



Drumoak & Durris NEWSLETTER

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**Welcome to the Spring edition of the Drumoak and Durris
Newsletter.**

This Christmas season was different to any other that most of us have ever experienced. The Christmas tree raised on the village green gave a ray of light in the darkness and going by the comments about it we have received, people's spirits were lifted by the sight of it, a small piece of normality in a turbulent time.

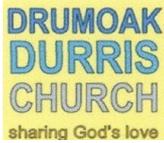
The whole event could not have taken place without WellGear Ltd and the Drumoak and Durris Community Group would like to thank WellGear Ltd, Drumoak for their extremely kind and generous sponsorship of our beautiful community Christmas tree for 20/21.



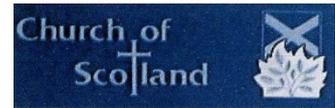
WellGear Ltd. are based in Drumoak and Managing Director of WellGear UK, Mr. Murdo MacLeod, agreed to fund not only the Christmas tree itself, but also the cost of felling and delivering the tree to its site on the green in Drumoak. We are most grateful to Murdo and to WellGear Ltd. for their very generous contribution which was very much appreciated.

The DDCG normally put on a Christmas tree lighting event with Carol singing and mulled wine etc., but due to Covid-19 that was not possible in 2020. With luck though, this next Christmas will see a return to the usual festivities.





Drumoak-Durris Church of Scotland



*In God's grace opening our doors and reaching out
To bring God's love, peace, and joy to all
Why not taste and see?*

Message from the Manse 'Money, money, money, must be funny in a rich man's world!' You probably know the song well. It was sung by the pop-group ABBA and was a hit-single in 1976. Of course, a lot has changed since 1976 yet perhaps money is still a funny thing!



As I write this, nationally as well as locally, the Church of Scotland is having to look at the money it is spending and make careful choices. Nationally the Church is projected to have a shortfall of income for this year in the region of £11 million. This is due in part to a loss of income from congregations as well as difficulties in maintaining funding commitments over Scotland as a result of COVID-19. Locally we have taken steps in recent years to produce careful budgets and spending plans and have managed to have minimal overspends. We have many faithful givers, for whom we are very grateful as a congregation, but we know too that as a church, we have an ageing congregation with fewer younger people who want to commit with us. In recent years we see a trend that our income is falling and so we are having to consider carefully our human and financial resources and to make difficult decisions of how we go forward.

As a result, the plans to restructure and modernise the Church nationally as well as locally have taken on urgent importance. All churches, not just the Church of Scotland, are having to rationalise spending and also consider how to continue and develop the key objective of the church which is to share with people the good news of the coming of Jesus Christ. As a church we know we need to change and are making inroads to progress change, but this takes courage as well as vision.

I am reminded here, of the parable that Jesus told of the 2 builders (Matthew 7: 24-27). One built his house on the rock while the other built on the sand. When the storms came, the house built on sand collapsed whereas the other house, built by the builder who built on the rock, stood firm. Jesus said, 'Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock.'

This last year has been hard-hitting for each of us in so many different ways and as a church, it has been tough too. If we are to move forward, the only way to do so, is to move forward with Jesus as the foundation, the rock on which we build God's church. This church is God's church and is not simply any one building but is instead a building of people built on the rock of Jesus.

First man on earth?	- - ? -
It was rolled over the entrance to tomb?	? - - -
Number of commandments?	? - -
The garden of?	- - ? -
Jesus died on a?	- ? - - -

God Bless



Craft, Coffee and Chat

It is now over a year since we had our last meeting and sadly it will be another few months yet 'till we can all get together again. Although restrictions are lifting slowly, we must wait until Drumoak Church Hall is open and fully operational again. If that happens in late Spring, we may be able to restart our group on alternative Tuesday mornings for a short while before the summer break - we will keep our fingers crossed (not while we are knitting though!). Till then, Norma and Marion send our best wishes to everyone and if you do need to make contact, please call Norma Menzies on 01330 844542 or Marion Nixon on 01330 811663.



Friendship Group

Hello Folks, we hope you are all safe and well, and have had the vaccine – with no ill effects. Like us you'll be glad to say 'goodbye' to the ice and snow and to see that the snowdrops and spring flowers have survived the winter. We hope you knitters are busy? Thanks to all of you who have already given me squares. If anybody in the Community would like to knit squares, please give me a 'phone (Amy on 01224 732575). In the meantime, take care and trust we will ease out of lockdown soon.

Amy and the Committee.

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[Bowling Club News](#)



Our Indoor Bowling Season has been suspended since the lockdown began at Christmas time. We hope to bowl indoors again soon but it is more than likely we will have to wait until the Outdoor Bowling Season begins in mid-April. We will prioritise the safety of our members before resuming activity both indoors and outdoors.

With regard to the social side and the re-opening of our bar, we will have to be guided by the restrictions laid down by the Scottish Government. Hopefully this won't be too far away, but social distancing will remain a factor for some time to come. We will use social media to give updates with regard to these and other club matters.

The Pop-Up Post Office which takes place on Tuesday mornings from 8.30am to 10.30am, has been well received by the local community and has been very busy. Depending on the volume of customers another two-hour session may be added. Your feedback would be very useful with regard to this.

The safety of everyone using the Club is our main concern and we now sanitise the Club premises monthly with a machine bought for this purpose. We look forward to getting back to something approaching normality as soon as circumstances allow. In the meantime we hope everyone stays safe and free of this virus.

Dave Stuart
Club President.

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[Durris WI](#)

Well here we are, 2021 and we are already through the first two months of the year. So far, we have had all sorts of weather including rain, snow and sun.

Now that Spring is approaching, we are all thinking of getting out into our gardens again. March sees the green fingered members of our group displaying their bulbs at our annual bulb competition at the beginning of the month. Hopefully members will send in photos of their bulbs this year and they will be judged remotely.

Although we are unable to meet up in person, we are very lucky to be able to catch up on our regular zoom meetings.

At our last meeting we had a great chat about various aspects of lockdown. The current weather, state of roads, improved computer skills, crafts that we had been keeping ourselves busy with, Covid vaccinations and lockdown hair were all discussed.

We then enjoyed looking through some old Durris WI photos which were found in a drawer at the Hall via the share screen button on the zoom platform.

It was great to catch up, keep in touch and socialise with each other without having to step outside the front door and brave the cold weather and icy roads.

Another way of keeping in touch has been through our regular newsletter, which is created and edited by our group Secretary, with articles submitted by some of our members. Our Facebook page is also updated regularly. It has been lovely to see what our members have been creating and keeping themselves busy with.

We will continue to meet up via our virtual meetings this year until the government regulations dictate that we can safely meet up in person.

Let's hope this lovely spell continues and we can start to enjoy the outdoors and Spring weather

[Peterculter Medical Practice](#)



Spring has Sprung

We are glad to see the weather improving after the last few months of cold and we are sure that most of our patients will be looking forward to the light at the end of the tunnel! We were pleased to be involved with delivering the Covid-19 vaccine to the over 80s, the vaccination programme continues to be rolled out in Aberdeen by NHS Grampian so if you haven't received your letter yet, please do not contact the surgery. If you would like further information, please contact the Covid-19 Vaccine Helpline on 0800 0304 713.

Lockdown 3 has taken its toll on a lot of us but there are some excellent resources out there to help with mental health such as Breathing Space and the Samaritans. We are all working together to help stop the spread of the virus, and the vaccine is a promising step to getting back to normality.

As always, we are here for any and all queries and we encourage our patients to continue to use our eConsult service in the first instance. The eConsult service can be found on our website at www.petercultermedicalpractice.co.uk and it covers a wide variety of conditions. We thank you for your patience and understanding during what has been a very difficult year for everyone with many changes.

If you have been here recently, you will have noticed that we are in the middle of a spring clean! The practice is currently being refurbished and we hope the works will be concluded at the end of March, giving the building a much needed new lease of life.

We are also pleased to welcome on board our new GPs, Dr Mair, Dr Ferri, Dr Masha, Dr McCann, and Dr Kelsey who will make a fantastic addition to our team. We look forward to the year ahead and in the words of L.M Montgomery; 'that is one good thing about this world... there are always sure to be more springs'.

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[Start the Season at Peterculter Golf Club](#)

Spring is in the air and the new season is on the horizon. Start 2021 off right with a membership at Peterculter Golf Club. We've got a range of fantastic membership offers from transitional, group and family, there's something for everyone! Contact us on membership@petercultergolfclub.co.uk for more information on our membership deals.

With the new season starting, it's a good time to brush up on your WHS knowledge. All of this can be found on our website: www.petercultergolfclub.co.uk.

We also welcome our new Head Professional Gary Lister to the club in March. Of his recent appointment, Gary said, "I am absolutely delighted to join the Team at Peterculter GC and

looking forward to help progress the Club forward. I have always had close family links with Aberdeen with my mum being born there and continuing to my dad's time playing for Aberdeen FC (Ian Lister). The interview process left me in no doubt as to the ambitions of the club matching mine. We will look to develop a top-class retail experience for members and visitors with the look to club fitting, tuition, and corporate outings/membership. In time, we hope to deliver an indoor Golf studio with state-of-the-art technology and delivering coaching programs for Ladies and Gents with a massive push on Junior golf."

Our Open Day this year although we won't be able to host in the same format, will still be going ahead towards the start of the season. Keep an eye on our social media pages and website for news about our Virtual Open Day! We look forward to welcoming new members and visitors to our course this year.

*Maryfield
Flowers*
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Our season of beautiful flowers is about to begin.

From April onwards we look forward to offering stunning bouquets for every occasions, or for the enthusiast why not try a bucket of flowers and foliage to arrange yourself.

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Rebecca.Stripling@btinternet.com

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mark1garage@aol.com*

[Farming at Present](#)

Farming in 2020 has fared quite well, compared to many other businesses and industries battling the Covid virus. Aberdeenshire and the NE for the 2nd year running had an excellent spring weather wise however from Forfar south, conditions were quite a bit different. Ground

wet sowing of barley oats and spring wheat 3 weeks behind Aberdeenshire. That pattern was exactly the same in the harvest. Mr. Sandy Haggart who farms at Muirmouth near Crieff had quite an acreage of combining to do at the end of September with the NE finished and all bailed. Every farmer and country person you speak to, has all felt sorry and sympathetic for people and families who are living in big cities having to stay in their homes and only getting limited exercise. Farmers have been fortunate having their workday in, day out as normal. Wheat, barley, and potatoes value have certainly increased as the year went on, with all livestock with cattle, sheep and pork pigs seeing a substantial increase in prices. Sheep and lamb values had been £10+ a head more than 2018, lambs, prime hogs all realising £100-£120 and ewes often up to £150. Cattle values increased gradually from April onwards with butchers seeing a big increase in beef sales commenting that home cooking has increased significantly. That filtered through to the auction marts with store and prime cattle being approx. £100 a head more than the previous year which is definitely given the industry a modest profit. All the folk over 70 were not allowed to enter auction marts but were allowed to drop off stock for sale and all collect cattle that were bought for us by attending buyers. That changed during early summer and we were all allowed to attend after registering and giving our name and phone numbers. Silage a must for winter fodder, was made with acceptable moisture content although not the huge crop of 2019 the quality seems to be good with the cattle thriving well. I look to my own silage to be analysed at the end of November. Cattle have put on a lot of weight especially during the first 3 months of grazing, this slowed up slightly in August then seemed to do especially well in September. Lambs have also done well all summer, and many have been sold at grand prices either at prime or store lambs. Previous years almost always fell back in September, but this has not happened this year

The sheep clipping in June and July progressed reasonably with a few broken days stopping the shearing due to the weather. Any sheep that were missed from the year before were termed double coaters by the shearers but there are very few missed usually due to gathering and misty weather. The shearers called them double coaters. My nephew John Blackhall and his team of 4 clipped approximately. 28000 sheep from Mid-May to the end of July. No mean feat. On a different note a few people including myself were similar to double coaters until hairdressers opened up in early August.

A great many folk are surprised to see in the press and media the very high prices for pedigree lambs. With a Texel ram lamb selling for 350k in August 2020 at Lanark. The previous record was 220k again at Lanark in 2014. It all stems from the commercial farmer selling his lambs to the butcher, lamb chops, leg joints and mutton. He would hopefully receive around £90 pound a head. His neighbour might get 100 a head for his sheep so he may try and buy a better ram with better confirmation instead of paying £300-500 he may go to £700-1000. The breeder of the £800 rams would always be hoping to breed a few that are making £2000 to £3000 and on it goes spiraling up for him to pay between £5000-10000. A few of the top notchers would be

selling between £50000 to £100000. There are very few rams around that sort of money, probably around 20 every year. Some of the top notchers breed high price ones but certainly not them all. It is often middle of the road price rams and bulls which can often leave excellent progeny. A dark horse. It would be accurate to say in Britain there have been at least 25000 rams sold for breeding but only a very small handful making the dizzy prices of six figures. Fruit farming is a large industry now and required a lot of migrant labourers and as the season went on Willie Porter at Carnoustie said they managed but only just. On the whole quite a good year for agriculture and farming with Farmers hoping that after January 1st will not cause serious problems.

W. Blackhall

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RIVER DEE RADIO

Some of you may have heard about River Dee Radio which was launched in October 2016 with a number of local volunteer presenters broadcasting on the internet from a small studio in the Banchory British Legion. Since then, an increasing number of presenters provide a varied weekly schedule to a growing audience around Deeside and the world. Regular listeners to River Dee Radio will know that we provide a wide range of music to suit all tastes from Pop to Rock and Roll, Country and Ceilidh, Jazz and Classical. We also provide local information, local interviews and promotes events, sports, arts, and businesses. It aims to involve our community up and down the Dee Valley.

River Dee Radio as an internet-based radio station means that listeners can tune in to their favourite programmes from anywhere in the world, at any time. All you need is a computer, mobile phone, or tablet. On your device the best place to start is to access the website; www.riverdeeradiorocks.wordpress.com. There you can listen to the live stream, find the weekly schedule, and listen to previous programmes. There is also a weekly roundup of programmes if you've missed them and lots of information about downloading the app and links to Facebook and Mixcloud. If you download our app <https://tunein.com/radio/River-Dee-Radio-s274232/> onto your phone or computer you can listen to River Dee Radio at anytime, anywhere.

During the pandemic presenters have continued to produce high quality programmes from home and in 2021 River Dee Radio will continue to entertain and inform.

Paul Wilson, Chairperson of RDR affirms "We want to support local organisations and promote events and businesses up and down Deeside and actively encourage Drumoak and Durris to tell us of up-and-coming activities: - we want to help where we can!" So, we are keen to hear from you. Just use our email address riverdeeradio@gmail.com to share your ideas, send messages, tell us about your events, ask for music requests and provide us with feedback. Our presenters will be delighted to hear from you and play a musical request, perhaps a birthday or anniversary dedication or just a favourite nostalgic memory? Leave a message with the relevant presenter for your chosen genre and River Dee Radio will do its best to give you a play.

During lockdown and the Spring why not tune into your local community radio station, River Dee Radio and enjoy great music and local information.

HOMEOWNERS – IMPORTANT NOTICE

**In February 2019 the Legislation relating to smoke detection in your home changed.
All domestic properties in Durris/Drumoak could be affected.**

You need to have the following: -

- **One smoke alarm installed in the room most frequently used for general daytime living purposes.**
 - **One smoke alarm in every circulation space on each storey, such as hallway and landing.**
 - **One heat alarm installed in every kitchen.**
 - **All fire alarms are to be ceiling mounted and must be interlinked.**
- **Carbon monoxide detectors are to be fitted where there are carbon fuelled appliances (such as boilers, fires, open fires, heaters, stoves, or a flue).**

The Regulations come into effect in February 2022.

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COMPASS: Navigating healthy, sustainable living in Cults

Camphill Wellbeing Trust (CWT), are excited to announce the launch of COMPASS, a new project which aims to transform the former Waldorf School site into a centre demonstrating practical solutions for healthy, sustainable lifestyles.

The site on Craighton Road, Cults is owned by local charity Camphill Estates [www.camphillestates.org.uk] and has been unoccupied since the closure of the school in 2014. Keen not to lose the potential of this naturally beautiful and historic site, CWT has taken it on to host a new community-based project, COMPASS, with plans to create inclusive spaces that serve and engage the local and wider community of Aberdeen City / Shire.

COMPASS is envisaged as a place where the ethos and practices successfully pioneered for those with learning disabilities by the North East Camphill organisations will be translated to benefit all who want to improve their health, maintain their wellbeing, or explore a more sustainable lifestyle.

It aims to showcase sustainable building practices, an integrated, creative health & education approach, sustainable social enterprise projects, organic / biodynamic land use and repair, reuse and recycle practices.

With an amazing 842+ volunteering hours supporting the venture so far, the progress onsite has been incredible. During our 7 onsite volunteer days, we have cleared the grounds of rubbish, cut back over-grown shrubbery, tidied the driveway of leaves, and unearthed the paths around each building. There are now three no-dig beds ready for planting in the spring with more to follow over the coming months. You can see these changes captured in before / after photos on our website in our volunteer gallery: www.camphillwellbeing.org.uk/compass .



Regular onsite visitors also include Grampian Police and Camphill Schools Aberdeen (CSA). PC Fairburn, pictured with PD (Police Dog) Zak, use both the outdoor space and buildings of the project for dog training while CSA have used the project to host an outdoor team-building day (pictured *left*). CSA students with learning disabilities and other support needs attend for weekly outdoor clear-up sessions.

This creates an opportunity for them to go to a workplace and carry out a recognisable job, which is important for the development of their self-esteem.

The project, currently in its early planning stages, is eager to continue to foster strong links with the local community. We would love to hear from those interested in sharing their knowledge and skills to help develop Compass. Get in touch with offers of help, ideas for projects or support us via fundraising. Although our onsite days are currently postponed due to COVID guidelines, we



may be able to facilitate socially distanced individual volunteers, so please don't hesitate to get in touch if you are interested. You can also register your interest for future events.

To find out more about COMPASS and sign up for volunteering or updates, visit:

www.camphillwellbeing.org.uk/our-projects/compass or contact: 01224 862008 | compass@cwt.scot

About Camphill Wellbeing Trust:

CWT is a medical charity providing an extended and integrative approach to health and wellbeing. It aims to address illness, build resilience, and maintain wellbeing.

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Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, our fundraising opportunities are limited. Please **support us by placing an order & share this opportunity with family & friends**

www.camphillwellbeing.org.uk/camphill-fish

 Camphill Wellbeing Trust is a business name of Camphill Medical Practice Ltd
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**Contact Val Muir:
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Postmistress Retirement

Thanks to everyone's generosity a total of £690 was donated and given to Anne.

Anne replied I would like to say a huge thank you to each and everyone of you who contributed to my Retirement collection and also to the people who gave me individual gifts, flowers and all the lovely cards received. I am overwhelmed by the kindness the Community of Drumoak and Durris. Once again thank you for all your kindness and supporting the Post Office throughout the 70 years that it has been in my family. Take Care and stay safe. Anne x

[Park Bridge Update](#)



We are pleased to report now that things are beginning to move in relation to Park Bridge re-opening although there's a long way to go yet. Both PBAG and CDD CC attended the Infrastructure Services Committee meeting with Aberdeenshire Council on 21st Jan. At this meeting, one of the topics covered was Prioritising Funding for Bridges and the council made a proposal for discussion

which we commented on. The good thing to note was that all parties involved recognised the need for additional funding for bridge maintenance and part of the recent 3% council tax increase has been allocated for infrastructure such as bridges. This is a major step forward! On the downside, the model that the council proposed based prioritisation on remaining service life (???), purpose (vital, important, or standard), heritage status and length of diversion. In spite of saying that economic growth and social cohesion were priorities, these were not included in the prioritisation methodology, so it is deeply flawed.

Park Bridge is on the proposed list for refurbishment, but no timescale has been set yet. We do not know how the decision was made to keep the bridge closed to traffic, it does not appear to have included input from elected councillors, so we are challenging this and have considerable support to get the bridge re-opened with a 3t limit. Our argument that the bridge is perfectly capable of carrying light traffic is being heard! In addition, many other communities are now kicking up on the status of rural bridges and there is a growing sense that these must be maintained to keep rural connectivity.

The fight goes on and we're making progress!

We can be contacted on info@parkbridgeactiongroup.com or visit our website at <https://www.parkbridgeactiongroup.com> or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/SaveParkBridge>

Anne Shearer

The PBAG Team

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[Dog fouling in the area](#)

We have had a number of people bringing this subject up recently due to the increase of mess left lying on the streets and open areas around Drumoak. It is not all people from outside the area with dogs, we live in a beautiful part of the country and we want to keep it that way. I know 99.9% of dog owners (myself included) do pick up after their dogs but all dog owners need to do it, it's part of the responsibility of owning a dog. Please clean up after your dogs, bag and bin it, or flick it off the paths through the countryside.

[Crathes Hall – March 2021 update](#)

Since our last communication, the Fundraising Group has been working hard behind the scenes.

Two anonymous donations totalling £15,000 have been received which is tremendously encouraging as it tells us that there are people out there who are willing to support our project, even though it is still very early days, and we have a long way to go!

Our new Virgin Money Giving page is up and running and can be found at

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-web/charity/finalCharityHomepage.action?charityId=1020400>

It is an excellent way of contributing, however much you can spare, as it enables the hall to gain the Gift Aid contribution from HMRC as well!

Other fundraising opportunities include the Easy Fundraising site that enables you to contribute via the companies you use when doing on-line shopping. It is all set up, all you need do is log into the link, register, and shop away!

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/search/cause/?q=Crathes+Hall>

The companies that are signed up to the page, will give us a donation for every purchase made through their site. What could be easier!!

See this very short video that explains how it works.

<https://youtu.be/Q9fPOZ6zm8I>

We are determined to see the new hall become a reality and a hub for the community of Crathes. This is a real opportunity to create something that will serve the Community and beyond for many years to come.

If you would like to help, please make contact with us through the website, www.crathes-hall.co.uk or via our Facebook or Twitter (@CrathesHall) pages.

We look forward to hearing from you.

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[Durriss Kirkton Hall](#)

2020 was a challenging year for us all and unfortunately our doors have been closed since March. We can't quite believe it has been nearly a year now. The committee have used this time as an opportunity to carry out redecoration work and general maintenance of the hall. It is being checked on a regular basis to make sure all is well and in good order. Hopefully later on this year we will see our doors open again and we are looking forward to welcoming you all back very soon.



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[Walking with Peter Richardson](#)

(This article was written for the last edition and the walking group has had walks since then)

The No-name Walking Group has continued to get out in the hills whilst adhering to the Covid rules and advice. Social distancing is relatively easy on the hills, except on the very popular routes, and we've been fortunate in keeping away from the crowds. As has been mentioned before our walkers mostly come from Durrus, Drumoak and Banchory with one or two from the environs of Aberdeen. It's an eclectic group holding diverse views which ensures good conversations and discussion on many subjects and even sometimes some answers to difficult questions. We alternate between walks of 15 to 25km up and down hills and shorter walks on more level ground of between 8 and 12km. There is a "secret shopper" amongst the group who awards points based solely on his or her, no clues there, personal feelings; off-piste and peat bogs are two of the said shopper's pet dislikes.

(I'm always conscious when I write these articles that several of the readers of the Newsletter are very much more knowledgeable and very much more experienced than I am in all of the matters of which I write – except perhaps Morse code. So, to those higher authorities I would perhaps apologise were it not for the wise words attributed to Admiral John Fisher (and, may I say, many others) "Never explain. Never Complain. And never apologise.")

Since the last article we've been out 8 or 9 times including tackling 3 Munros, namely Beinn a'Bhuird, Carn an t-Sagairt Mor and Cairn Bannoch. Whenever one thinks of Munros one should remember Sir Hugh Munro who, in 1891, listed all the peaks in Scotland which are over 3,000 feet. "Munro Baggers", of which we have three in our group who've climbed them all, chase the 282 "Munros" while Munro himself went after the 509 peaks which he listed as being over 3,000 feet. (This article isn't the place to get into the difference but, briefly, many of the mountains have subsidiary peaks known as Munro Tops.) Before he died in 1919, he managed to climb all but three of the over 500 peaks over 3,000 feet. The writer has left it somewhat late to bag all the Munros but as of July this year 6,768 people had managed the challenge. You may think that that is a lot but the Himalayan Database records that 5,294 people have summited Everest which puts into perspective the difficulty of getting round all the Munros.



Beinn a'Bhuird is a very, very enjoyable hill to climb. There is more than one route to the top but on September 8th we took the path from the Linn of Quoich up Glen Quoich, across Allt an Dubh-ghlinne, around Carn Allt na Beinne and up to the North Top (1197m). The weather was perfect, not too warm, and not too windy and clear on the top which presented us with superb views in all directions. (The photo is of Ben Macdui, some 10km to the west.)

It is quite a long walk, 29km, but it is nowhere very steep and is well within the grasp of most people. However, one cannot stress too much how quickly a walk can become dangerous if the cloud comes down and the temperature drops. Mobile phones and map apps have their place, but we've experienced occasions when freezing weather has rendered phone batteries worse than useless and one has needed a power pack, which at least one of us always carries, besides a map and a compass.

We had another longish walk, 23.5km, on September 22nd up to Carn an t-Sagairt Mor (1047m) and over to Cairn Bannoch (1012m). This walk is tougher than Beinn a'Bhuird as the path is much less kind to the feet and legs. It made no difference to the two young men who jogged past us on their way to completing a circuit of 5 peaks including Carn a' Choire Bhoidheach and Cac Carn Beag, aka Lochnagar. There must be a shop selling new legs

Just before the deadline for the Newsletter, we organised a 17km walk in Strathdon which is an area we visit only a few times a year. Dunecht Estates kindly gave us permission to park from whence we walked along a minor road giving clear views of Edinglassie House. This large

country house dates from the 18th century and to some is remarkable not because of the building itself but because of the large front lawn, more like an English park estate. We turned NW up a good Landie track aiming for Shannach Moss. En route one passes a pond with a very well kept building used for lunch by shooting parties and Edinglassie guests, where Kylie Minogue visited. No, no idea if she had to sing for her supper. From Shannach we turned SW going down to the Shiel below Fairy Hillock. And thence down Glen Ernan back to the cars. Two valuable lessons were learned as we parked; don't park on a dung heap and don't peel your banana while standing on a dungheap.

Our shorter walks stuck to the mantra, on the hills, in the hills, around the hills but not up the hills and of a length between 8km and 12km. It's an interesting challenge to meet the requirements without repeating the walks. Of course, in Aberdeenshire there are many, many walks of the required length but not so many which get us into the hills without going up them. In mid-September we had a memorable stroll from the Linn of Dee to Derry Lodge; memorable because of the midgies which were in such clouds that lighter members of the group were in danger of being carried to the midgies' lair to be devoured at their, the midgies', convenience. Another walk which started from the Linn of Dee took us to the White Bridge; as the bridge structure is mostly red, one presumes that the term "white" is the common corruption of *chuite*, meaning fold or cattle fold but after my experience of Duncan Gray's Burn I'll leave it to a Gaelic expert. Gleann an t-Slugain is a favourite area for both long and short walks. Two weeks after the midgie episode we went from Keiloch, past Invercauld House, in the grounds of which are some outside pieces of art, and up the Glen until it clears the plantation and affords views of Beinn a'Bhuird and other large hills.

We had a longer walk, 16.5km, from the car park at Invermark, along Loch Lee then across to the Shank of Inchgrundle (a wonderful name to drop into the dinner conversation, when next you can have such a conversation) and around Cairn Lick; it was then suggested that we take the direct route across the hags to the footbridge above the Falls of Damff and then past the Falls of Unich to rejoin the track along the loch. One of the features of peat hags is the occasional deep hole, as illustrated.



However, the views from Cairn Lick made up from any discomfort.

As has been mentioned before, while we organise the walks, we don't make any charge for them. However, over the years it's become the custom for walkers taking part to put some money in the "kitty." From the 14th of January to the 22nd of October, we collected and disbursed £619.50. We gave the BMRA £300, MBA £175, ARI A&E £40, Scotways £30, Smarathon (Samaritans) £42 and NTS £32.50.

If you are interested in joining us contact Ronnie Mitchell, Peter Richardson, or Alan Young.

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From the Editor

I must thank all the advertisers and contributors, both old and new for continuing to support the newsletter. The past year has not been easy for anybody but there is light at the end of the tunnel and hopefully we can return to our daily life's and also, next year, get to enjoy international travel again. Looking back at this time this year, the DDCG was just going to have a beetle drive at the bowling club on Saturday 14th March which had to be postponed. We are looking forward to hosting other DDCG events as soon as possible and as safely as we can.

With the weather improving all the time, there will be more people out walking so just everybody remember to leave only footprints behind, and please clean up after your dogs, this is becoming more of an issue around Drumoak and surrounding areas. We have a beautiful countryside around here, please try and keep it that way.

If you want to contribute to the next newsletter, please drop me an article at

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Many thanks

Kevin

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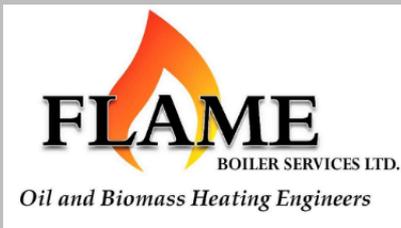
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This Newsletter has been published quarterly for over 20 years. Firstly as a community service by Drumoak-Durriss Church of Scotland, and more recently by the Drumoak & Durriss Community Group. It is produced and delivered FREE by volunteers to all households in Drumoak and Durriss.

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