed this 10.5 mile walk over extremely remote ground, suggested by Margaret Leslie. Once again, this was an example of a member including a walk in the program. Please take note.

Graham

I did a variation on the recommended route. I followed forest tracks to emerge at NGR 415 315. (A shire boundary runs along the forest track.) A short heather-bash past a stags' wallow brought me to a farm track (NGR 412 312), which I descended to the farm of Hillock (of Echt). This is on an unclassified cul-de-sac, which I followed for a mile south west to a bridge over the Deveron. I stayed on the true right bank, and followed the Deveron upstream on green roads through attractive autumnal woodlands, to the Grouse Inn footbridge.

Kris

Friday 15 October: Royal Hotel Supper



Supper at Royal Hotel

We had our usual excellent turnout of members and friends for our annual informal supper, once again at the Bath Street Royal Hotel. Twentyeight turned

out to *claik an blether* on Club experiences. The restaurant did us proud once again—the food and service was to the usual high standard—and the *claik* was even better.



Alison, Fiona & Christine

It was good to see past and present members who had not been out with us on our fortnightly Sunday walks for some time. This social evening has always been great fun on AHC's social calendar—long may it continue! Thanks again to Heather for organising this highly popular event.

Graham

24 October: Stonyford to Invermark

All started on the Landrover track from Stonyford in Glen Lethnot. A new Landrover track, not yet shown on maps, turns off the recommended route, and most walkers followed this track onto the west shoulder of West Wirren. Another new track, this time shown on the newest maps, comes up onto the 514m West Wirren shoulder from Dalbrack Farm in Glen Esk.



Maule Monument on Hill of Rowen

I followed the original route, now becoming indistinct, to the Clash o Wirren, an interesting glacial meltwater channel. Having made slow progress through the Clash, once I reached the track on the north side, I elected to skip the detour to Tarfside, and instead, made straight for Dalbrack and Invermark.

Kris



John & Fiona at Maule Monument

7 November: Moss-side to Bogendreip

This was the last of our fortnightly walks for 2010, but what a turnout of walkers—we had a completely full bus for this outing. We welcomed Joe McGrath who had seen our walking program on the AHCW website. Gordon, our driver, had us at our start point near Moss-side for 9:30am, and we commenced walking on a crisp, clear morning.



Kerloch Summit Trig

Underfoot conditions could have been pretty messy on the inward tracks, but low overnight temperatures gave us solid ground. We climbed steadily up through forest to emerge onto a zigzag path to Kerloch summit trig, where we lunched with marvellous views in all directions. The distant Cairngorms were covered in snow, and the nearer tops

of Morven, Mt Keen and Mt Battock showed a white dusting around their summits.



At Kerloch Summit

Our descent track from Kerloch into the forest showed extreme sediment washout due to recent heavy rain [and poor road design—Ed.]. However, the path through Glen Dye forest was very pleasant and we soon reached our bus parked near the new Bridge of Bogendreip. Coffee & tea were ready on arrival and we departed on time.



Wendy's Painting

Wendy Suttar (not a walker) spent the day at the old bridge of Bogendreip, where she painted a beautiful picture.

Refreshments were taken at the Feughside Inn, where we chatted to our newcomer, and we arrived

home on time after a glorious nine-mile autumnal day in Lower Deeside.

Graham



Not a Forest Fire!

Clear skies overnight resulted in a keen frost. A little short of our starting point, a recently constructed angling pond was mirror-still, but disappointingly, time did not allow for a retreat to the pond to photograph reflections. We set out southwards into a blindingly low sun, which eventually compelled me to don my sun-hat! However, the frost was advantageous, having solidified what had been a very muddy track, *sharny dubs* heavily poached by cattle.



Club Moss in Profusion

Immediately inside the forest, there was a striking sight—the frost on the heather was evaporating or subliming in the sunshine but immediately condensing

out in billowing mist, with the appearance of an incipient forest fire.



Club Moss

Toward the summit of the track, we passed a bank where the dominant species was a creeping club moss—rather unusual.



Banchory from Kerloch

We had brilliant panoramas from the summit of Kerloch. It had become breezy, and the surface of the angling pond could be seen to be rough.



Frozen Drop

Inside the forest again, the spruce saplings were decorated with frozen drops on the ends of the branches. (There had been a little rain the previous

evening before skies cleared.) Frost had formed as long crystals under surface grit.



Frost Crystals

In places, the track was severely eroded, to a depth similar to the length of my poles.



Severe Gullying

After photographing all these sights, I was left behind and lost sight of the other walkers ahead of me. I came across a few sorry-looking chanterelles, but collected enough for omelettes for two. Arriving at the bus, I was surprised to find I was not last. The tail-enders turned up a little later, somewhat grumpy at having taken a wrong turning. Graham enquired of one *How did you get lost, you had a GPS?* but, indicating his wife, he replied *No, she had the GPS!*

Kris

11 November: Digital Still & Movie Show



Frank Introduces the Evening

A gratifying 36 turned out for our annual still & movie show at the United Services Club. President Frank Kelly welcomed all and introduced Graham Sangster, who had put together the show, and to describe the forthcoming events. Graham was again assisted by Martin Burns whose expertise in setting up the digital projector to a computer lap-top is very much appreciated.



The Audience

Frank Kelly kicked off proceedings with lovely pictures covering the 2010 Week's Hike based at Strontian and Glen Coe. Graham then showed a video of his walking holiday in the Ecrins National Park in the French Alps. This was followed by Christine Brown's spectacular pictures from her December

2009 holiday in Argentine & Chilean Patagonia National Parks. A technical hitch prevented David Bruno presenting his pictures from the St Cuthbert's Way—these will be seen at a later social event. Graham then gave a digital picture show from recent AHCW walks and social events. Frank Kelly closed proceedings by thanking all presenters for their contributions in making the evening successful, and to all members for attending this extremely popular social event.

Graham

5 December: Collieston to Balmedie



Entering Forvie Nature Reserve

The scheduled Collieston—Bullers o Buchan walk had to be changed due to recent severe weather conditions making the narrow cliff paths towards the Bulls unsafe with snow & ice. Your Committee decided to reverse the walk direction from Collieston, going south across the Forvie National Nature Reserve to Newburgh and on along the beach to a pick-up point at Balmedie. This was discussed and accepted by those present on the day.



In Forvie Dunes

Hamish Clunas cancelled by phone at a late stage, but said he would pay his bus fare to the Treasurer—well done Hamish! We left Aberdeen on time (after seven late cancellations and four no-shows). With twelve aboard, we picked up another twelve at Bridge

of Don, the Exhibition Centre and Ellon Park and Ride. Due to ice, our driver Mike decided against the secondary road from Ellon east to Collieston and had us back at Newburgh very quickly. We dropped off eight here who decided to do a shorter walk (or was it the lure of the local coffee shop!) before continuing to Collieston.



Fiona & Alan

The remaining group started in Collieston and had a wonderful traverse through Forvie Nature Reserve in glorious sunny clear conditions. Lunch was taken at a shelter on Newburgh Golf Course, and we continued along the beach to Balmedie. After high tide at 12:09, the tide was ebbing, and we just managed to cross all the streams and dodge incoming waves on our way south to Balmedie—great fun!



Refreshments in the Balmedie Pub

Refreshments were taken at the local hotel, while the bus took the Ellon group back to the Park & Ride carpark. On its return, we departed a little behind schedule for Aberdeen. All in all, it was a lovely day for walking in sunny, clear, crisp conditions. *En route*, Martin Burns lost the soles of his old walking boots, but in the pub, he said that he wrote a letter to Santa, requesting a new pair. Lets hope Martin gets his wish! Everyone enjoyed a super eleven-mile coastal walk.

Graham

Two buses were parked outside New Telecom House. The trains were having weather-related problems, and a replacement bus had been laid on for train passengers, but they and their luggage were scattered across the footway between their bus and the multi-storey carpark in a most obstructive fashion. I was reminded of Friday night teenagers on Union Street, a suitable case for a Dispersal Order!



Tank Traps at Menie

Alighting at Collieston, I had difficulty standing upright—the roadway was a skating rink. I was most impressed that our driver had got the bus to High Town, the top of the hill at the south end of the village without the bus skidding.

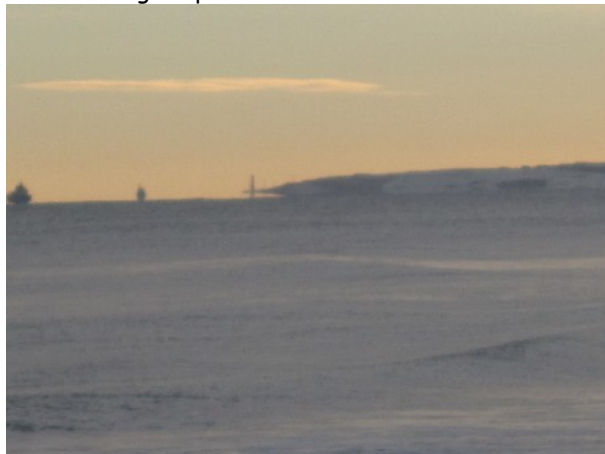


Pill Box

Just after the gate into Forvie National Nature Reserve, the route forks, that on the left follows the coast to Rockend near the ruin of Forvie Kirk, where it turns inland, but I chose that on the right, which is a fairly direct route to Waterside Bridge over the Ythan. At first, there were equal numbers of footprints in the snow either way, but quite soon I was disappointed to find footprints turning north off my track to skirt Sand Loch on the way back to the visitor centre. My route is occasionally used by vehicles, so I didn't lose the way, but after a while,

the only footprints I was following were those of a dog!

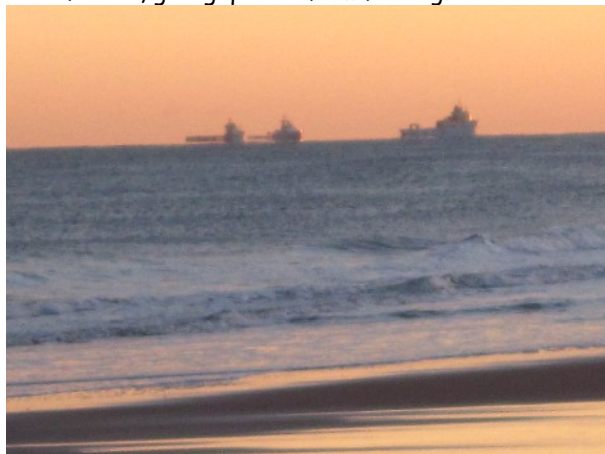
On reaching the Waterside Bridge carpark, I rested briefly in front of an explanatory noticeboard, and was quite surprised when Christine, Alistair, Linda and Ella caught up with me.



Girdleness Lighthouse with Mirage Effect

We started walking through Newburgh, but were directed off the motor road to a footbridge over the Foveran to Foveran Golf Course. It's difficult to play golf under snow, so we walked across the course to the beach in safety.

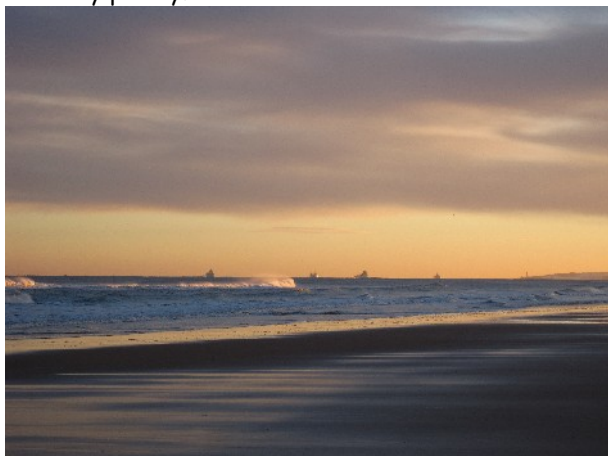
The beach walk to Balmedie was some four miles long. It's usually easier to walk along the top of the wet sand, as your feet sink in less than in the dry sand, but conditions were somewhat unusual this time. Rain had fallen on the sand that is normally dry, and then frozen, giving quite a firm footing.



Tankers with Mirage Effect

In the distance, we could see Girdleness Lighthouse and oil tankers anchored in Aberdeen Bay. Unusual conditions produced mirage-like effects—sky could be seen between ships' hulls and the sea, and between the lighthouse tower and the headland. This occurs when air close to the surface is appreciably hotter (or in this case less cold!) than air above, and is observed at a shallow angle.

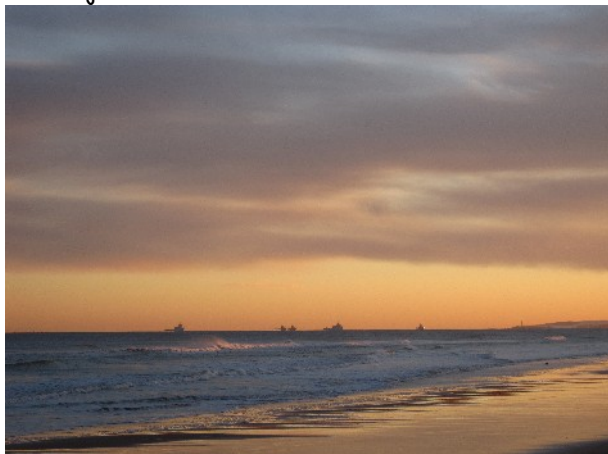
The section of beach along Menie Links still has WWII tank traps (large concrete cubes), and a pill-box. Heavy clouds to the north never came to anything. Sunset catching on the breakers and spray was very pretty.



Sunset on Breakers

The bus was not parked on the beach carpark, but a mile or so inland. I must have looked exhausted as a car stopped and insisted on giving me a lift. They dropped me at the bus, and I took my pack on board. Before I could collect my thoughts, the bus started off. Where was everyone? They were in the pub; the bus was taking the Ellon party back to Ellon. Everyone else had another hour in the pub, but I'd been hijacked!

Kris



Sunset on Breakers

15 December: AHC Committee Meeting

This Committee meeting was arranged solely to put together AHC's walking program for 2011. In October 2010, members were given a Suggestion Sheet so that their ideas for future walks could be forwarded to the committee for consideration when compiling the 2011 walks program. We had a tremendous response from the membership, with 67 suggestions. With such a good response, it is much easier to decide on a varied walking program, and it also gives us the opportunity to try and please the

majority of the membership. It took almost three hours to sift through your suggestions to decide on a variety of walks, both circular and through routes.



Committee Drawing up 2011 Program

Afterwards, a sub-committee comprising Alan Wallace, Kris Howard and Graham Sangster conferred by email to finalize the 2011 program. The membership endorsed this program at the AGM. Once again, your Committee has worked hard to keep your Club on a sound footing.

Graham

9 January 2011: Scolty to Feughside Inn



At the Memorial Tower on Scolty



Ray & Pauline atop Scolty Tower



Clachnaben

Our original plan was to walk to the Potarch Hotel for our traditional New Year festive meal, but uncertainty about the Potarch Hotel persuaded us to walk to the Feughside Inn instead.



Break for Lunch

An excellent attendance of 39 set off from Scolty car park through forest tracks to the main summit, crowned with a nineteenth-century circular stone tower in memory of local landowner, General Burnett.



Forestry Track

Snow lay on the paths but the forecast was good with only occasional showers. Many however took shelter

in the tower as we were hit by a short but severe blizzard on the summit.



Carvery Dinner at the Feughside

Thereafter, the day brightened and we had lovely winter sunshine for the rest of the walk. The route from the summit to the edge of the Blackhall forest gave interesting views across Feughside towards Clachnaben and Mount Battock.



At the Feughside

All too soon, we headed downhill to the farms of Tillylair and Croftfoddie before finally reaching the comfort of the bar of the Feughside Inn. All enjoyed the carvery meal and the opportunity to chat and celebrate our first walk of the new year before returning home around 7pm.

Frank

6 February: Rattray Head to Peterhead

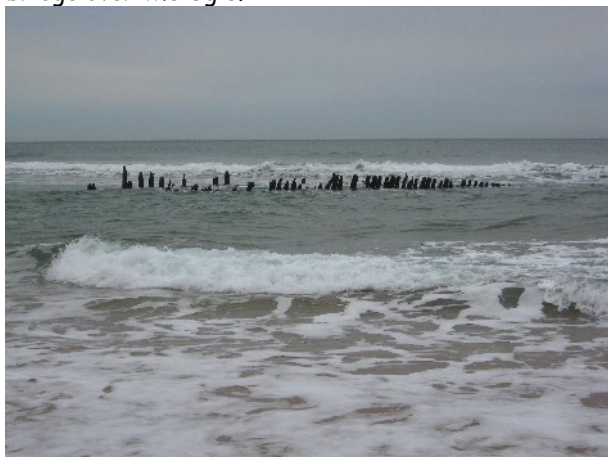
Our final outing for the 2010/2011 season saw 38 on the bus. It was good to see Anne McAulay, as she had been absent from outings for almost eighteen months on medical grounds. The forecast was for clear conditions with light winds. We had pick-ups at Bridge of Don, the Exhibition Centre and Ellon Park & Ride. Our driver Stephen dropped us at Old Rattray at 10:30. A lovely walk east through sand dunes to the beach gave us good views of the Rattray Head lighthouse.

We turned south along the beach and lunched soon after passing St Fergus gas terminal.



View North to Rattray Head Lighthouse

We enjoyed an exhilarating three-mile walk along the dune crest before dropping to the beach proper for the last part of the coastal walk to the memorial bridge over the Ugie.



An Old Shipwreck

It was then through Buchanhaven and Roanheads to Peterhead harbour dominated by the massive *Synrolift* boat lift.



St Fergus Gas Terminal

Our bus was conveniently parked opposite the bus station in Peterhead. Refreshments were taken at

the local Station Pub before Stephen had us back in Aberdeen almost on time. All walkers agreed that this had been a lovely 10.5 mile walk along the Buchan coast, taking most members just over 4.25 hours.

Graham



Lunch Break

St Fergus Gas Terminal isn't a "thing of beauty and a joy forever," but I imagine you have to go as far as Grangemouth to find anything similar. South of St Fergus, the beach is punctuated by three rocky outcrops with associated boulder fields, and with an incoming tide, it seemed wise to bypass the last and biggest of the three by taking a short cut across the golf course to the George Birnie footbridge over the Ugie.



At the George Birnie Memorial Footbridge

On the links, helpful finger posts directed me *This Way* to a well made track. However, the golfers had other ideas, and I was directed to a barely discernable footpath round the outside of the course. So much for the links being donated to the public for golf *and* walking! Does anyone else remember when the golf courses were closed for golf on Sundays and you could walk the links looking for lost balls? **Kris**

6 March: Peterculter to Banchory

An excellent turn-out of 37 attended our first outing of the 2011 season. It was good to see Tork Mackenzie, who was absent from outings for almost six months. We also welcomed newcomers Deirdre McGrath and Dave Cheseldine. Dave had seen our program on our website.



For Pedestrians, Cyclists & Equestrians

The forecast was for sunny intervals with little wind, and we anticipated a pleasant outing. Our driver Gordon soon had us at Station Road, Peterculter, where Tracy McCollin, Moira West and Colin Chapman joined us at our start point.



Kevin, Vi & Rosie Enjoy a Coffee Break

A pleasant walk led us along a recently refurbished part of the *Deeside Way*. We lunched in glorious sunshine at Crathes train station and signal box. Further lovely views were met along the heritage railway line and in the forest adjacent to the Dee before eventually reaching Banchory's Bellfield Park, where our bus was parked. Refreshments were taken at the pub before Gordon had us home on time. It had been a lovely walk along 10.5 miles of the Deeside Way suggested by Willie Robb—thanks Willie.

Graham

This route is also part of the Sustrans National Cycle Network (Route 195). I was inclined to wonder about

the alternative attraction of cycling from Aberdeen to Banchory and back.



Crathes Station & Signal Box

A couple of times we were passed by a semi-recumbent tandem—this carried the rear cyclist in the normal upright posture, but the front cyclist in the laid-back recumbent attitude.



Rolling Stock

At the end of the walk I took a sneaky short cut through the grounds of the Banchory Lodge Hotel. This has a splendid view across the Dee up the outflow of the Feugh to the Falls under Bridge of Feugh.

Kris



Engine at Milton of Crathes

20 March: Drummuir to Aberlour



Botriphnie School

Although we had one illness cancellation and three no-shows, 37 members attended this popular walk. The forecast was dry all day but with strong southwesterlies at high level. We had a comfort stop at Huntly where Margaret Leslie joined the bus. Our driver Gordon soon had us at our start point, Botriphnie School near Drummuir station, for those undertaking the whole route. Five continued to Dufftown for the shorter walk to Aberlour, while Alex Barbour and five others opted for Ben Rinnes to finish at Aberlour.



Richard, Paul & Tork on Fiddich Footbridge

The walk along the Isla Way was very pleasant with lovely views over Loch Park and Glen Isla before crossing the Fiddich to join the Dufftown spur of the

Speyside Way near Balvenie distillery. We lunched overlooking the Fiddich before continuing north to Craigellachie on the main Speyside Way. Again, we had beautiful views walking along the Spey to finish at Aberlour. Those doing Ben Rinnes had a good walk with clear visibility on the summit albeit a trifle chilly in the brisk wind.



Lunch in Glen Fiddich

We took refreshments in the village before departing on time and arriving home an hour early. It was a fine outing today along an eleven-mile route on country tracks, woodland paths and unclassified roads with a great variety of scenery.

Graham



Consulting a Map, Craigellachie

Fans of *Scotland the What* will find Drummuir more familiar as Botriphnie. The walk started at Botriphnie Primary School, and Botriphnie Kirk is close by.

Along the Fiddich river banks, butterburr was in bloom in profusion.

Kris

Blog Page

Some members may be unaware that our Club now has a page on the Web totally dedicated to Aberdeen Hill Walking Club. Those who access the network by computer, can view our *blog page*, either directly, or through AHWC's Home Page. Member Martin Burns

has done a great job in setting up this facility. Once on the site, follow prompts and, if you wish, create a free Account and add any of your comments and pictures of our most recent walks and social events. As time goes on, we will find that this web page will be used more and more—as yet, it is still at a very early stage. The next route sheet is also displayed there. Please take time to view this facility and see what comments and pictures are already on the screen and what you may want to add to the site in future.

Graham

Collieston

11/12/2010 walk

Collieston is the first safe haven in over fifteen miles of beaches and dunes stretching north from Aberdeen. It was established as a fishing village by the 1500's and much of the pattern of the settlement you can see today dates back to then.

Collieston marks a very sharp change in the landscape. Cliffs and rocky bays stretch north, while to the south, the huge sand dune system of Forvie National Nature Reserve stretches three miles to the mouth of the Ythan near Newburgh. The dunes also stretch over a mile inland, producing an unusual landscape.

Man has tried and failed to tame the Forvie Sands. At their centre are the remains of Forvie Kirk, built in the 1100's, all that is left of Forvie village, once a thriving community but buried by shifting dunes during a storm in 1413.

Collieston flourished in the 1600s and 1700s, making its name as the origin of *Collieston Speldings*, salted and sun-dried haddock and whiting, which proved a popular delicacy as far afield as Edinburgh and London. The whole village was involved in fishing. In 1791, it was recorded that school attendances halved in summer when children collected mussels and dug bait for the line fishing that underpinned Collieston's economy.

However, drift netting developed as a more efficient means of fishing by the mid 1800s, and Collieston was too small for the drifters. The industry focus shifted to Peterhead and many of Collieston's residents moved with it.

Collieston was an ideal location for another industry. With many sea caves in the surrounding cliffs and with small coves and shingle beaches, it was excellent territory for smugglers. In the late 1700s, the Excise estimated that up to 8,000 gallons of foreign spirits were being illegally landed in the area every month. This all came to a head on 17 December 1798, when Excisemen lying in wait surprised a group

of smugglers unloading barrels of spirit. In the subsequent skirmish, Philip Kennedy, the most notorious of the smugglers, was killed by an exciseman's cutlass.

On cliffs a mile north of Collieston are the remains of Old Slains Castle, blown up by James VI in 1594 to punish the Earl of Erroll for involvement in a Catholic plot against him. Subsequently forgiven, the Earl built New Slains Castle six miles north up the coast in 1597.

There is a tangible link to this plot near Collieston. The remains of a Spanish warship lie off the rocky point of St Catherine's Dub, near Collieston's main car park. The Santa Caterina was said to have sunk while trying to land arms to support Erroll's rebellion.

Graham

Ratray Head Lighthouse

6/2/2011 walk

For many years from 1849, petitions were made for a lighthouse to be built on the *Ratray Briggs* reef. One stated *it is a rare thing to pass this dangerous point without finding a ship of some sort stranded and it is also one of the most prominent maritime turning points of North East Scotland*. Other reports referred to banks of fog, rapid tides, high seas and shifting ground.

When Trinity House repeatedly refused the building of this station, the Northern Lighthouse Board, supported by both local fishermen and a large number of well established shipping companies, eventually appealed directly to the Board of Trade, who on 30 December 1890 overturned Trinity House's decision and sanctioned the building of both the lighthouse and a first-class fog siren at a cost of £ 18, 949.

An innovative lighthouse design was planned: engineer David Alan Stevenson built a rock tower in two parts, the lower containing a foghorn and engine room, the upper the lightkeeper's room and lantern. A first-class fog siren was installed in a rock lighthouse for the first time. Ratray Head lighthouse was built on the *Ron* rock. *Ron* is Gaelic for *Seal*. Work commenced in 1892 and the masonry of both portions of the tower was completed in sixteen months, spread over three seasons.

The lower section is 46-feet high with an entrance door reached by a 32-foot outside ladder. At high water, it is covered to a depth of seven feet, but it is possible to walk ashore when the tide is out. The upper section brings it to a total height of 120 feet above the rock. The light first operated on 14 October 1895, with a 44,000-candela power five-wick paraffin lamp, compared with 6,500 candelas at

neighbouring Buchan Ness. It gives three white flashes every 30 seconds, visible for 28 miles.

In August 1895, Robert Clyne at the Isle of Man Langness Lighthouse was promoted to Principal Lightkeeper, and appointed first Lightkeeper at Rattray Head. He served almost five years before his transfer to the most famous Scottish Lighthouse, the Bell Rock. In the early days, communication between shore and lighthouse could be by megaphone, though both semaphore and morse were also used. At the onset of the First World War a telephone was installed, carried by a lead-covered, armoured cable. Only in 1977 was a mains electricity cable laid under the seabed. In February 1982, the light was made fully automatic and the lightkeepers withdrawn.

Graham

George Birnie Memorial Footbridge 6/2/2011 walk



The Footbridge

Alexander Birnie of Peterhead was one of the largest fleet builders in the Broome Area Pearling Industry in Western Australia. He built and owned four Pearling Schooners at Broome, the *Dora* and *MSW* in 1898, and the *Peggy* and *Culvulla* in 1903. His 60-ton schooner, *The Ivy*, used as a tender to supply his fleet near the Lacepede Islands, was lost at sea in 1896 and became an integral part of the Birnie history—but that is another story.

As a young man, Alex Birnie, apart from being a boat builder was also engaged in the pearl industry itself in Western Australia, where he had an adventurous career and was indeed very successful, accruing a substantial fortune.

Retiring from his adventures at pearl diving, Birnie returned to Peterhead to purchase Wellbank estate where he lived until he died in 1944.

For over 100 years, the inhabitants of Peterhead had been granted permission to play golf on Craigewan Links. In 1906, the Feuar's Managers purchased the Links from Colonel George Ferguson of Pitfour, extending them to 101 acres, and including the ferry

across the Ugie and the right to build a bridge. Subsequently, they were leased to Peterhead Golf Club and with a stipulation that the public should have free access to the links for walking and recreation. It should also provide services in the interests of the community. In 1919, the Feuar's Managers purchased Mains of Inverugie farm, and the additional 55 acres were leased to the Golf Club.

In 1907, the Managers considered replacing the ferry with a bridge, but year after year, with the usual endless committees, they considered and re-considered the perfect site. Finally, in June 1924, Birnie proposed paying for a bridge across the Ugie. It was agreed to dedicate the bridge to his father, George Birnie, the long-time Peterhead Harbour Manager. The *George Birnie Memorial Bridge* was completed with a contribution from Birnie of £2,000, together with a grant from the Peterhead Unemployment Committee of £728.

Graham

Scolty Woodland Park

9/1/2011 walk

Woodland Parks Initiative

In May 1991, the Forestry Commission launched an initiative to designate appropriate woods as Woodland Parks. They would be formed by a single wood, a group of smaller woodland or be part of a larger forest block, but generally be a maximum of approximately 150 hectares in area and be associated with a particular centre of population. An essential component of the initiative would be the involvement of the local community in the Woodland Park.

Scolty Woodland Park

In 1992, a 158 hectares area, lying on the lower and middle slopes between 70m and 260m of Scolty (299m) was designated as Scolty Woodland Park. The Park is the east end of Blackhall Forest which stretches westwards opposite Banchory on the south side of the River Dee and is bounded on the western edge by forestry tracks and roads and the Forestry Commission legal boundaries elsewhere.

For many years, it has been a popular outdoor recreation area for people in the Banchory area and the many visitors who visit the area.

Scolty Woodland Park Association

The Association was formed in November 1995 to assist the Forestry Commission in the management of the park. Its committee has been involved in the organization of work parties and volunteer days. Tasks undertaken have included tree-planting, ditch-clearing, bracken-bashing, and path and dyke repairs. The committee also endeavours to promote outdoor learning and has worked with Banchory schools.

New Project

They plan a red squirrel feeding area near the main forest track, not far from the car park. It is intended to have a path to the area with a viewing hide and information plaque for the public. They also intend to have feeders fixed to the trees so that the public can watch the squirrels.

Graham

The Royal Deeside Railway Preservation Society

6/3/2011 walk



Railway to Nowhere & Displaced Deeside Way

The Royal Deeside Railway dates back to 1845, but this was reported in a previous issue of this Newsletter. Although the Deeside Railway was one of the most scenic and picturesque lines east of the Great Glen, the line was closed to passengers on 28 February 1966 when Arnott Young Ltd were given the task of dismantling the line, and by 1972 the tracks had been lifted.

From 1972, the trackway was gradually reclaimed by nature, although the former trackbed, station buildings and bridges remained clearly visible. Over time, portions were converted to other uses, the trackbed between Holburn Street & Culter being surfaced as a popular cycle & walking route.

Other changes were more dramatic, such as the removal of the Holburn Street bridge in 1981, the demolition of the station site at Banchory for the construction of housing and the complete dismantling of the Blarncrag Viaduct between Torphins &

Lumphanan. [Actually, it collapsed when they were about to explode it—Ed.] However, the majority of the route is still easily visible some 40 years after the railway closed.

The *Deeside Railway Preservation Society* was formed in 1996 by local railway enthusiasts, initially concentrating its efforts at the Aberdeen end of the line, where part of the former Ferryhill Engine Shed was considered for use as a workshop and museum along with heritage railway services on the section of the former Deeside railway trackbed adjacent to the shed line. Discussions on the acquisition of the shed site continue with Network Rail and Aberdeen City Council.

In August 2000, the Society submitted plans to the local council for a reinstated railway between Banchory and Milton of Crathes, on the former Deeside Railway Line. European legislation required an Environmental Impact Assessment, submitted in 2002. The majority of the scheme, from the outskirts of Banchory to Milton of Crathes, was approved on 10 June 2003, work starting at Milton of Crathes shortly after.

The Society now has several items of rolling stock under restoration, including the unique *Battery Railcar* which ran on the line in the 1950s and a historic collection of Victorian coaches under restoration for use on the line. Regular work parties are held at various sites and the railway is beginning to come back to life! This will allow families and enthusiasts alike to view into the fascinating way of life in the Victorian Era.

The Royal Deeside Railway is a registered Scottish Charity, and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

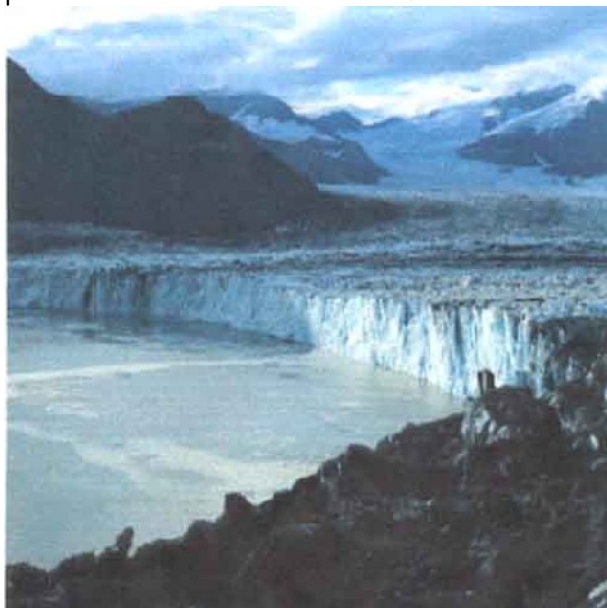
Graham

Greenland—1966 to 1969

On Wednesday, 8 December 2010, I attended a North East Mountain Trust illustrated talk by Roger Owen, titled *Climbing and Skiing in East Greenland*. It was super, lasting over an hour, and during this time, my memory was buzzing, taking me back to the late 1960s, when I worked in Greenland for the Scottish Fisheries Department, part of an international survey on salmon migration.

After the Old World, the New World, Antarctica and Australia, Greenland is the world's largest island. All in all, I was stationed in Greenland during 1966, 1967, 1968 and 1969, investigating the mixed salmon population around its coast. Salmon stocks in the UK, Scandinavia, Canada and the USA had taken a massive drop in numbers returning to their native rivers after

wintering in the far north, and the question was *why*? I won't go into the details of this scientific investigation, except to say that the work was expensive and inconclusive, for various problematic, political reasons outwith our control.



Jakobshavn Glacier

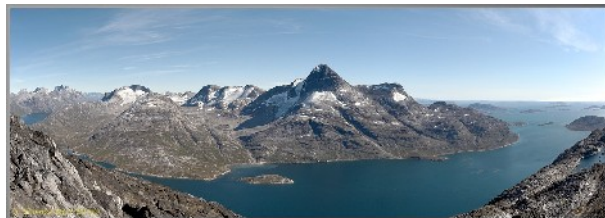
At this time, Greenland was still administered by Denmark, not being granted home rule until 1979. Village names were Danish while I was there, but have reverted to Greenlandic (Inuit) since home rule.



Kangerlussuaq Glacier

Anyway, my time in Greenland was fantastic. The locals were unwilling to work at weekends (in fact some were not keen to work at all), so myself and others took the opportunity to see the interior of this wonderful land. We travelled to our various work sites on both East and West Greenland by shanks's pony, helicopter, boat or ski-doo. Weather varied between cloudless, heavy snow and thick fog. We ate seal, reindeer, whale, sea bird, salmon and cod, with boiled potatoes only. After four years in Greenland, don't ever offer me salmon or cod, but the rest of the "delicacies" were acceptable.

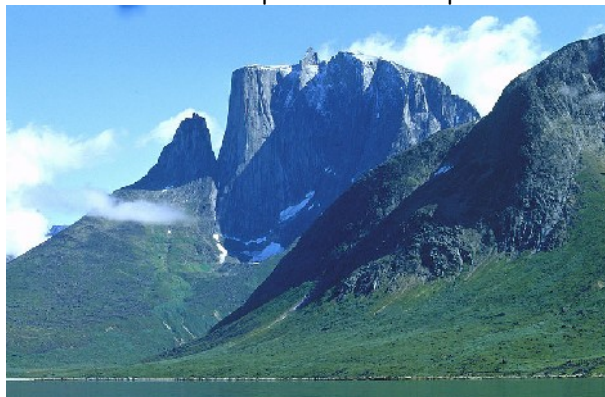
Anyway, to return to the great outdoors where we travelled up and down the west side of Greenland, based at the small biological station in Godthab (now Nuuk, capital of Greenland) working in various sites from Julianahab (now called Qaqortoq) in the south, to Umanak (now called Uummannaq) in the central West near Disko Island.



Store Malene

We walked, trekked and ski-ed along (and over) spectacular glaciers, snow filled valleys and ice-fjords at Kangerlussuaq, Jakobshavn (now Illulissat) and climbed Greenland's little Matterhorn—Store Malene (765m). We trekked and ski-ed over the mountains to Holsteinsborg (now Sisimiut, next largest town in Greenland). We worked here with local salmon fishers at the local shrimp factory, now the biggest in the world, processing 10,000 tonnes per year.

On our days out in the mountains, we had to shoot to eat, and mountain hare and snow goose was usually on the menu, washed down with a couple of Carlsbergs. (In the late sixties, Greenland's main export was said to be empty Carlsberg bottles, a social problem which I think nowadays has been resolved [Untrue!—Ed.]). We dug and slept in snow holes when the weather was bad and otherwise camped on the snow pack.



Ulamertorsuaq Rock Wall

We sailed to the south east coast of Greenland to work near Angmassalik (now Ammassalik). On our way, we spent time in Tasermiut Fjord in the south of the island, near Cape Farewell and Cape Desolation, to view, ski and hike near the precipitous walls of Ketil, Ulamertorsuaq and Tintertuup peaks. This is incredibly spectacular country. Ulamertorsuaq has a 3800-foot vertical wall of granite, one of the largest and steepest in the world, exceeding even El Capitan

in Yosemite. The best climbers from all over the world now come here for the challenge of these rock walls.

This type of activity is well beyond me, but I would really like to see Greenland as it is today. Apart from its traditional hunting and fishing, it would appear that Greenland, in the dark ages for decades, has now got its act together and has something really worth while for outdoor tourists.

Graham

The Importance of Walking

Walking can add minutes to your life. This enables you at 85 years old to spend an additional five months in a nursing home at £7000 per month...

My grandpa started walking five miles a day when he was sixty. Now he's 97 years old and we don't know where he is.

I like long walks, especially when they are taken by people who annoy me.

The only reason I would take up walking is so that I could hear heavy breathing again.

I have to walk early in the morning, before my brain figures out what I'm doing...

I joined a health club last year. It cost \$400, but I haven't lost a pound. Apparently you have to go there.

Every time I hear the dirty word *exercise*, I wash my mouth out with chocolate.

The advantage of exercising every day is so when you die, they'll say *Well, she looks good doesn't she?*

If you are going to try cross-country ski-ing, start with a small country.

I know I got a lot of exercise the last few years—just getting over the hill.

We all get heavier as we get older, because there's a lot more information in our heads. (That's my story, and I'm sticking to it.)

Every time I start thinking too much about how I look, I just find a Happy Hour, and by the time I leave, I look just fine.

You could run this over to your friends, but just email it to them.

Email circulated by Hamish and Graham

Villages Commonly Known by their Parish Name

<i>Village</i>	<i>Parish</i>
Drummuir	Botriphnie
Charleston	Aberlour
Charleston	Aboyne
Auchleven	Premnay
Blackburn	Kinellar
Gardenstown	Gamrie
Auchendryne & Castleton	Braemar

This is just the ones that I can think of off-hand—you can probably add to the list. Some of these have made it onto maps (e.g. Aboyne), but most have not. In the days of one-inch maps, parishes were named on maps, so this was less important, but for reasons best known to themselves, OS deleted parish names when they published the 1:50,000 series. As regards village names, OS claim to take guidance from local authorities, so you need to complain to Aberdeenshire, &c., if you are unhappy about this state of affairs.

Kris