

the green diary

—Moray, Aberdeenshire & Aberdeen City



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this issue sponsored
by:



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Down by the Sea near You.....

This month the Green Diary finds out what's happening around the North East coastline and how we can all get involved with a variety of projects and initiatives to conserve valuable coastal habitats, sea wildlife and marine heritage.

We've updates from our two Coastal

partnerships, a look at the Donmouth Nature Reserve and news of a coastal rangers' office share that will increase co-operation for environmental education. See our website www.reapscotland.org.uk/greendiary for extra articles and links on the environment

£10,000 for Moray Firth Communities

words by Dominic Shann, picture courtesy of Moray Firth Partnership

The Moray Firth Partnership (MFP) is delighted to announce the launch of its ninth annual Community Grant Scheme.

Thanks to funding from Scottish Natural Heritage, grants of up to £1,000 will be awarded to community groups and schools (between John O'Groats and Fraserburgh) to help them undertake activities in their local area that will benefit the coast and sea of the Moray Firth.

In 2008, projects funded included a Seal workshop in Caithness, schools visits on board the traditional sailing boat "Isabella Fortuna" and a survey of rare lichens at Findhorn. For 2009, projects focusing on reducing coastal and

marine litter, particularly plastic litter and bags, fishing heritage and crafts, or on coastal access are especially welcomed. The closing date for applications is 19 January 2009. Application packs are available online at www.morayfirth-partnership.org, by email admin@morayfirth-partnership.org or phone 01463 725027.

MFP PROJECTS UPDATE

Sustainable Marine Recreation
and Tourism

This project will provide up to date information

about the uses and resources of the Moray Firth, including marine and coastal recreation, to help towards future marine planning.

Work will include a marine traffic survey, public survey of recreation and tourism including economic values, and creating an electronic "Moray Firth Directory". It will help provide a comprehensive overview of the current

resources, activities and pressures in the Moray Firth and identify potential increases in usage, local impacts and pressures within the next 20 years.



Local school children on board the traditional sailing boat 'Isabella Fortuna' at Whitehills.

Ganseys Project

The MFP has just been awarded £50,000 by the Heritage Lottery Fund towards a 3 year project focusing on traditional "ganseys" (hand knitted seamen's jumpers). This will help gather and preserve information about Moray Firth ganseys and wider maritime heritage & crafts to share with new audiences of all ages.

For more information about any MFP work, please email: info@morayfirth-partnership.org or call 01463 225530

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by AREG

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East Grampian Coastal Partnership

words by Emily Hastings, photo courtesy of EGCP

EGCP is a voluntary group of individuals, with members from local authorities, industry, conservation bodies, recreation and tourism groups, local residents and many others with an interest in the local coast from Fraserburgh to St Cyrus.

Why the Partnership was Created

The local coast has long played an important role in the lives of local communities and provides a wealth of environmental, cultural and economic resources. In modern society, these are under increasing pressure which may threaten their existence. Our work helps to improve their management and protect them for future generations.

How We Can Help

- Knowledge of marine and coastal issues
- Good links with local authorities and businesses
- Knowledge of the local area
- Website with lots of useful information

Get Involved!!

There are many ways you can get involved in the local coast including

- Adopt a Beach and beach cleans
- Whale and Dolphin Watches
- Community Grant Scheme, with grants of up to £1000 available to non profit making bodies for projects which benefit the coast
- Coastal events

For more information on EGCP and how you can get involved, see our website www.egcp.org.uk or call Emily Hastings on 01224 395150. If you haven't had a look at our site before please do - there is loads of information about the local area, activities and things to do (for kids and adults), national coastal and marine



Members of Stonehaven Horizon Project with their new wildlife interpretation board funded by a grant from EGCP

updates, information on up and coming events and a forum where you can discuss anything coastal with like minded folk!

Donmouth Nature Reserve

words and photo by Petra Vergunst

If you go for a walk to Aberdeen's Donmouth Nature Reserve this autumn, look out for flocks of redwings and fieldfares feeding on hawthorn berries on the banks of the estuary. Below them, seals are likely to be resting on the island beneath the busy trunk road that leads north from Aberdeen city centre.

At only 36 hectares, Donmouth is not only unique because of the variety of habitats in such a small space, but also because of its vicinity to Aberdeen city centre.

The wildlife that live here are attracted to the varied estuary where the fresh water of the River Don meets the salt sea. The erosion and deposition of sand and silt along with the varying water levels and tides have moulded the shape of the estuary, which contains shallow water, gravel banks, mudflats and saltmarsh.

The banks upstream are wooded with willow, ash, sycamore and beech. Closer to the mouth of the river, the south bank of the estuary consists of meadow, while the dunes on the north bank form the start of Scotland's largest dune system that stretches 12 miles to Collieston.

These habitats provide spaces for birds, fish and mammals to feed, rest and breed. Seals like to rest on the gravel banks underneath the bridge. Red-breasted mergansers float on the water in search for salmon and trout. Large flocks of long-tailed ducks overwinter in the estuary. The water of Donmouth Nature Reserve is an

important breeding ground for the less visible flounder.

In recognition of its unique biodiversity Donmouth Nature Reserve was designated a Local Nature Reserve by Aberdeen City Council in 1992. Local Nature Reserves are places of special local natural interest, set up to protect nature, and for people to enjoy and appreciate. In contrast to formal open green spaces such as parks and gardens, they offer an accessible natural environment. Aberdeen City Council manages Donmouth Nature Reserve in

collaboration with a local management group consisting of residents with an interest in the reserve.

To further enhance the wildlife, Aberdeen City Council has stopped mowing the area between the south bank of river Don and The Esplanade Road regularly to create a wildflower meadow. Aberdeen City Countryside Rangers and volunteers of the Springwatch Action Team also planted wildflower plugs there in spring 2008.

For more information contact Aberdeen City Countryside Ranger Service 01224 897400.

Sharing to Care - for the Environment

Aberdeenshire Coastal Rangers Sarah Gosden(right) and Douglas Gooday are moving to share the same office at the Stevenson Centre at Forvie, Collieston with SNH Ranger Annabel Drysdale (left) from this autumn. This move will help environmental education in the area through sharing of equipment and knowledge. The Coastal Rangers' new number is 01358 751337, while the SNH Ranger's number is still 01358 751330 or e-mail enquiries@snh.gov.uk



Throughout the month**SCARF**

Advice sessions in Moray on keeping warm this winter. Find out about energy efficiency, grants for insulation and help with high fuel bills – receive a free power down plug and efficient light bulb. All sessions are at the local Council Access points from 10am – 12 noon

ELGIN AREA ACCESS POINT

Meet on Thurs 6th November and Thurs 4th December

KEITH AREA ACCESS POINT

Meet on Thurs 13th November and Thurs 11th December

FORRES AREA ACCESS POINT

Meet on Weds 26th November

BUCKIE AREA ACCESS POINT

Meet on Thurs 20th November and Thurs 18th December

For further details

Tel: 0800 512 012.

WDCS Spey Bay Centre

The Centre goes on to its winter timetable from November 1st. It is open Weekends only, Sat and Sun from 10.30am - 5pm. For more details contact

Tel: (01343) 820339.

Cyclist Touring Club

Hold a variety of runs throughout the month for all abilities, with fast full day runs, shorter morning runs and slower or medium day runs on other weekend dates. The popular 'Try Cycling' runs events which are for those new to cycling or those who haven't been in the saddle for awhile, run every Sunday morning from Duthie Park, Aberdeen at 10am. For more details visit www.ctcgrampian.org.uk or

Tel: (01224) 639012.

Scottish Wildlife Trust

Regular midweek volunteering opportunities during the month, including Aberdeen pick up every Wednesday. Help protect Scotland's wildlife reserves and keep fit at the same time. To volunteer contact mstevens@swt.org.uk

Tel: (01466) 780164.

Aberdeen Greenspaces

Environmental volunteering opportunities in/near Aberdeen. Ring for details on

Tel: (01224) 711129.

Balmoral Rangers

Land Rover Safaris daily. Guided vehicle tour to learn about the work undertaken to help conserve the important species and habitats on the Balmoral Estate. 9am-12noon & 2-5pm daily, £45 per person, booking essential

Tel: (01339) 742534.

Throughout the month**BTCV Conservation Volunteering/
Green Gyms**

Volunteering sessions for full or half days on Tuesdays at locations throughout Aberdeenshire and Moray, and Green Gym sessions in Aberdeen on Mondays 11am - 2pm (or stay to 4pm), plus occasional projects on weekends and other weekdays. Please check with us beforehand on

Tel: (01224) 724884.

Saturday 1st November**Farmers Markets**

Come along to your area's farmers market to buy local produce and crafts – get those food miles down! Please note that many farmers' markets only operate up until 1pm – if you are travelling to them please ring and check times beforehand.

1. HUNTLY – meet at the Square, Huntly Tel (01466) 720247.
2. PETERHEAD - meet at Drummers Corner, Tel: (01779) 476458.
3. STONEHAVEN- meet at the Market Square, Tel: (01569) 750504.
4. ABERDEEN - Aberdeen Country Fair at Belmont Street

Tel: (01224) 649000.

Aberdeenshire Rangers

Box bash - come along anytime during the day and make a bird or bat box for your garden. Cost: £3 each. Or give your feathered friends a feast by cooking up a bird cake. Cost: £1. Meet at the Bennachie Centre, Chapel of Garioch 10.30am – 3pm

Tel: (01467) 681470.

Aberdeenshire Rangers

Action for aspen - take part in some practical conservation, cutting overgrown aspen suckers and invasive scrub to improve the habitat for moths and butterflies. Hand tools and instruction provided - please bring a packed lunch. This event is organised in partnership with Balmoral Estate and Butterfly Conservation. Adults only, meet at Crathie car park 11am – 2pm, booking essential

Tel: (013397) 55059.

**Forestry Commission
Aberdeenshire**

Spooky-wood Ghost Walk. A guided walk through the woods for Halloween. Be prepared to be scared! Not suitable for children under eight years, adult must accompany children. Adults welcome on their own too! Meet at Tyrebagger Woods at Christmas Tree car park; various timed slots, cost: £2 per person, for details and booking (essential)

Tel: (01466) 794161.

Saturday 1st November cont.**Baillies of Bennachie**

Voluntary work party, on the first Saturday of every month - footpath maintenance, rhododendron removal, archaeology survey work and more. For more details, check out www.bennachie.org or

Tel: (01467) 629969.

Sunday 2nd November**Forestry Commission
Aberdeenshire**

Bin Ranger Club meets near Huntly on 1st Sunday of the month for 8 - 12 year olds. Activities include overnight camping, woodland crafts, treasure hunts, pond dipping and bird watching. Booking essential

Tel: (01466) 794161.

Moray RSPB Supporters Group Outing to Lossiemouth West Beach to see gulls, sea ducks and waders. Meet at West Beach car park (GR NJ 227709) at 10am, all welcome, please book first on

Tel: (01343) 543467.

RSPB Loch of Strathbeg Goose watch. The chance to see one of the most spectacular wildlife spectacles in Scotland - the dawn flight of thousands of pink-footed geese. Enjoy this sight in comfort - the whole experience is well worth the early start! Meet at the Visitor Centre car park at RSPB Loch of Strathbeg at 6.30am. Cost: Adult non-members £3/ children £1, members free. Booking on david.parnaby@rspb.org.uk

Tel: (01346) 532017.

Tuesday 4th November**NTS Aberdeen Members**

Talk: "What does a marine scientist do?" by John Dunn, Torry Marine Laboratory, in Cowdray Hall, Aberdeen, 7.30pm. All welcome, non-members £2. For details ring

Tel: (01224) 315103.

Wednesday 5th November**RSPB Loch of Strathbeg**

Goosewatch – as Sun 2nd November. Meet at RSPB Loch of Strathbeg 6.30am. Booking on

Tel: (01346) 532017.

Cairngorms National Park 'Green Places, Green Profit' - Cairngorms Tourism Conference at Boat of Garten Community Centre 6-8.30pm. Booking on contact heathertrench@cairngorms.co.uk

Tel: (01479) 870545.

Thursday 6th November

Aberdeen Friends of the Earth Monthly Meeting. Meet at The Quaker Meeting House on Crown Street, 7.30pm, non-members welcome. For more details

Tel: (01224) 581162.

Saturday 8th November**Glen Tamar Ranger Service**

Hands on conservation days every second Saturday of the month. Come along for the day and do your bit for the environment. Volunteer tasks can include building bird boxes, creating insect banks, tree planting etc. All welcome. Pick up point Aboyne Academy Reception area 9.30 am or make your way to Braeloin Visitor Centre for 10am. Booking please with Alan Melrose 013398 86222, contact for the Ranger Service is
Tel. (013398) 86072.

Balmoral Rangers

Salmon Safari. A vehicle tour to search for evidence of migrating and breeding salmon. Learn about the life cycle of this fascinating river runner. Meeting point: Crathie car park, 1-3pm, cost: £5/person, booking essential.
Tel: (013397) 55059.

Farmers Market Inverurie

Come along to buy your local produce and crafts – get those food miles down! Please note that many farmers' markets only operate up until 1pm – if you are travelling to them please ring and check times beforehand. Meet at Inverurie Market Place – for more details or to book a stall

Tel: (01467) 621195.

Sunday 9th November

E. Grampian Coastal Partnership Seawatch Survey at Torry Battery 1-5pm. Our coast is one of the best areas in Britain to spot whales and dolphins from the land - join the experts to find out more and see our local wildlife. all welcome, binoculars provided. For more details

Tel: (01224) 498251.

Moray Ranger

The seals of Port Gordon. Come and see the local seal celebrities hauling up onto the rocks to relax and interact with each other, and swimming in the waters nearby – but keeping well back to avoid disturbance and stress. Dogs must be kept on a close lead. Meet at disused ice house on Buckpool road out of Port Gordon 2-3pm details on

Tel: (01343) 543451.

Sunday 9th November**RSPB Loch of Strathbeg**

Goosewatch – as Sun 2nd November. Meet at the Visitor Centre car park at RSPB Loch of Strathbeg at 6.45am. Cost: Adult non-members £3/ children £1, members free. Booking on david.parnaby@rspb.org.uk

Tel: (01346) 532017.

Sunday 9th November cont.**Aberdeenshire Rangers**

Nordic walking. Want to get fit and healthy? Why not try Nordic Walking? Learn the technique, under the guidance of trained Nordic UK leaders, while enjoying a social walk in the outdoors. There will be two sessions each Sunday:

10.30am – 12noon **LOW LEVEL AND BEGINNERS** Cost: £3 including pole hire or £1.50 if you have your own poles.

12.30 – 4.00pm **MID TERRAIN** Cost: £5 including pole hire or £1.50 if you have your own. Sessions are weather permitting. Booking essential – come along to one session or all. Meet at the Bennachie Centre, Chapel of Garioch. Contact Angela McMillan, Health and Fitness Coordinator on 07884 276979 or
Tel: (01467) 681470

Aberdeenshire Rangers

Ythan Estuary walk (moderate). Meet at Newburgh beach car park and enjoy a 3 to 4 mile walk to the beach and along the Ythan estuary. Bring a packed lunch and binoculars as we'll be looking at the bird life of the estuary and we may be lucky enough to see seals. Adults only, stout footwear and waterproofs required. This event is only suitable for adults. Meet at the beach car park in Newburgh 12noon – 3pm, booking essential on

Tel: (01358) 751337.

Aberdeenshire Rangers

Nordic Walking. Want to get fit and healthy? Why not try Nordic Walking? Learn the technique, under the guidance of trained Nordic UK leaders, while enjoying a social walk in the outdoors. There are monthly sessions at the Bennachie Centre, chapel of Garioch – the others are 14th December and in 2009 18th January, 22nd February and 15th March. 2 sessions each Sunday: 10.30am – 12noon for **LOW LEVEL AND BEGINNERS** Cost: £3 including pole hire or £1.50 if you have your own poles; and 12.30 – 4pm for **MID TERRAIN** Cost: £5 including pole hire or £2 if you have your own. Sessions are weather permitting. Booking essential – come to one session or all
Tel: (01467) 681470.

Manor Park Project Aberdeen (formerly Healthy Roots) Volunteer at Aberdeen's only community-led, wildlife-friendly public park, including planting, weeding, art work etc. Meets on the second Sunday of each month 1- 4pm starting at the park entrance next to the swings on Manor Walk, Aberdeen. Contact: healthyroots aberdeen @yahoo.co.uk
Tel: (01224) 276810.

Sunday 9th November cont.**Aberdeenshire Rangers**

Ythan Estuary Walk for adults and older children (12+). Come on this moderate walk (3-4 miles) over dunes, beach and muddy tracks along Newburgh beach and Ythan Estuary. Bring a packed lunch and binoculars to view the bird life and perhaps the seals. Stout footwear & waterproofs required. Meet at Beach car park in Newburgh, grid ref: NK003 246 OS map 38. 12 noon – 3pm, booking essential on
Tel: (01358) 742396.

Monday 10th November

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament Aberdeen and District monthly meeting, 6.30 pm. café-bar in Belmont Cinema, Belmont Street, Aberdeen. All welcome; for details
Tel: (01224) 583877.

Scottish Ornithologists Club

Talk: "A Life of Ospreys" by Roy Dennis, well-known independent consultant. Meet at 7.30pm at The Sportsman's Club, 11 Queen's Road, Aberdeen, all welcome, details on
Tel: (01467) 651296.

Tuesday 11th November**RSPB Aberdeen**

Indoor meeting and talk: "Africa: from the Cape to the Falls" by Mark Caunt. Meet at the Large Lecture Theatre, Zoology Dept. Uni of Aberdeen, at 7.30pm, all welcome, Details on
Tel: (01651) 806252.

Cairngorms National Park

Cairngorms LOAF meeting – Glen Clova Village Hall – For more information or to book a place contact or franpothecary@cairngorms.co.uk
Tel: (01479) 870533.

SNH Conference

Controlling invasive non-native species in freshwaters and wetlands. This event is an opportunity for those who manage these habitats to discuss successful control methods and strategies for dealing with invasive plants and animals. Workshops will consider impacts on biodiversity, control methods, legislation and examples of successful strategies. Venue: Battleby near Perth, cost £55, Booking on sgp@snh.gov.uk or

Tel: (01738) 458556 or 458557.

Wednesday 12th November**RSPB Aberdeen**

Day outing to the Montrose Basin. Meet at Montrose SWT Centre car park [OS54 NO701565] at 10am. Details on
Tel: (01651) 806252.

Wednesday 12th November cont.

Aberdeen Amnesty International Group Monthly Meeting. Meet 7.30 – 9.30pm at the Music Hall, Aberdeen. New faces always welcome. For more details contact

Tel: (01339) 882240.

Saturday 15th November**Farmers Markets**

Come along to your area's farmers market to buy local produce and crafts – get those food miles down! Please note that many farmers' markets only operate up until 1pm – if you are travelling to them please ring and check times beforehand.

1. BANCHORY - meet at Scott Skinner Square, Banchory, Tel: (01330) 825895.
2. ELGIN – meet at Elgin Plainstones, Tel: (01464) 861503.

Aberdeen City Rangers

Volunteer Work Day - pond dredge on Kincorth Hill. Help the rangers make more space for newts and other animals and plants. Bring wellies - tea, coffee, gloves and tools provided. Meet at the Reserve car park off Abbotswell Crescent on bus route 21 10am - 3pm. Booking essential

Tel: (01224) 897400.

Aberdeenshire Rangers

Feed the birds. At this time of year our feathered friends need a little more help to keep the hunger away. Come along and have a go at making some cake for the birds in your garden and decorate a feeder to take home. Please wear old clothes and be prepared to get messy! All welcome, children must be accompanied. Meet at Bridge Street Community Centre, Banff 2 – 3.30pm, booking essential, Tel: (01261) 813299.

Sunday 16th November**RSPB Loch of Strathbeg**

Goosewatch – as Sun 2nd November. Meet at the Visitor Centre car park at RSPB Loch of Strathbeg at 7am. Cost: Adult non-members £3/ children £1, members free. Booking on david.parnaby@rspb.org.uk

Tel: (01346) 532017.

Aberdeenshire Rangers

Cairns and Covenanters. Walk from Fyvie Castle out through Fyvie, on to the Cairn of Pitmansy, through Ardlogie, up to Woodhead and back to the Castle passing the camp where Montrose's royalist army stayed the night before the Battle of Fyvie in October 1644. All welcome, children must be accompanied. Meet at the car park, Fyvie Castle 10am – 12 noon, booking essential on

Tel: (01358) 726417 or 07786 021780.

Sunday 16th November cont.**Aberdeenshire Rangers**

Birse more to Birse Castle (6 miles, moderate). Bus leaves Gordon House at 8.30am and returns at approx. 4pm. Landranger map No. 44 Ballater and Gen Clova.. There are several famous routes from Deeside to the south which have been used by travellers for hundreds of years. This route follows part of one of them, The Fungle. From Aboyne and Birse more south, with some interesting wayside features and a house called 'The Guard'. Then through some coniferous woodlands with possible black cock sightings before the woodland gives way to open moorland, descending via a deep glen to Birse Castle, which was built to guard this ancient route. Cost: £14. Only suitable for adults, booking essential

Tel: (01467) 681470.

Monday 17th November**Amnesty International Moray**

Group meeting on the 3rd Monday of the month, venue tba. Meet at 7.30pm, all welcome – for more details

Tel: (01309) 672648

Tuesday 18th November**N E Mountain Trust**

Winter lecture: "A Celebration of Scotland" by Hamish Brown, first man to climb all the Munros in a single walk who is hugely enthusiastic about the Scottish outdoors - his talk contains a lively mixture of patter and pictures. Meet at the United Services Club 15 Bon Accord Square, Aberdeen, 7-30pm. All welcome, cost: £4/ £2. Details on www.nemt.org.uk

Tel: (01651) 842402.

Wednesday 19th November**Moray Firth Partnership**

AGM with a Moray Firth Wildlife slideshow and talk by Charlie Phillips, all welcome. Meet at Fortrose Community Theatre, 10.30am start , more details on info@morayfirth-partnership.org or

Tel: (01463) 225530.

Thursday 20th November**Aberdeenshire Environment Forum**

Annual General Meeting and Green Butterfly Awards. All welcome – meet at 7.30 pm at Strathburn Primary School, Inverurie. Details Tel: 01651 891336

Scottish Wildlife Trust

Winter talk: "North Eastern Grasslands" by Mike Smedley, SNH Advisory Officer for Grampian. Meet at the Lecture Theatre, Zoology Building, Aberdeen University, Tillydrone Ave, Aberdeen at 7.30pm, details

Tel: (01569) 763742.

Thurs 20th - Fri 21st November**CIFAL Findhorn Seminar**

Food Security: A Bioregional Response, a UNITAR Training Seminar at Findhorn Eco-village, Forres. Join us for these inspiring and educational days and help shape the future of Britain's food system! Explore key issues relating to all aspects of food security, gain an insight into what can be grown in Scotland, investigate policies and locally based food initiatives and visit three local farms engaged in Bioregional food development. Useful for those involved in food, health and community planning, and agriculture. Come for one day or two, rates from £100 per day, some subsidised places available for farmers. Book on www.findhorn.info/cifal_food_security.php or

Tel: (01309) 692011.

Saturday 22nd November**Aberdeenshire Rangers**

Trees of Lumsden. Come for a gentle stroll round Lumsden and find out more about the ecology and history of your local trees. All welcome, children must be accompanied. Meet at the car park at the south entrance to the village of Lumsden on the A97, 10.30am – 2pm. Booking essential,

Tel: (013398) 87453 / mobile 07768 704671.

Aberdeen City Rangers

Exploring environments – Hazelhead Woods. Find out about the natural history of the woodland and surrounding area exploring with the rangers. Meet at the car park behind Hazelhead café close to the golf clubhouse 11am – 1pm. Booking essential

Tel: (01224) 897400.

Sunday 23rd November**RSPB Aberdeen**

Day outing to Kinnaird Head. Meet at Kinnaird Head car park in Fraserburgh [OS30 NJ998677] at 10am. Details on

Tel: (01651) 806252.

Monday 24th November**Volunteer Centre Moray**

Supporting & supervising volunteers training seminar. Half day training seminar to help those involved in supervising or managing volunteers develop ideas, skills and strategies. This course will provide participants with understanding of the skills necessary for effective volunteer support and how this can enhance the volunteering experience for individuals, plus good practice examples. Meet at Volunteer Centre, Elgin from 1pm – 4.45pm, costs £10. Booking essential on info@volunteermoray.org.uk or

Tel: (01343) 544104.

Tuesday 25th November**Aberdeen Cycle Forum**

Monthly meeting on the last Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm to campaign and promote cycling in Aberdeen. All welcome- for details
Tel: (01224) 630669

SNH Conference

A place for life: environment, health and well-being. Sustainable places support the physical and mental health and well-being of people. This event will examine links between natural heritage and well-being, and show how communities, planners, land managers and health professionals can work together to create places which improve health and well-being and reduce health inequalities. Venue: Battleby near Perth, cost £55, Booking on sgp@snh.gov.uk or

Tel: (01738) 458556 or 458557.

Wednesday 26th November**Tibet Support Group Campaign**

Illustrated talk: 'Tibet by Bike: altitude with attitude'. Gordon Casely will describe his three-week, 1000 mile ride from Lhasa to Kathmandu, including reaching the Rongbuk glacier at the foot of Mount Everest. Free, meet 7.30pm, room KCG7 King's College, High Street, Old Aberdeen, details on

Tel: (01224) 314127.

Friday 28th November**Kemnay Wildlife Explorers**

Merry WEXmas! An evening of making decorations, bird cake and fun and games with this nature club for 8-14's. Meet in the Friendship Room in the Kemnay Village Hall at 7.00pm, 50p per child. Booking is essential on

Tel: (01467) 643859.

Saturday 29th November**Farmers Markets**

Come along to your area's farmers market to buy local produce and crafts – get those food miles down!

1. BANFF/MACDUFF – meet at Macduff Fish Market, Tel: (01771) 644369.
2. ABERDEEN - Aberdeen Country Fair meets at Belmont Street

Tel: (01224) 649000.

Saturday- 29th November**Aberdeen City Rangers**

Volunteer Work Day - Carnie Woods tree planting. Join the rangers to plant Scottish trees to enhance the woods for wildlife and people. Tea, coffee, gloves and tools provided. Meet at Carnie Woods, W of Elrick at Machie steps car park off the B979, 10am – 3pm. Booking essential

Tel: (01224) 897400.

Sunday- 30th November**RSPB Loch of Strathbeg**

Winter Fair. Fun for all the family - selection of games and activities for kids and for the adults, a selection of stalls for your Christmas gift ideas and a burger stand from a local farm to keep you well fed! Free entry, meet at the Loch of Strathbeg visitor centre 11am – 3pm, details
Tel: (01346) 532017.

Tuesday 2nd December**SNH Conference**

Landscape – Inspiration and Implementation: how landscape design and management can contribute to making sustainable places. This event looks at how landscapes of all scales – from the expanse of our fine scenery to the micro detail of the design of our parks and streetscapes – can be managed and designed to create sustainable places where people can find enjoyment, security and inspiration. Venue: Battleby near Perth, cost £55, Booking on sgp@snh.gov.uk or

Tel: (01738) 458556 or 458557.

Friday 5th December**Natural History Centre Aberdeen**

Nature tots – dinosaurs and fossils. Take a step back in time and discover the giants that roamed the earth – come and have fun at this free session for 2 to 5 year-olds. Two drop-in sessions 10am and 12 noon, repeated 2-4pm. Booking essential on nat.hist@abdun.ac.uk or
Tel: (01224) 274545 .

Saturday 6th December**Aberdeenshire Rangers**

Stonehaven Watch Club - cake, cards and calendars. Have fun making winter cake to feed the birds and putting together your own cards and calendars for 2009 using recycled pictures and materials or your own art-works. Wear old clothes and come equipped with imagination and enthusiasm. This monthly Nature Club event is for 8-14's age group. Meet at the Stonehaven Community Education Centre 10am – 12noon, advance booking essential,
Tel: (01569) 768292.

Sunday 7th December**Moray Ranger**

Goose count on an evening flight. Christmas is coming but we're not counting chickens. Instead, it's the wild pink footed and greylag geese, wintering here and flying out each day to feed on grasses and in corn fields – see them return to their roosts at Findhorn Bay Local Nature Reserve bird hide car park 4-5.30pm – an amazing sight. Bring warm clothes and binoculars, booking on
Tel: (01340) 543451.

Sunday 7th December cont.**Aberdeen Beach Clean**

Come along and join the Aberdeen Marine Conservation Society beach litter survey and cleanup team down at Aberdeen beach cleaning up and recording litter today from 2pm, starting from the North end of Aberdeen City beach. Family friendly event, more details on ijhouse@btinternet.com

Tel: (01224) 869245.

Thursday 11th December**Ythan Project Volunteers**

Meeting at 7.30pm at the Buchan Hotel in Ellon. All welcome, details on

Tel: (01358) 789394.

CALLING ALL 'GREEN TEENS'!

Are you interested in Environmental issues?

Are you a teenager (13 – 19 years) living in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire or Moray?

Thanks to sponsorship by SNH, we are looking for 'Green Teens' to enter our competition to write an article for the Green Diary on an environmental issue/project that you care about. This could be about a local place that has inspired you to think about the environment, a global environmental issue, wildlife in your area or a great local environmental project that you'd like to write about. The article must be between 200 – 350 words, include a picture and have a connection to the North East that you think Green Diary readers would be interested in.

Up to 3 winning entries will be published in the March 2009 edition of the Green Diary. To submit your entry, please e-mail ann@reapscotland.org.uk. Entries must reach us by 31st December 2008 and include your date of birth and school attended or contact details. If you are unable to e-mail photos, these can be sent separately by post on paper or disc to REAP, Green Teen Green Diary article, 177, Mid St Keith, AB55 4DN. Please include the caption for the photo, and check that any people in the photo are happy to appear in the Green Diary. We cannot return any photos sent to us. Articles and photos will be edited at the discretion of the Green Diary editorial team, who will also judge the competition.

For details Tel: (01542) 888070.

Getting Switched On

words and photo by *Griselda McGregor*

One of the highlights for of this year's Aberdeen Techfest for me was talking to David Rodger, Communications Manager of Aberdeen Renewable Energy Group (AREG). As one of the guest lecturers at this now famous festival of science, technology, engineering, mathematics and all sorts of environment concerns, David addressed a packed house on the diverse subject of renewable energy including the latest developments in the North-East.

Under an umbrella-theme of 'Switching on to Renewables' David tackled issues from the global scale right down to the average domestic scenario. Choosing the right renewable energy device is every bit as important as the initial choice to 'go green.'

"You have to consider your location very carefully and choose the right solution for it," he explained. "Renewables are very site-specific. You must find out what the heat/power loads of the situation are, whether your solutions suit the building energy useage, are there specific operation and maintenance requirements and do the economics stack up."

He began his renewables journey by taking his audience back 7000years to show how even those clever Egyptians knew a thing or two about harnessing windpower when sailed craft first appeared on the Nile. Over 4,000 years ago Babylonians (now Afghanistan and Iraq) built the first known windmills for grinding grain, and water pumps for irrigation were developed.

David explained that making buildings more 'energy-conscious' is an on-going problem. "Existing buildings account for most emissions

and will be with us for many years to come, but even new buildings in Scotland still lag behind other European countries in terms of energy conservation standards for new buildings. The solution involves matching the best standards in Europe to achieve a zero emissions standard for all new buildings by 2016", David said.

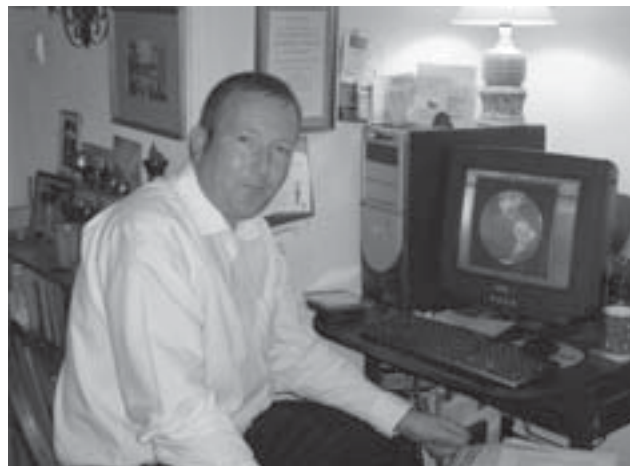
The planning system has been slow to promote environmentally friendly buildings. Low impact technology such as solar panels still needs costly and time-consuming planning permission due to out-of-date regulations. One solution here is to adopt a percentage rule which requires all developments to cut their CO2 emissions by installing small-scale renewables such as solar panels and to do away with the need for planning permission for these. The good news is that in March this year, a consultation on changes to planning permission was launched that promised to cut the red tape surrounding micro-renewables.

However, new technologies remain expensive and out-of-reach of most households. Government grant schemes have been small and are often running out of funds or threatened with review. The answer is bigger grants to fund more projects, creating a market for small companies and installers to become established, so bringing down costs.

David also gave an update

on the Grampian Biomass Working Group. Established in 2006 it is a network for the exchange of information and for confidence building with presentations of existing projects and discussions on how to expand the sector.

Founded five years ago AREG is an innovative private/public partnership set up to help identify and promote renewable energy opportunities in the Aberdeen city and shire region. It now has 100 members across a wide range of sectors who are actively involved in every type of renewable energy resource. The group provides advice and support to businesses, householders and public sector bodies looking to install renewable devices in their buildings. AREG can be contacted on 01224 814619 or see www.aberdeenrenewables.com



*David Rogers of Aberdeen Renewable Energy Group
AREG*

INVERURIE'S FAIRTRADE FUTURE

words and photo by *Griselda McGregor*

Inverurie is getting geared up to achieve Fairtrade Town status. A first meeting was chaired by former Gordon MSP Nora Radcliffe and guest speakers were Martin Forster, chairman of the Ellon Fairtrade steering group and Sue Good of the Montgomery Development Education Centre, Aberdeen. Martin outlined five fundamental goals which he suggested Inverurie could follow:

that the local council passes a resolution supporting Fairtrade

a range of at least 2 Fairtrade products sold in local shops and catering establishments

Fairtrade products to be used by local workplaces and community organisations

attract maximum media coverage and enlist popular support

establish a steering group

Said Martin " I think the impact on Ellon has been to encourage civic pride and good citizenship. The public have become aware of

the needs of others. As it affects the local economy we are looking to link Fairtrade with the promotion of local produce."

Sue Good from Aberdeen explained the background to the Fairtrade (FT) movement. The Fairtrade Foundation is a charity in its own right and is supported by many organisations including Traidcraft, Christian Aid, Mothers Union, the Co-op. Aberdeen achieved its Fairtrade status in March 2004 and support has grown to include 50 retail outlets, 34 catering establishments and the movement has the support of oil companies, Aberdeen University, medical centres and churches.

An enthusiastic steering group has been formed in Inverurie, with plans afoot to increase




*From left to right: Nora Radcliffe, Martin Forster and
Sue Good*


support amongst other local traders and organisations.

For more information contact Sue Good, Tel: (01224) 620111 or visit: www.aberdeenfairtrade.org.uk




CFINE is a company, registered as a charity, which supports:

 *Community Food Outlets* in and with our poorest communities

 *Fareshare* surplus produce from the food industry, collected and distributed free to priority groups

 *Fast Fruit* to nurseries, schools, voluntary organisations, etc

 Commercial, competitive *Trading* with oil companies, restaurants etc

Healthy Snacks – Fruit – Veg – Salad

For more information contact Fiona or

Dave on (01224) 596156

www.cfine.org

the **green** diary team:

Ann Davidson
Griselda McGregor
Petra Vergunst
Alan Stevenson

the **green** diary team is grateful to

The Harlaw Centre, Inverurie for the distribution of the **green** diary

Deadline for inclusions: 6th of each month

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Noticeboard

Fantastic Fossils at Macduff Marine Aquarium – go down to the Aquarium this autumn to see a fascinating collection of fishy fossils on loan from various museums around the North East. Most are fossils of animals and fish from the Moray Firth area including some top predators of their day (around 250 million years ago!) who would have almost certainly evolved to be the first land animals. We would like to thank Elgin Museum, Aberdeenshire Heritage and Aberdeen University Geology Dept. for their donations towards this display and we hope lots of people are able to see and enjoy it. Contact the Macduff Marine Aquarium on Tel: 01261 833369.

How can the ECA help you? – over 90% of businesses in the UK are unaware of a Government incentive scheme to help improve energy efficiency, according to new industry research. A survey by Daikin of 1,300 businesses across offices, retail and leisure, revealed that 92% were unaware of the Government's Enhanced Capital Allowance (ECA) scheme set up to aid investment in modern energy efficient technology such as low emission vehicles, efficient space heating and controls and combined heat and power units. Claim 100% first year capital allowances on www.eca.gov.uk and save money, energy and running costs.

make sure of your copy of **the green diary** - *pick it up* FREE at a range of outlets in Moray, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City, get it by *e-mail* in PDF format - [e-mail greendiary@reapscotland.org.uk](mailto:e-mail@greendiary@reapscotland.org.uk) or look on our *website* at www.reapscotland.org.uk/greendiary for back copies

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