



*Live it up  
in Glenlivet*



THE  
**CROWN  
ESTATE**

*A week of walking and environmental Volunteering*

*19th – 23rd August 2002*



With thanks to:

**Grampian 50+ Network**  
**Rural Environmental Action Project**  
**The Crown Estate**



**For further information contact :**

REAP – CSV  
177 Mid Street

Keith  
Banffshire  
AB55 5BL

☎ 01542 888070

💻 reap@csv.org.uk



## *Live it up in Glenlivet 2002* 50+ Environmental Volunteering Project

19th – 23rd August 2002

### BACKGROUND

After the success of previous years, a residential week of environmental volunteering for the 50+ Network was organised by the Grampian 50+ Network, REAP and the Crown Estate. Lessons were learned from the previous residential week and the volunteers were split into teams to allow tasks to be allocated in a more orderly manner. The work consisted of various small tasks around the estate and the construction of a bird hide on the all-abilities path.

### PREPARATORY WORK AND SELECTION PROCESS

A programme of volunteer involvement were agreed between The Crown Estate Ranger Service and REAP. This enabled volunteer materials and invitations for the week to be prepared by REAP. With the help of Marjory Darcy, these were sent to all the 50+ walking groups in the North East offering a 4-night stay in the St Michael's Centre in Tomintoul at the subsidised rate of £65 per person. There were 16 places for volunteers on offer and there were initially 14 applications from individuals from the Grampian 50+



Network. An attempt to allocate remaining places to volunteers from 50+ groups outside the Grampian area was unsuccessful. Therefore the invitation was opened to over 50's outwith the Grampian 50+ Network by publicising the event in local newspapers. One additional volunteer came forward after reading about the event in the newspapers.

However 3 volunteers had to withdraw at the last minute so the total number of volunteers attending *Live it up in Glenlivet* were twelve.

In addition two volunteer cooks were identified by Marjory Darcy to prepare morning and evening meals and to assist in the preparation of packed lunches for the other volunteers. Without volunteer cooks the week could not have gone ahead.

## DIARY OF EVENTS

### Monday 19th August – Day One

Participants arrived and the first morning consisted of an induction talk, a safety talk and being split into three groups. After lunch one group started to construct the bird hide with Andy while the other two went in the minibus to carry out tasks around the estate.



### Tuesday 20th August – Day Two

Participants remained in their groups from yesterday and the tasks were allocated to each group in the morning. The intention is to rotate the groups through the choice of tasks so each group gets an opportunity to try everything. In the evening a map reading lesson was given by Geoff. This was well received and appreciated by all attending.

### Wednesday 21st August – Day Three

A day off work had been scheduled to ensure that participants were given an opportunity to explore some of Glenlivet Estate. However this had to be postponed till Thursday as Andy would not be available on Thursday to assist with the hide. The work parties were given different tasks to ensure that everybody would have an opportunity to work on the hide.



#### **Thursday 22nd August – Day Four**

A day off work was taken to allow participants an opportunity to explore some of Glenlivet Estate. Some chose to explore the estate on their own while others chose to visit a farm which houses a herd of reindeer and other exotic species. However most chose to go on an organised walk led by Geoff. Whatever option people chose to do they seemed to enjoy the opportunity.



#### **Friday 23rd August – Day Five**

Final day. All teams worked around the ranger centre. The bird hide was completed and turf laid on the roof. Other works around the centre were done including drainage works. A buffet lunch was held in the centre. This gave an opportunity to report back to the Crown Estate Rangers on any suggestions or ideas for the project or estate. The groups thanks were also given to the organisers and cooks. Finally, after cleaning the St Michael's Centre everyone made their way home.



## EVALUATION

There were two methods used in gathering data to enable an evaluation of the residential week, namely:

1. Short evening evaluations where participants were asked to give their positive and negative reactions to the days activities;
2. Questionnaires were sent out to the participants once the residential week was completed.

### 1. Evening evaluations

*Tuesday 20th*

#### Highs

- Chicken
- Company
- Walks
- Work Satisfaction
- Organised
- Team brilliant
- Dinner – packed lunch
- Weed free garden
- Happy laughter
- Constructing hide

#### Lows

- Rain
- Midgies
- Bendy nails
- Worrying about cleaning breakfast
- Squeaky doors

*Wednesday 21st*

#### Highs

- Hide – satisfying but hard work
- Better organised
- Window being cut out of hide
- Seeing lots of people using the path
- Buried 3 men today (this refers to the 3 carvings around the trail)
- Showers and beds improved from last year

#### Lows

- Gillian not allowing us to de-forest Glenlivet
- No signs or info about the wheelchair trail

*Thursday 22nd*

#### Highs

- Day Off
- Walk – seeing where we've been working
- Farm walk – better than thought it would be. Informative, get among the animals
- Geoff comparing the amount of work we did to others. It was so much more!

#### Lows

- None

## 2 Participants Questionnaire

### ***Why did you apply to take part in this project?***

- Interested to find out what it was all about
- Was frog-marched into it by some eager beavers (tongue in check)
- Had spoken to others who had taken part last year
- A good opportunity to work outside and to meet a lot of friendly people
- To be part of a group for a working holiday
- Because I like an adventure
- Encouraged to go by a friend who had been before (2)
- I enjoyed my time at Glenlivet 2 years ago and felt I would like to repeat the experience
- Had been before and enjoyed it. Good to meet other volunteers and listen to their interests and walks that they do in other groups

### ***Was the week as you had expected?***

- Not as hard work as I thought it would be
- Yes (6) and much more (4); better (2); Hope there are many more
- Wasn't sure what to expect but, after hearing from last year's "workers", it appealed to me
- More or less
- Not really, but I became part of the group easily
- No hassle doing the work
- The weather was great (2)

### ***What were the most positive aspects of the week for you?***

- To see the Bird Hide completed (3) and the Rock garden reappear!!
- Seeing what could be achieved in a short time
- Enjoyed seeing more of Glenlivet
- At least they had some decent tools this time which was a big help
- Work better organised this time
- Friendship, hard work but also walks and time to enjoy the countryside
- Just being able to be out and about and doing a satisfactory job in the end of the day
- Realised I was still fit enough to participate in work
- Having fun and doing something positive
- Seeing the results of our work, realising how physically fit I am
- Meeting and working with such nice people
- Seeing the results of our labours, having new experiences and skills, working outdoors and enjoying the lovely countryside
- Comradeship of group, their willingness to partake in all aspects of the work
- Meeting other ramblers and the group getting on so well, discussing different topics and setting the world to rights

### ***What were the least attractive aspects of the week for you?***

- Moving logs (2) Should have been taken by mechanical means
- None (2)
- Didn't find the speakers in the evening very interesting (2)
- Sleeping arrangements - missed bed lights but could survive again!
- Didn't like trifle in a yellow plastic bowl!
- Bunk beds
- Evenings dragged a bit

***Are there any changes/ improvements/ideas you could suggest for future projects?***

- o No (5)
- o Keep up the good work
- o To have heavy objects in situ beforehand
- o Be given meal duties on arrival
- o More info on estate and its overall plans for the future
- o Maybe another walk

***Would you consider taking part in a similar project?***

- o Yes (10)

***Were the 5 days too long? If so, what do you suggest?***

- o No (8)
- o Just right (3)
- o Keep same format

***Do you think more people might be interested if it was: a shorter time, nearer home, as a 1 day?***

- o Nearer home (2); perhaps
- o No (2)
- o Word of mouth about how good an experience it is will help encourage others
- o 5 days just perfect
- o One day not worthwhile
- o 5 days good to get work finished. Might be some interest in having 3 x 1 day a year

***Would you be interested in a re-union of participants? If so, when and Where?***

- o Yes (9)
- o Anywhere (2)
- o Glenlivet (5)
- o Springtime (3)
- o Spring 2003 – on a bus route
- o No (1)

***Any other comments?***

- o Meals were good but not as good as last time. Packed lunch sandwich fillers a bit repetitive. Maybe pay more for the week (2)
- o An earlier dinner would give us a longer evening
- o Have some young fit people for some of the projects
- o Better if venue was on a bus route
- o Thoroughly enjoyed the week, thanks to all the good planning by everyone (2)
- o Good to have an insight into the work involved in maintaining a large estate and how necessary it is to have voluntary helpers
- o Thanks to the Cooks

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

After the evaluation of the Live it up in Glenlivet 2001 a number of recommendations were made and acted upon. Specifically:

- The introductory materials stressed the physical nature of the work. This appears to have had the desired effect and there were not as many comments on the physical side of the week. In fact the physical work was seen as exciting and empowering.
- More tools were available. This was a major concern in 2001 and was resolved successfully. The fact that tools did not have to be shared allowed groups to be separated and work on their own. This was also seen as an improvement.
- The reduction in participants meant that no one had to be on the top bunk of a bunk if they were unwilling to do so.
- At the start of the week participants were split into three teams and then each evening work was allocated to each team for the next morning and afternoon sessions. This allowed duties to be agreed and started quickly and prevented time being wasted by people waiting to be allocated a task. Although this meant people were in the same team for the week there were no complaints of not being able to mix with other participants. Allocating work in teams was much better than allocating individual tasks as has been done in previous years.
- The inclusion of a day of walking in the week ensured that participants were forced to stop and relax. Previously this was optional. The day off meant that participants did not feel compelled to work and ensured that everyone got a chance to explore the estate.
- The opportunity to learn map-reading skills was enthusiastically taken up by participants. This should be continued.
- The completion of the birdhide gave a sense of achievement for the week which is vital.

**The incorporation of the recommendations from 2001 led to a smoother and more enjoyable experience for staff and participants. It is recommended that these changes be kept for any future projects.**

---o0o---

During the week participants were invited to note down any ideas and improvements. These were shown to Crown Estate staff and were the following:

- Breakfast could be self-service
- Signposts to advertise picnic seats, disabled path etc. Interpretation sign that is suitable for wheelchairs
- Work out a quiz for going round path
- Set up a long distance walking route using some disused croft houses for bothy/camping accommodation. Advertise some led walks for groups interested in local history, estate management, geomorphology, environmental studies etc.

