

CLOCHANDIGHTER

EDITION 52 - SUMMER 2006



Local lad takes part in
Land's End to John O' Groats Challenge
please see page 43

June 2006



Portlethen Moss Conservation Group

For any member of the community who may not be aware of this group's aspirations, they are to designate Portlethen Moss as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). We have the support of Aberdeenshire Council, the Local Ranger Service and the Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) for this project.

Those of you who walk in the Moss will have noticed the improvements that have already been made to the Moss. These improvements are the result of a site visit on a very cold day back at the beginning of the year when members of the group met with representatives from Aberdeenshire Council and the Local Ranger Service; initial suggestions were put forward by the group as to what improvements we thought would benefit the community regarding accessibility of the Moss. Aberdeenshire Council have carried out all the proposed improvements that we suggested. These were:

- Clearing paths by cutting back some of the gorse bushes
- Placing a small boardwalk over a very boggy area
- Erecting 2 bridges over ditches

All of the above has already made a big difference, the paths are drier as light and air can now get to them, the bridges enable walkers to take a circular route of the Moss, whereas before it was impossible as crossing the larger of the ditches prevented this.

Letters from the group have already gone out to two of the main landowners of the Moss asking them for their support as it is likely that management arrangements will need to be put in place. We also assured the landowners that our proposals would not entail any significant changes to the Moss's current state. To date we have not had any replies – but no news is good news. Aberdeenshire Council will be sending similar letters to the landowners shortly to try and gain their support for the group. On a positive note Aberdeenshire Council own part of the Moss so we have secured these areas for our LNR.

A second visit to the Moss took place on 6th April, arranged by the SNH. The Peatlands Advisor for Scotland attended and carried out a Hydrological Survey of the Moss. He was very positive about our small but significant area and stated that the conservation of the Moss was possible in certain areas; the SNH will carry out the work required. Aberdeenshire Council also advised us on this visit that they are looking into significant tree planting in the drier areas of the Moss.

This project has taken a long time to kick start but things are moving forward now. I know that I speak for all the members of the group when I say that we feel this is a worthwhile project for the community and for the conservation of an area which to date has been very much neglected. I look forward to the day when Portlethen can say that it has its very own Local Nature Reserve.

Thank you once again to my fellow members of the group who have made all of this possible.

Denise Martin