

A G E n d a

Grampian 50+ Network News for

Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire & Moray



Issue 83
Spring 2021



A very atmospheric - and chilly - picture from Ballater 50+ group during a walk at Dorsincilly near Birkhall.

NETWORK NEWS

Covid Leaders: At the time of going to print, groups wishing to go walking again must have a Covid Leader. This means one or more members have to take part in a brief, easy, online questionnaire to get a certificate. Visit Scottish Sports Council – <http://sportscotland.org.uk/covid19-officer-training/>

Coming out of lockdown: If you are a large group normally using buses, it may be some time before your group can be all together again so why don't you split into smaller groups – up to 15, putting those of similar fitness together. You could walk locally, or take cars or public transport to further afield. Each group would require a Covid Leader and/or a Walk Leader, but certainly worth it. Some groups have met already and are really enjoying being back walking and all the chat that goes with it. Hopefully the walks experience will be complete with the cafes open. A paper entitled '**Guidance for Groups**' has gone out to Group Contacts.

AGEnda: Since lockdown, we have been producing the AGEnda online with paper copies for those without email. This has worked well but now rules are relaxing, we are happy to provide paper copies for any members who wish them. Group Contacts have been asked to update us on the number of paper copies required so, even if you have email but would like a paper copy, please ask your Group Contact to let the Secretary know. Some members have told us they like to 'hold the newsletter in their hands' and are more likely to read it through than online. Over to you!

'Like to join a Walking Group?' We have created a poster for groups who wish to advertise for new members. There is a box on the poster for you to give your group details. Remember not to give a landline if you can – a mobile number is safer. Posters will be sent to Group Contacts.

Welcome Pack: We have copies of the Welcome Pack for new members. Group Contacts, please request from the Secretary.

'Promoting Health and Happiness in Later Life': We have updated our Flyer promoting the Network. This will be circulated to Group Contacts and groups can request further copies.

The Network Facebook Page: is a closed group – for members only. Why not join? Even if, like me, you are no expert on IT, it is worth looking at to find out about walks and other interesting information from members.

Programme for 2021: At the time of going to press, our plans are to hold Autumn Walks in three different areas – Inverurie, Moray and South Aberdeenshire on 5th and 7th October. We also hope to have small 'get togethers' for Coffee and Chat across the region later in the Autumn, running similarly to the Afternoon Teas we held a couple of years ago with a few members from different groups meeting together. Any group wishing to host a get together should contact the Secretary.

Guidelines for Walkers

Guidelines for Walkers

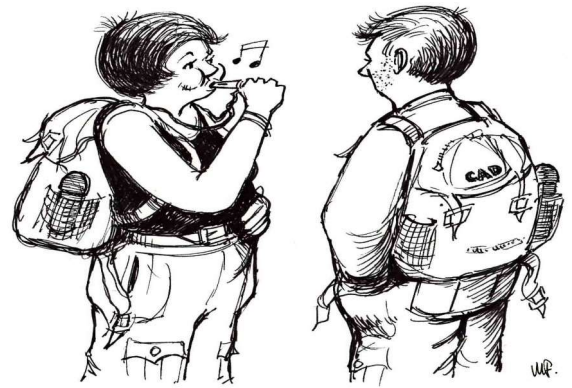


Our ***Safety for Walkers*** campaign last year arose from the problems some groups were experiencing on pathways from cyclists approaching from the rear without warning. Following on from this, the Network will be providing each group with a high-viz waistcoat for the back marker to wear over his/her rucksack. On the back of the waistcoat there will be a cyclist logo and easily read wording to warn cyclists that there is a group ahead and to **'Ring Bell or Yell.'** This is the winning slogan from our Waistcoat Challenge

and came from Rab Gunn of Dyce TFG group.

Thanks to Rab and all the others who sent in suggestions.

Of course, if we expect Cyclists to do their bit, we Walkers must also do our bit. We are asking that both back marker and leader carry a whistle to warn of cyclists coming from either direction. On hearing a whistle, the group **must always go to the left**, making it safer for everyone. As well as the back marker's waistcoat, it is advisable that the walk leader also wears a high viz yellow waistcoat.



"Yes, yes but can you play Mull of Kintyre?"

These measures will be helpful to approaching cyclists and should lead to safer walking for all.



Annual Report January – December 2020

Because of Covid 19, 2020 was a year to remember, not for the busy active Network activities planned but for lockdowns, isolating and vaccines. However, there was still quite a bit Network activity going on in the background:

- The Spring Fling at Fraserburgh was all planned by the local Walking Groups and ready to go; the Spring Walks were planned and ready to go; we had initial meetings about the Rendezvous at Banchory with the Culter Group; we had a holiday planned for 50 members in June in the Borders staying at Peebles Hydro. Surprisingly there was quite a lot of work to do cancelling these events.
- We produced 3 AGEndas – Spring, Summer & Winter, many being sent by email but with paper copies for those who requested them. Thank you to all the contributors and of course our Editors, Chris & Joan. The content was different with no group reports but members told us how they were coping and there were some budding poets too, along with lovely photographs.
- In January 2020 we had started discussions with Dr Kathryn Martin of University of Aberdeen to do a research project with our members and groups about the Benefits of Walking. A research student, Emily, was going to do her Masters Degree and was very excited at the prospect of attending the Spring Fling & Rendezvous as well as joining groups on their walks, all as part of her research project. Then suddenly she was off home to Canada because of Covid. The project was completed via Zoom and other social media which was a great contrast to the initial proposals and I'm sure much more difficult. Congratulations to Emily on receiving her Masters. An additional survey on behalf of Scotland's Chief Scientist Office was also carried out by Dr Kathryn Martin of the University.
- Throughout much of the year we campaigned for the safety of "Walkers v Cyclists". We were responding to complaints from groups about cyclists overtaking walkers on country paths & pavements without warning or at speed. Whilst we are not at all against cycling, we felt this was an issue the network could get involved in. We were delighted at the widespread recognition and support we received from organisations and politicians and are now implementing some ideas for 2021.
- We now have a Facebook Page for Network Members only and numbers are increasing
- We did not have an AGM in 2020 but we have had a few changes to our Committee. Alison Emslie, Nora Radcliffe & Muriel Knox retired from the committee after many years of service to the Network. A big thank you to them. We are lucky to have three new members, Graeme & Lorna Rae taking on Treasurer & 100 Club responsibilities and Alan Melrose representing Age Scotland with whom we have worked closely over the years.

My thanks to all the Committee Members for their continuing contribution and support to the Network and looking forward to seeing members again later in 2021.

Marjory D'Arcy,
Chairperson



RECEIPTS

21/01 - 31/12/2020

01/01 - 31/12/2019

Grants
Co-op Community Fund - AGenda Funding
NHS Grampian
Aberdeen University Survey costs

Network

Membership fees = 1215 members
Donations (Stagers £5 + CB goodwill £80)
100 Club Income

Rendezvous

Fees: Entries = 0 + (Transport= 0 x £6)
Rendezvous Prize Draw
AGM & Spring Fling - Fees = entries 0 x £6
Week of Walks - Spring = 0 x £2 + Autumn = 0 x £2
Holiday Income
Bank Interest

PAYMENTS

Network Expns-Includes Ins.£508.46 + ACVO £20
AGenda -Printing & Postage
Spring Fling & AGM Expenses
Rendezvous Expenses
Spring & Autumn Walks Expenses
Training Costs
University Survey Costs
100 Club Costs
Mortuary Costs - (2019 = Hotel deposit) - (2020 = Refunds)

Deficit/ Surplus for Year
Balance b/fwd as at 01/01/2020
Closing Balance at 31st December 2020

	21/01 - 31/12/2020			01/01 - 31/12/2019		
	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £
	0	0	0		102	102
	5000		5000	5000		5000
	916	185	1101			0
			0			0
	3645		3645	4083		4083
	85		85			0
	751	731	1482	884	808	1692
			0			0
			0			0
	0		0	4008		4008
	0		0	504		504
	0		0	1248		1248
	0		0	224		224
	11419		11419	3640		3640
	15		15	100		100
	21831	916	22747	19691	910	20601
	1235		1235	1683		1683
	822	185	1007	800	929	1729
	274		274	3010		3010
	24		24	7270		7270
	158		158	558		558
	0		0	2215		2215
	1455		1455			0
	20	820	840	77	820	897
	11595		11595	3464		3464
	15583	1005	16588	19077	1749	20826
	6248	-89	6159	614	-839	-225
	16038	606	16644	15424	1445	16869
	22286	517	22803	16038	606	16644

I have examined the financial records of Grampian 50+ Network for the year to 31st December 2020 and the above statement has been properly prepared from these records.

Signed 

Date 15/12/21

2020 was a bleak year for us. We had our AGM on 12th March, then everything was cancelled until further notice as we abided by the dictates of the Scottish and National Governments.



However, we did manage to have 3 outings in November. Twelve of our group bravely met at Haddo House, in individual cars, and obeying the rules, staying 2 metres apart, approximately, we managed a short 4-mile ramble round the woods, up to the Deer monument and back to the car-park without incident. We all enjoyed it and agreed to have another outing if there were no changes to the rules.

On 19th November, fifteen of us ventured to Castle Fraser, again in individual cars and did a 5-mile ramble round the estate. One of the members had a drama with a hired car, flat battery. We managed to start it with a pair of jump leads and were rewarded with coffee and cake at the excellent restaurant.

Finally, days before lockdown, eight of us headed to Banff where we walked along the coast to Whitehills in brilliant sunshine, where we had our snack, purchased fish at Downies, then headed back to the car park. Another five invigorating miles.

On 17th December, twenty-one of us had our Christmas lunch at Morris's Hotel, excellent as usual. We were socially distanced at tables of two. It was as always, a jolly event.

Since then we've done nothing, though I have met a few of our team while doing our frequent exercise walks round the by-pass in Oldmeldrum. All are anxious to get started again which I'm certain will be soon.

Sandy McIntosh,
Oldmeldrum Ramblers.

Hopefully this lockdown and current restrictions will be easing soon to allow us to return to some semblance of normality.



We have however been meeting as a group once per month to take a socially distanced walk around Peterhead. These have seen an average of 15/17 of our members participate. Hopefully it won't be too long before we can go further afield on our fortnightly walks. Three of our members have completed the SportScotland COVID safety certificate to act as COVID Officers.

Some time ago we set up a WhatsApp group and more than 30 of our members participate by sharing photos of walks they have done. It really has been a great way to keep in touch during these strange times.



Doug Driver
Peterhead Wayfarers

Only five walks were managed with our group before the last lockdown. They were: Whiteford near Pitcaple, Brimmond and Elrick Hills, Turf Hill, which is a small hill at the Keig end of the Bennachie range, Kintore/Kinellar circular and a walk around Queen's Hill, starting from Coull. The latter has

limited parking at the Cemetery but avoids walking past some very intimidating guard dogs along the Tarland Way!



Since the announcement that we could only walk with one other, our group members have been doing their own thing and have shared their walks

on What's App. Two of our members have been clocking up the miles locally as they recover from hip replacement surgery and abdominal surgery...both individuals doing really well. We



look forward to welcoming them back once they are fully fit.



I, personally, have been walking mainly with

one member of our group...usually three times weekly, and we have "discovered" at least twelve new/partially new walks...mostly local... which we find amazing!

So, with the vaccine roll out going at a pace, we have just received the welcome news that we can very soon get back to walking with our groups. We shall be sharing the new walks we have found and can hardly wait. I think we are all "champing at the bit"!

Sheila Carter, Kintore Wanderers

COTSWOLD
outdoor

15% discount
for Grampian 50+ Network

in-store and online
Use code: AF-GRAMP50

You can also use your discount with:

SNOW ROCK **runnersneed**

When restrictions were relaxed last Autumn our club got back together enthusiastically with numbers reaching the mid twenties (up to 30 being allowed that time.) Walks were restricted to around Elgin so members could walk, or drive themselves, to the start point. Walks were fortnightly and it was so good to have company on walks again.

**Elgin 50+
Group**

Everyone was disappointed when these were stopped just after Christmas – but now we are back together again, still walking in and around Elgin as travel restrictions still apply. We are forming two groups – one fast and one not so fast – every other Thursday. We may be walking the same routes again - changing the direction sometimes – but no one minds because we are together and have company. We also have 7 new members who are keen to come out with us. A walk seems so much shorter with someone to chat to.

Hopefully we will get the chance to join up the groups and have a coffee afterwards – just like old times - but until then we are just happy to be back.

Jo Jones
President

EATING IN THE UK IN THE FIFTIES

Pasta had not been invented.

Curry was a surname.

A takeaway was a mathematical problem.

A pizza was something to do with a leaning tower.

Bananas and oranges only appeared at Christmas time.

All crisps were plain; the only choice we had was whether to put the salt on or not.

A Chinese chippy was a foreign carpenter.

Rice was a milk pudding, and never, ever part of the dinner.

A Big Mac was what we wore when it was raining.

Brown bread was something only poor people ate.

Oil was for lubricating; fat was for cooking.

Tea was made in a teapot using tea leaves and never green.

Coffee was Camp, and came in a bottle.

Cubed sugar was regarded as posh.

Only Heinz made beans.

Fish didn't have fingers in those days.

Eating raw fish was called poverty, not sushi.

None of us had ever heard of yoghurt.

Healthy food consisted of anything edible.

People who didn't peel potatoes were regarded as lazy.

Indian restaurants were only found in India.

Cooking outside was called camping.

Seaweed was not a recognised food.

“Kebab” was not even a word never mind a food.

Sugar enjoyed a good press in those days, and was regarded as being white gold.

Prunes were medicinal.

Surprisingly, muesli was readily available, it was called cattle feed.

Pineapples came in chunks in a tin; we had only seen a picture of a real one.

Water came out of a tap, if someone had suggested bottling it and charging more than petrol for it they would have become a laughing stock

The one thing that we never ever had on our table in the fifties was elbows.

Dorothy Scott

Tuesday 16th March wis Red Letter Day
Fan we could a' walk the gither as a group.
Well, nae a' o' us; nae mair than 15
But man! We were a' cock a hoop!

We started in Fettercairn, syne walked oot tae Fasque
Far we walked roon the lake in a gale.
Oot past the Home Fern we took the Bogindollo road
Far they're plannin' new hooses for sale.

Twa weeks later Inverbervie wis the start
O' a lang walk tae Benholm and back.
Fae the beach it was a fair climb tae the tap o' the hill
Then doon and up and doon the track.

Fae Benholm we hid tae cross the road
And ging doon tae be close tae the sea.
Fae here on in, the goin' wis easier
An' flatter fir auldies like me!

Oor third walk started at Dunnottar car-park
An' you could choose the short walk or the lang.
I couldna' go cos my hair needed cut.
I hope you dinna' think that wis wrang!

I apologise now for this terrible poem.
If you can't understand it, don't worry.
Just enjoy reading the other reports.
This one was written in a bit of a hurry!

Helen Ritchie - Mearns 50+ Group

Discovery Challenges

Like everyone else, Discoverers have found life difficult in trying to move things forward during the last year.

Some items, such as hobbies, crafts and writing reports, could be undertaken during the long days stuck at home. Physical activities are now beginning to get underway again. Journeys may or may not be done, depending on the journey you are undertaking. The Community Challenge is the one I have been unable to do anything with at the moment as nobody is in a position to take on volunteers at the moment, but hopefully this will change as the summer progresses.

I believe that the Discovery Association is to have its Annual General meeting on Zoom at the beginning of May so we will hear what problems other Discoverers have had and what they have done to overcome them.

Alan Stewart

Discovery Rep



On a fine, sunny morning on 24th March several members of our Club met up at Eden Park in Peterhead. We organised ourselves into small groups before setting off to walk locally.

Bloo Toon Ramblers



Different routes and paths were followed by each group.

We went along various streets where we were able to admire the Spring flowers in the gardens as we went along.

A change of scenery as we walked along the waterfront by the River Ugie where great views of the water were enjoyed.



From the waterfront several paths were followed before heading onto Maggie Black's Trail. At times deer can be spotted in this area but no sign of any as our group walked along.

The old railway line was another route followed before heading back to Eden Park. Great to have a socially distanced chat with fellow members! One member has a new grandchild and another has a new great grandchild. It was lovely to hear some bright news!

Being able to meet up again and have a walk is hopefully a step back to some sort of 'normal' life!

Hazel Beaton

Blue Toon Ramblers



Eager to get going again!

Aboyne 50+ Ramblers

Aboyne 50+ Ramblers took the first opportunity to go walking again. Although allowed to be in a group of up to 15, we split up into two smaller ones. In the middle of the countryside, this group came across a somewhat unusual set of abandoned aircraft steps.

There may be quite a long wait for the next plane to come along, but we can all dream of jetting off to somewhere a bit more exotic than Kincardine O' Neil!



Ballater 50+ Walking Group

Ballater 50+ continued to walk during early winter. We donned our Santa hats on 21 December and headed off to Abergairn Castle where we stopped for coffee and mince-meat pies, although I'm not sure all the flasks contained coffee! The hoar frost the following week was picturesque, but a sign of things to come.

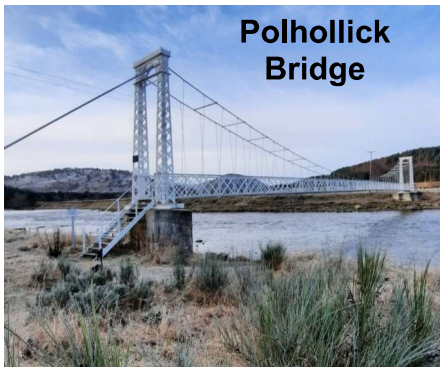


Abergairn Castle

Polhollick Bridge

There was a light covering of snow for our first walk of 2021 to Mill of Sterin. We optimistically discussed where we would go the following week but realised new lockdown restrictions were imminent. Group walks had to be put on hold for the foreseeable future.

The weather during January and February was harsh; prolonged sub-zero temperatures, deep snow and, when the snow thawed, floods. Many trees and riverside paths were damaged, the build-up of silt and stones changed the course of the river dramatically.



After the challenges of winter it was a relief to see signs of spring and to receive encouraging news about the reduction of infection numbers, the successful rollout of the vaccination programme and a cautious route map out of lockdown. It was so good to be able to meet up as a group on 15 March and enjoy each other's company on a local walk. Since then the weather has been mixed for our walks; snow blowing across fields one week, glorious sunshine the next but regardless of this we all agree, it is great to be out walking together again.

Danzig Suspension Bridge over Dee near Garbh Allt Shiel



Susan Lawson - Ballater 50+

Network Holidays

It was such a shame that the 2020 holiday to the Borders was cancelled. I was so looking forward to it. Here are some recollections of Network holidays that I have been on in the past.

Aberfoyle; A 'Fawlty Towers' beautiful old building, in need of a tender loving care upgrade! We, the Ballater Belles (something of a misnomer!) got a bit of a reputation as "The Gin Ladies"! The weather was lovely, so post daytime activities we settled ourselves in the garden with our G&Ts, ably assisted by the bus driver! His bus fridge proved quite handy! A few notable others did come and join us once they observed our little gathering. We came back one day after our walks a little bit hot and sweaty to no power/hot water. We were, however, compensated with a lovely glass of complimentary fizz!

Glenmore Lodge: Here we kept our gin gatherings more under wraps! We loved the quizzes on all our holidays but the Dingbats quiz at the Lodge gave me sleepless nights. I am so competitive that I was even dreaming about them, trying to figure them out. The walk from Nethybridge to the Lodge was particularly memorable because of the fabulous scenery.

I also have very fond memories of the 50+ holiday to **Kitzbuhel**, staying at the Hotel Edelweiss, where Veronika and Klaus were excellent hosts, catering for our every need. I loved it so much that I returned there to ski in the winter several times. The walks were ably led by Alan Melrose. The weather was very hot and sunny, which, for us fair-skinned Scots, was indeed a challenge, but sitting in the hotel garden with a small libation in the warm evenings after the daily exertions was lovely.

The camaraderie on all the holidays was super and it is always nice to meet up again at the efficiently organised Network events. I hope it's not too long before they can start up again.

Fiona Robertson, Alford & Ballater

Full Circle; a year in Stonehaven

Stonehaven
50+ Walking
Group



Our last group walk at Tullos Hill March 2020; beautiful sunny day a promise of Spring.

Here at the War Memorial on another bonny Spring day, but lockdown was just round the corner!



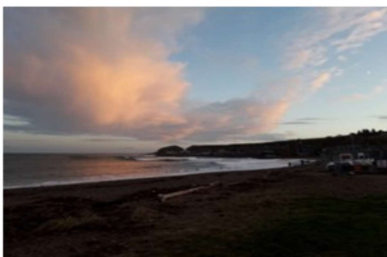
It might look sunny but that north east wind will chill you to the bone!

If you get up early enough you might catch this Summer sunrise.



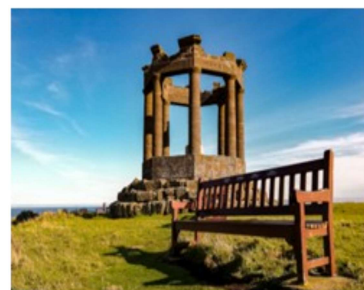
Dunnottar Castle never disappoints but where do all these folks come from?

This time of year is no guarantee of sunny weather. Wrap up well!



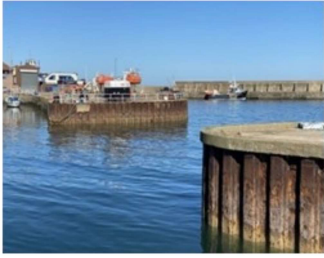
A summer evening stroll, spectacular skies.

Stunning views across the bay from here; enjoy sitting in the sunshine.



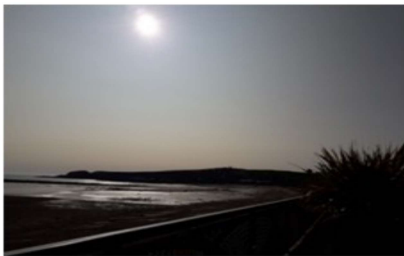
Full Circle; a year in Stonehaven

Stonehaven
50+ Walking
Group



Who could resist a walk round the harbour on a fine summer day?

The days are starting to shorten, so enjoy an autumn afternoon walk.



..... and suddenly the light is fading earlier in the day and winter chills set in.

But even the coldest snowy days are beautiful - if you are appropriately dressed!



But oh! The joy when the sun returns and the daffodils are in full bloom. A whole year of restrictions has past, already April but better days are here again!! We will be back with our boots on shortly.

Lots to enjoy.

Betty Luurtsema, Stonehaven 50+

POET'S corner

One cold morning in December
We went for a walk in the park.
As it was near to Christmas,
We wore Santa hats for a lark.
Some people smiled at us and some even
laughed.
We certainly made a few dogs bark.
In this weird time of staying apart,
I hope we started a Xmas spark(le)

Wishing everybody an optimistic 2021



Pat Balfour, Cornhill Thursday Walkers

Under House Arrest

Will this lockdown niver end?
This virus tae hell can we nae send?
Upon oor health we do depend
And on oor sanity.
Let's oot tae see oor freends again
An' a' oor femmily.

Like prisoners in the hoose we're shut
Oot once a day tae walk or shop.
Ma nails need deen', ma hair needs cut,
Ah'm in a mess
Lat'soot again, we're in a rut
Nae mair, nae less.

Bit at least we're a' in reasonable health.
We're nae in hospital or near tae death.
So let's be thankful that we hae breath
An stop this girnin'
For life is better than a' the world's
wealth.
Gweed times are comin'.

**Frances Jaffray
Ellon Ramblers**

14

My ABTA Claim

(The cruise was for October 2020, then the company went bankrupt and it took till January 2021 to get my money refunded.)

First they wantit a' the paperwork
So I sent them scans o' cheques and
bills.

Syne they wantit proof o' payment.
Should I send a copy o' my will?
Syne they asked the bank tae confirm
The scan o' cheques baith front an' back.
I winner't if I should send my blood group
In case they wantit some o' that!
Bit jist fin I thocht my hopes were sunk,
I checked my balance on my online bank
An' lo and behold, there wis the amount
Paid in full – they hid come up trumps

**Frances Jaffray,
Ellon Ramblers**



Frances' knitting needles
are still busy clicking away,
but this time it's socks for her friend's 98
year-old father who has 'affa caul' feet!

POET'S corner

Nearing the End

We've lived a year of hope and fear.
When the virus turned up here,
We never thought it would last this long,
But getting there we've had to be strong.

It took us all by surprise.
Who would have believed their eyes?
Staying at home has been the motto.
It's been like living in a grotto.

Time was spent by all the scientists
To find a vaccine to meet the compliances.
Governments, they must all agree
To really work. We wait and see.

We've all been holding out an arm,
All the people, taking it in turn.
It really doesn't hurt at all.
Then we all will have a ball!

We're all waiting in vain
To live our lives like we did again.
I'm not making any predictions
But getting rid of all restrictions
'At last!'

Lorraine Gerrard

The Drumoak Poet

The Ups and Downs of COVID19

Over the last year I have walked almost everyday
Observing seasonal changes along the way
In all sorts of weather even snow and ice
Just to be outdoors was so very nice

Having not done so much walking before.
Everyday Improved my well being a little bit more,
Taking heed of advice, walked alone in the main
Though meeting a friend every now and again.

Friends and family made real efforts to keep in
touch
With their news and messages appreciated so
much.

The time spent at home and indoors ,
Kept occupied with cooking, baking, puzzling and
numerous chores.

Current restrictions will be easing quite soon ,
So our vaccinated members are over the moon
Group walks should resume with little more delay
Looking forward to meeting in April and May,

Sheila Jones

Culter 50+ Walking Group

**Even cats
know to
social
distance!!**



Garioch 50+ Men's Walking Group

On Tuesday in Finzean a black Labrador-looking dog appeared in the car park and went round everyone. We thought he had come from the garden opposite. When we set off on our walk, he came with us and stayed the whole day, walking 9 miles, going back and forth from the front to the back of the group. He had a good lunch – chicken, corned beef sandwiches, followed by bananas!

He had a tag on his collar and so Tommy phoned the owner, who said she'd meet us at the car park. He'd been out since 7.30 and it was now 15.00. She explained that he was from Guide Dogs but didn't make the grade. He wouldn't go into the owner's car but leapt into Dave's and wasn't for coming out – Dave has 2 Labs and 2 spaniels. He had to be "encouraged" out of Dave's car into his own. Apparently he has disappeared a few times and though, on the walk, we went past his house, he didn't go near it but stayed with us! We asked his name, which was, Elvis, and told the owner that we are happy to walk him each Tuesday. He qualifies as a member, being over 8 years of age.

I recently read an article about a gent in Edinburgh's visit to the doctor, expecting a prescription. The doctor's prescribed – join the Ramblers.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh/eastfife-56919166>

We are continuing with our weekly walks and have had a great turnout recently, despite restrictions. Our programme is available till the end of July initially. Along with everyone else, hoping that all stay well and that life gets easier soon.

Russ Jacobs



Our group started walking again as soon as we got the go ahead from the Government, and two of us did online training to become Covid Officers to conform with Sport Scotland regulations.

Forres 50+ Walking Group

Our walk today started at the bird hide in Findhorn and we walked 7 miles along the coastal path and back to Findhorn along the beach. The views across the Moray Firth were amazing but the snow on Ben Wyvis and the hills further north in Caithness reminded us that it was still March.

We were just so lucky with the weather and when we arrived at Findhorn Bay, we were delighted to see two groups of seals taking their ease on the sand bank and on the other side of the Findhorn Bay. We had heard that the Ospreys had returned to the area, but we did not see them

Walking 2 metres apart to Findhorn Bay



We have all really suffered from the lack of social interaction and it is worrying that some members are complaining of loss of fitness and low mood. It was so uplifting just to get out in a socially distanced group and catch up with all the news.

Hopefully with the further easing of lockdown and the vaccination programme, things will improve for us all and we might even be able to organise an away day towards the end of summer. We look forward to a Spring and Summer of walks and a renewing of friendships. **Sheila Crosby**

Findhorn Bay with the Black Isle in the distance



John C Milne (The Memsie Poet)

Mintlaw
Ramblers

On Wednesday 16th October 2019, Mintlaw Ramblers set off on our usual fortnightly walk. Our route today was to take us from the village of Memsie to Fraserburgh, a distance of approximately 4 miles.

On alighting from our bus, a short distance to the west of Memsie Crossroads, we gathered in a "boorachie" to learn a little about Memsie's most famous son, the Doric Poet, John C. Milne. Remarkably, Milne was of particular interest to one member of our group as Mintlaw Rambler, Ruth Taylor, is John's niece!

John Clark Milne was born at the farm of Waterside, Memsie on 29th November, 1897 and was one of a family of twelve, ten of whom survived. When he was aged around two, the family moved to the farm of Pickerstone, also near Memsie. It was here that John spent his boyhood and, through his experiences and keen sense of observation for the world around him, first discovered his gift for writing.

John walked the 1¾ miles to Memsie School (now the house to the south of Memsie Cairn) and completed his primary education there, a clever lad with the makings of a scholar. His daily journeys are fondly remembered in his poem '*When You and I were Laddies*' (on the road tae Memsie School). John's next journey would take him to Fraserburgh Academy - a four mile cycle ride daily. He excelled in his subjects and was among the top performers and prize winners at the end of term. He went on to pass his higher exams and secured a place at Aberdeen University. In the evenings and at weekends though, like many farmers' sons, John became "orra loon" at Pickerstone, for there was always work to be done on the farm.

***I widna be an Orra Loon
For a' the world's gear
I widna be an Orra Loon
I'd raither stick tae Lear***

***Pu'in neeps wi hacket hans
Scrapin dubs an sharny kye
Howkin holes tae beery nowt
Reddin midden drains forbye***

John's university career was interrupted by service with the Gordon Highlanders during WWI, but in 1922 he graduated with First Class Honours in Mental Philosophy. Three years later in 1925 he graduated with First Class Honours in Moral Philosophy and a further degree in Geography. John then went on to follow a teaching career, first at Rose's Academical Institute, Nairn and then at Aberdeen College of Education, where he spent most of his working life. John inspired many young people to enter teaching and his quiet style and friendly manner endeared him to work colleagues and students alike.

JC Milne was one of the finest poets the north-east of Scotland has produced and his works are loved, not only here in Scotland but by many devotees the world over.

John's first book, '*The Orra Loon*,' was published in 1946, followed by his collected '*Poems*' shortly after his death in 1962.

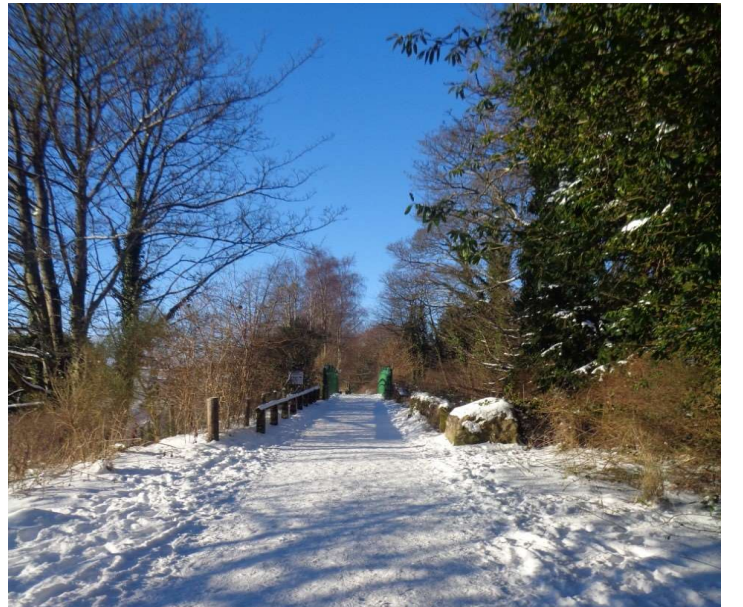
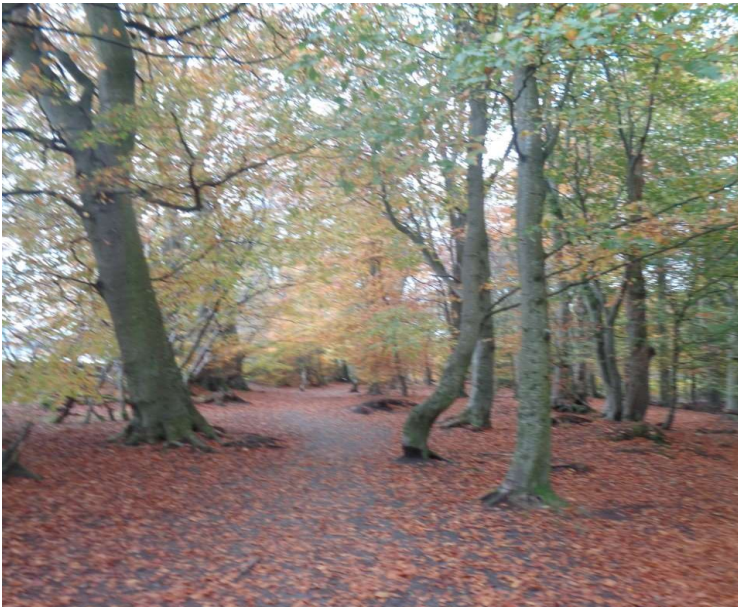
***O' Lord look doon on Buchan
An' a' its fairmer chiels
For thirs nae in a' yir warld
Mair contermashious deils***

John C Milne 1897 – 1962

***Doug Simpson
Mintlaw Ramblers.***

Photo Call!

Stunning pictures taken in the Cults area during this past year by Sheila Jones



Some friendly geese Marjory encountered by the Don; they like people but not dogs!



Photos from a walk in Fasque Estate. Swans on the lake. Building is where *The Good Food Guys* present their TV programme from.

D&K Shaw - Mearns 50+ Walking Group.



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Grampian50+ Committee 2019/2020

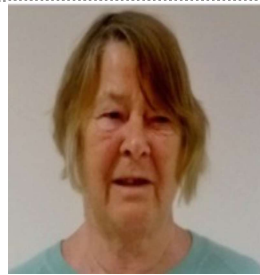


Chair

Marjory D'Arcy



**Secretary
Membership Secy
Sue Wright**



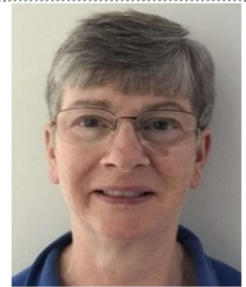
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100 Club

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2021 WINNERS:

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No 85	P Gray	£15

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No 52	C Fleming	£20
No 6	L Rae	£15

MARCH

No 3	H Massie	£25
No 53	I Davidson	£20
No 15	M Michie	£15

APRIL

No 133	W A Hogg	£25
No 20	C Fleming	£20
No 131	D Miller	£15

Why don't YOU join too?

Contact

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