



Craigenalt Rural Community Trust

- to live and enjoy

www.craigenalttrust.org.uk **Newsletter** Winter 2014 no 9

Chairman of the Trust, Ron Edwards summed up another successful year.

As we come towards Christmas and a new year, it is tremendous to reflect on what the Trust has achieved in such a short time. Not only that, but the fact that our care and maintenance of the loch is for all generations. Our children and grandchildren having the opportunity to try canoeing, bird watching, enjoying the outdoors, and to more senior citizens like me, walking through the miles of the fantastic landscape.

We have worked with landowners to provide a wonderful path from Kinghorn to the loch and Rodanbraes/Binnend with its bridge and the Three Billy Goats Gruff for the kids. We have produced booklets, interpretation material and presentations to give interest to all we do. Our "Friends of CRCT" have enjoyed all this and supported our Come & Try Day (from 5 year old to 80) and summer BBQ and have helped fund a number of projects.

The climax of this year has been the Walking Festival. Although my illness stopped me participating, it was incredible to see complete strangers coming together in such friendship to make the most of the splendid weather and exploring the diversity of what we have to offer – our heritage in town and country, Glassmount Gardens, Auchtertool Kirk near Cromwell's base camp, the remote sinisterness of the Black Rock and the fact that at the back of The Binn, you feel away from everywhere. It was really gratifying for me that my report to the annual meeting was presented partly by me, but crucially by five other key project managers in the Trust, and showed our capability and how well our team works together.

I am very proud of the enthusiasm of our people in giving us a broad-base of environmental, recreational and sporting interests and who are workaholics. Also, without the active involvement of the landowners, our aims could not be achieved, and this is indeed the mainstay of our strength.

We are pleased to have become members of the Burntisland and Kinghorn Community Sports Hub as the Trust is the only existing multimedia umbrella group for sporting activities - canoeing, sailing, open water swimming, fishing, walking and horse-riding.

The path making that has been done has been of vital importance. In partnership with both Fife Council and Rio Tinto Alcan, pavements have been constructed along parts of the Loch Road, at either end of the loch, and this has greatly improved road safety and opened up our network.



Walking Group

As the walking group has had a successful year (no doubt helped by the good weather) we decided to keep the momentum going and continue throughout the winter. We had glorious weather for the November walk when we climbed the Binn and admired the spectacular views from the top.

3rd December was another lovely morning, so we set off with a spring in our step through Craigenfalt Farm and up the Rodenbraes Path to the Common Road. Apart from a little mud this path was not as wet as expected. Once on Standing Stanes Road we passed Glassmount and returned to the starting point along the Kissing Trees Road. Everyone agreed it had been a lovely walk.

We hope the weather will be as kind to us for our next walk on the 7th January so we can get out and walk off any extra pounds put on over the festive season. The walks will continue on the first Wednesday of the month leaving at 10:00am from the layby before turning into the Craigenfalt Farm. New members are always welcome.



Bridge at Balmuto Castle

The upgrading of the Doric Well Path continues with the recent installation of a handrail beside the steps.



Bird Watching



Great Tit

Winter is often regarded as beginning at the winter solstice on 21/22 December, but it sure feels like it might have come early over the past few days. The "winter thrushes" would seem to agree and they have been sighted in large numbers about the loch. These migrants from Scandinavia include: Mistle Thrush (bigger than Song Thrush, white under wing, and football rattle alarm call); Fieldfare (grey head dark tail, white under wing); Redwing (size of Song Thrush, light lines about the eye and red under wing); Song Thrush (orange under wing); Blackbirds; Ring Ouzel (Blackbird with white bib, never recorded at Craigenfalt); and Waxwing (exotically marked but never recorded at Craigenfalt). You may see a combination flocking together. The disappearance of Cormorants suggests less fish activity in the loch which is typical of colder weather. If the temperatures remain below freezing, I would expect many more waterfowl on the loch as surrounding smaller lochs freeze up.

We already have some Goldeneye Duck present and before long the black/white males will be putting on a show for the females. The best place to be just now is in the bird hide. Put some mixed seed on the ledge outside the window, throw a crust in the water in front of you and wait for the birds to arrive. You won't have to wait long. Coal Tits and Blue Tits are bravest and first to tuck in. Watch the Coal Tit pick out the black seeds and stash them in the bark of the willow opposite to enjoy later (that is, if the male Great Spotted Woodpecker doesn't find them). If you remain still, you may even be treated to Long-tailed Tits feeding on the ledge in front of you, but blink and they'll be off. Get yourself down to the bird hide with a flask of tea and watch the sun come up!

You won't have to get up very early!

CRCT held its Annual Meeting in November at the Sands Hotel in Burntisland. The event was well attended and the business of the evening was followed by the chance for folk to socialise over a small buffet. It was confirmed as a very enjoyable and well received celebration of the work of the Trust. The chairman reported that CRCT had enjoyed a successful and very active year. He went on to mention some of the achievements. In April, completion of Rodanbraes/Binnend project was celebrated with a public launch. He said that the Troll Bridge, with resident troll, had attracted lots of visitors over the year, especially from youngsters who enjoy playing out the Three Billy Goats Gruff fairy story. A new Pathways Booklet has proved popular with local folk and visitors taking advantage of it to enjoy pathways in the surrounding area. In September CRCT organised the first local Walking Festival for Fife and this proved so popular that it is bound to be repeated and may even have set a trend for groups in other parts of Fife to follow on. CRCT continues to oversee the general maintenance of Kinghorn Loch and pathways in the surrounding area. Many residents have expressed their appreciation for the improvements made to the Burnside Path which now extends all the way to the loch. The chairman said that all the achievements, including path maintenance were due to a great bunch of volunteers and he thanked them wholeheartedly for their dedication, expertise and enthusiasm to get things done. The Chairman said that he felt that the three presentation evenings, the Trust website and newsletters each year helped friends stay in touch with all that the Trust was doing. Several key project leaders added detail of their interests showing the breadth of abilities within CRCT.

Each year at the annual meeting CRCT holds its annual photo competition for the best photograph of scenic value or wildlife taken in the area. This year there was a good selection of entries. The winner of the CRCT Best Photo Cup for 2014 was Kathleen Curley. See photos below.

Friends Annual Photo Competition

Below: the winner of the CRCT Best Photo Cup for 2014 was Kathleen Curley for her photo of a swan and cygnets, taken on Kinghorn Loch. Our congratulations go to her.



If you wish to support the aims of Craigenalt Rural Community Trust (CRCT) and become involved, either as a volunteer helper or as a supporter, become a Friend of the Trust by asking for an application form or emailing info@CraigenaltTrust.org.uk

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