



The Ythan Project & the Formartine Partnership

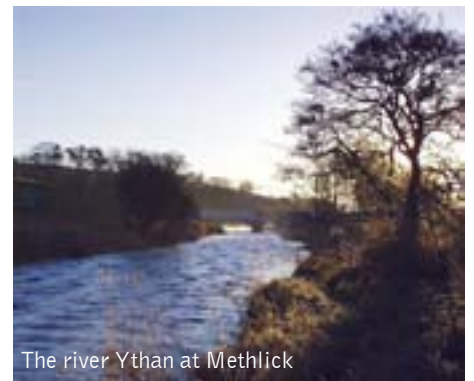


Two organisations working for the benefit of people in the Formartine area

Newsletter

February 2004

This newsletter contains information about the work of BOTH the Ythan Project and the Formartine Partnership. The Ythan Project is a 3.5 year project, developed by the Formartine Partnership. The Partnership continues to be part of the Ythan Project and improve the lives of Formartine residents in a variety of other ways. Information about the recent work of the Ythan Project can be found on pages 1 and 2 and information on the Formartine Partnership can be found on pages 3 and 4.



The river Ythan at Methlick

What area does the Ythan project cover?

The whole catchment of the river Ythan, which is all the land that drains into the river through the network of small streams and burns. The area stretches from Ythanwells in the west, eastwards to Newburgh where the river joins the sea.

What's happened recently?

Working with farmers...

The project works with farmers in two main ways. One is raising awareness of the grant schemes that farmers can use to create wildlife habitats on their farm and the second is through assisting farmers with nutrient budgets on their farms. Not all farmers were aware of the project and what it could do for them, so in the winter of 2002/3 we visited farms in the southern half of the catchment. By March 2003, 42 farmers had applied to the Scottish agri-environment scheme from the Ythan catchment, and once these farmers have created the wildlife habitats on their farms, over 38km of burns in the catchment will be protected with un-cropped strips of land next to them.



Newly cleared floodplain at Gight, near Methlick



Finishing off the sea trout spawning bed near Tarves

What is the Ythan Project?

The Ythan Project was developed by the Formartine Partnership and is now managed by a partnership of organisations which includes: Aberdeenshire Council; Forestry Commission for Scotland; Formartine Partnership; Macaulay Land Use Research Institute; River Restoration Centre; Scottish Environment Protection Agency; Scottish Natural Heritage; Ythan District Fishery Board

The project is financed by a combination of these groups and a grant from the European Commission's Life Environment fund. The project began in August 2001 and runs until February 2005 and aims to protect, restore and enhance the river Ythan.

www.ythan.org.uk

The YTHAN Project



Working with Farmers...

The project has also developed software which enables farmers to complete nutrient budgets for their farms and provides advice and assistance to farms completing budgets as well as running training courses in nutrient budgeting techniques. If you'd be interested in knowing more about nutrient budgeting and how it could help your farm, please contact the project team (contact details on back page).

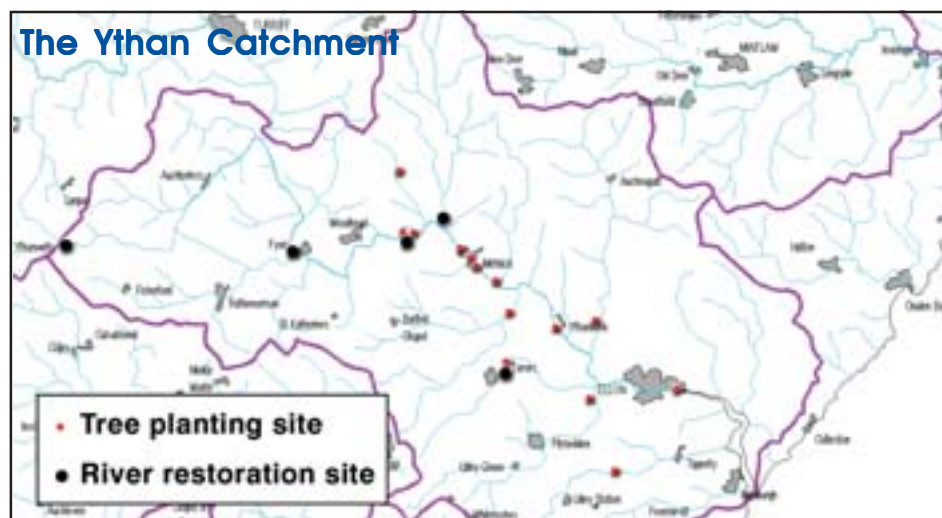
Restoring the river...

The project has funding to undertake restoration work on the river, but didn't want to make all the decisions about how to use this money. So in both 2002 and 2003 we asked local people to help us prioritise a list of sites around the catchment. In 2003 these decisions were made with the help of a bag of beans, which were used as voting counters, with work being undertaken at the sites that received the most beans from the voting public!

In 2002, two sites were completed, a spawning bed for sea trout on the Youlie burn near Tarves and the removal of some overshading conifers on the Kelly burn at Haddo, which were replaced with native broad-leaved trees.

In 2003, four sites were completed:

- The creation of a wetland area next to the river at Ythanwells.
- Fencing and bank restoration at Chapelhaugh near Methlick.
- Kelly lake fish pass, Haddo Country Park.
- Fyvie castle tree thinning to allow in more light and to create the conditions of 'dappled light and shade' which fish prefer.



If you'd like to know more about what the project's doing, you can find further information on our website at www.ythan.org.uk

And on a really big scale...

One river restoration site was selected before the project began due to requests from many local people. This site was at Gight Woods near Methlick, where one bank contained a Forestry Commission conifer tree plantation on the river's natural floodplain. As part of this project, Forestry Commission agreed to remove the conifers from the floodplain and allow the site to regrow as native broad-leaved woodland. To help it on its way, we'll be planting a few broad-leaved trees there during the winter of 2003/4. Future developments at this site will hopefully also include some new footpaths across the recently felled area.



Planting up the wetland at Ythanwells



The new fish pass at Haddo



Gight floodplain before the felling



Gight floodplain after the felling

What's coming up next...

Over the winter months we'll be undertaking tree planting at various watery sites around the catchment and also visiting farmers in the western half of the catchment. If you have a burn or pond side site in the catchment where you'd like to plant some trees, please contact the project team as we may be able to supply you with trees and rabbit guards.

The **FORMARTINE** Partnership

Partnership News

Since the last issue of the Newsletter, the post of Development Officer with the Partnership has been filled by Craig Whyte. Craig joins the Partnership from the Nàdair Trust in Oban, where he was involved in a range of community-based projects on the Argyll Islands. As a newcomer to the area, Craig has been forging new relationships with the many communities of Formartine and is working with them to develop and take forward a number of exciting initiatives:

Transport – Communities in the Driving Seat

The Formartine Partnership has been instrumental in drawing together a number of organisations that are involved in community transport. The organisations – Ellon Community Transport, Ellon & District Transport Club, WRVS and others – have, individually, been providing vital transport services to community groups and excluded individuals in Formartine for many years. Now, following a series of meetings held during the summer 2003, the groups have resolved to work more closely together to address transport issues in Formartine. A similar initiative is underway in the Turriff area.

The new 'association' of community transport has applied for and received £11,000 of funding to carry out an assessment of the local transport needs of communities in Formartine. We are grateful to the Rural Community Transport Initiative and Aberdeenshire Council for this support.



Community transport buses

Community Garden Could Become a Growing Trend

The Partnership's search for a suitable piece of land on which to instigate a community gardening project is about to bear fruit (or veg!). Thanks to our links with 'Ellon LETS', a plot at Foveran is now available for use by community groups in Formartine. The Ellon Resource Centre has expressed a strong interest, opening up the possibility that people with learning disabilities could soon be involved in the production of organic produce for local sale or distribution. They may

even produce flowers for the many planters and hanging baskets that are likely to appear in our towns and villages next summer.



The planned community garden site

Celebrating our Heritage

The Formartine Partnership has invited heritage, history, biodiversity and other community-based groups to join it in a major bid for funding to support a portfolio of heritage projects. Already we have received proposals from groups who wish to protect and promote historical buildings, create countryside access routes, improve wildlife habitat, and record local oral history. The bid, if successful, will bring funding into our communities, support local action and, in some cases, lead to new employment opportunities.

In further celebration of our area's rich cultural heritage and its ties with both land and sea, the Partnership is involved in organising a week-long, community-based Formartine Festival. The environmental groups Aberdeenshire Environmental Forum, About Turn and REAP, together with the Formartine Partnership, are working with community groups to develop a series of events, including music, storytelling or drama, to take place between 30th May and 6th June 2004.



Fyvie castle

The FORMARTINE Partnership

On the Tourism Trail

Following the re-print of the Partnership's Tourism Group's leaflets, the group is now looking to develop new community-based tourism initiatives. During the early part of 2004, the Group will be holding a *photographic competition*, open to anyone with an interest in Formartine. The winning photos will feature an aspect of life in Formartine - a view, a building, an event past or present - and will form the basis of a series of post cards. The cards will be used to raise



Across the fields of Formartine to Bennachie

awareness of our area as an attractive tourism destination. Entries should be sent to the address below by April 30th 2004.

The Tourism Group is currently developing a series of *walking routes* in Formartine, encouraging residents



Fyvie castle grounds

and visitors to explore some of the more attractive, and lesser known, corners of our area. The project will culminate in the production of a booklet or series of leaflets describing several routes and their features of natural and historical interest.

Community Planning and other Partnership Grants

After the successful 'Planning for Real' events in Rothienorman (November 2002 - see March 2003 issue) and Woodhead & Windyhills (May 2003), the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership* has awarded the Formartine Partnership grant assistance to support four further community participatory consultation events in our area. This is a great opportunity for communities to find out what their members *really* want to see happen locally. Consultation centres on a model of your area or village,



Planning for Real event at Windyhills

built by community members, and the placement of suggestion cards at relevant locations on the model allows each and every person to have a say in the way forward for their area. Financial and practical assistance is available **now** for groups wishing to carry out a 'Planning for Real' or similar event.

In addition to assistance for such events, the Partnership continues to offer small grants for projects that will enhance your local community or environment (including access development), and support for young people's groups to travel to participate in certain events or activities.

For regular updates on the Formartine Partnership's projects and activities visit our website at www.formartine.org.uk, or see our monthly column - "Formartine Forum" - in the Ellon Advertiser & Turriff Advertiser.

*The Community Planning Partnership comprises Aberdeenshire Council, Grampian Police, NHS Grampian and 5 other statutory bodies providing vital services to our communities. The Community Planning Partnership sees the Formartine Partnership as having a vital role in helping local people (a) to contribute to the development of a local community plan and (b) to undertake their own projects and initiatives in their area.

Contact details:

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