



# DUNNET HEAD EDUCATIONAL TRUST

## Newsletter

ISSUE 15  
March 2009

Now that the reorganization is all done, we can look forward to 2009 and have a bumper year coming up in 2009 with promotion of Homecoming 2009 and the Walking Festival, along with our main sponsors the Forestry Commission, and our marketing arm, Caledonian Iberian ConeXions.

### Some of the projects currently in hand

**Information Shelter** – the facility is proving very popular with local people and tourists alike. It is well used by the Dunnet & Canisbay Community and other local groups, as well as businesses. Many thanks again to Mervyn Sinclair for maintaining the facility, and for fixing the broken hinge. Mervyn has also provided a seat and bench for people to sit and wait for the bus, and this was well used in the summer months - people were even seen picnicking there!

**Seal viewing platform** – the pathway to the seal viewing platform between Little Clett and Windhaven has been maintained by the owners of Windhaven, as two of the Trustees. The seal viewing plaque has been removed temporarily for cleaning and will be put back in place in the summer. The seat has also been removed for the winter, and will be replaced in the Spring. This provides a great sheltered place for visitors and local people to view Brough Bay and a nice spot to sit and ponder the magnificent views across to Orkney. Many people use the path to the Bay, making a nice short circular walk of the village.

### Caithness & Sutherland Walking Festival – 2-9 May 2009

The festival was launched at the end of October, and will be part of Homecoming 2009. See more information at <http://www.activities.iberacal.com>. There are walks with a wide appeal, and for all abilities. Businesses are, as ever, happy to donate to this continuing successful event. A really big thank you to the Forestry Commission, RSPB, Highland Council Ranger Service, Caithness Field Club, Step it up Highland, John o Groats Promotional Group representative and the Halkirk Community for agreeing to lead walks, and to the Moray Firth Partnership, Forestry Commission, RSPB, Sutherland Walking Group and Orkney Tourism Group for their letters of support for the event. Many thanks to SNH for their contribution to costs for the brochure which is available from the St. Clair Hotel, Castletown, and the TICs. This is augmented by our self guided walks at Walking World – <http://www.walkingworld.com>. The event is being promoted by VisitScotland, Homecoming 2009 and the BBC Outdoor Events section, to name but a few avenues.



### members since 2008

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<http://www.iberacal.com>

[http://www.iberacal.com/dunnethead\\_trust.html](http://www.iberacal.com/dunnethead_trust.html)

Registered charity: SC035021

Registered office: Windhaven, Brough, Thurso, Caithness, KW14 8YE

Email: [info@iberacal.com](mailto:info@iberacal.com)

We have teamed up with Everyclick to raise money for the Trust, and launched a shopping mall – see <http://www.activities.iberacal.com>.

## New projects for 2009

- Development of a DVD about Dunnet Head
- Working with a university to analyse the use of Google Earth for community benefit. The Trust has been granted a one year Google Earth Pro license key, which offers the power of high resolution printing, movie-making and data import. This will assist us in integrating all the information we have about walking, wildlife, history, archaeology and other aspects of the Head, as well as photos and movies. Great news.
- Launching local exhibitions
- The Highland Council have kindly given their permission for the renovation of the bus stop at Brough, so we are planning an upgrade with plants and flowers to make an attractive point of entry to the most northerly point of the UK mainland!
- Development of a new web site

## Consultations

The Trustees submitted comments to the consultations on the Scottish Marine Bill and proposed extension of the North Caithness Cliffs. Quote from SNH “*SNH is currently preparing a report on the consultation responses regarding the proposed marine extension to the protected area for seabirds at North Caithness Cliffs Special Protection Area (SPA). We expect that Scottish Government will make a decision on how they wish to proceed with this proposed site some time in 2009.*”

Information about the current status of the Scottish Marine Bill, which was carried out by the Scottish Government, can be found at (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/07/11100221/0>). Enquiries can be made to [marinebill@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:marinebill@scotland.gsi.gov.uk) or call Damon Hewlett on 0131 244 0381. Some consultation responses have been put onto the web by Scottish Government at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/11/13100309/0>.

## Homecoming 2009 – Caithness style

With the majority of the events for Homecoming 2009 being held in the central belt, it was decided that we would have our own Homecoming 2009, linked to the major events down south. The special Burns Night event at Wetherspoons was a roaring success. The Northern Nashville Country Music will be held on Easter Weekend, O'Neill Surfing Championships (April 29 to 6<sup>th</sup> May), our own Walking Festival, and links with the Whisky Month in May. See <http://www.homecoming.iberacal.com> for further details.



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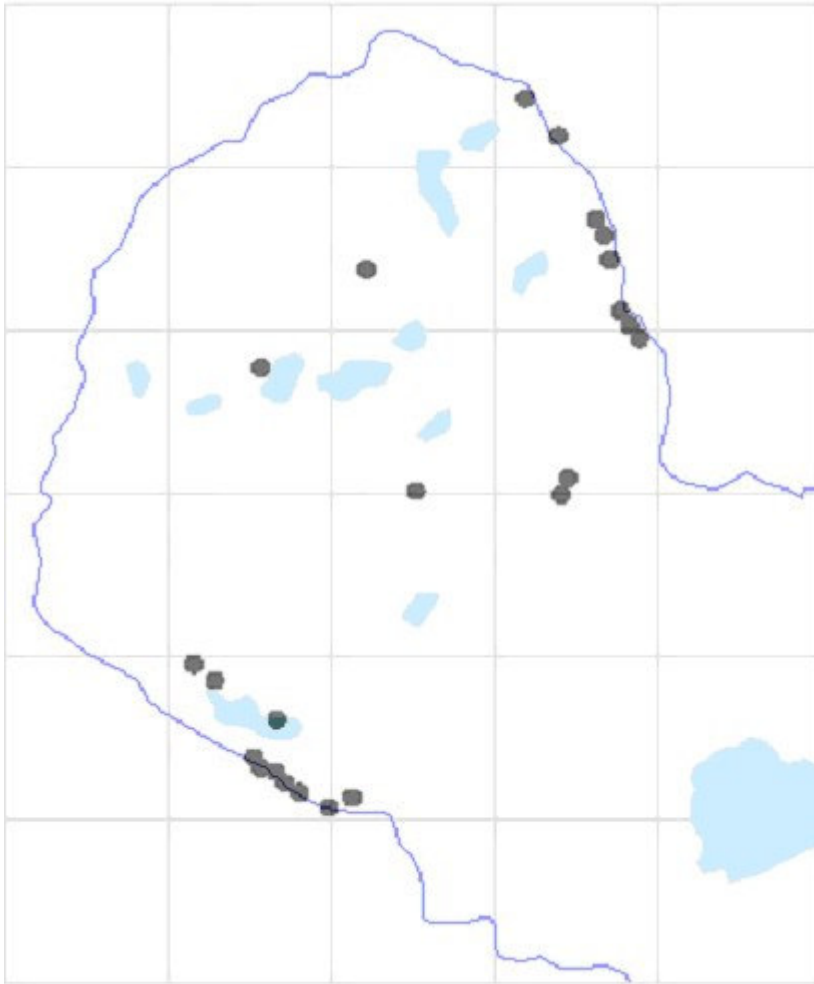
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**A Survey of Aspens on Dunnet Head - by David Glass and reproduced here with the kind permission of the Caithness Field Club.**

**Introduction**

Dunnet Head might seem an improbable place to search for native woodland, but this windswept headland holds important remnants of the ancient Aspen woods. Aspen *Populus tremula* occurs throughout Britain. In northern Scotland it survives mainly in small, isolated stands or refugia. Aspen was one of the earliest trees of the woodland which became established at the beginning of the Holocene Period as the ice retreated after the last glaciation. Colonisation took place from the continent (by the land bridge) and possibly from Ireland (by wind blown seed). It has also been conjectured that some Aspen survived the last glaciation in glacial *refugia* in the west highlands (as may have occurred in the case of Scots Pine *Pinus sylvestris*) but there is no conclusive evidence for this.

**Survey results**

Aspens were recorded at 24 locations. Sixteen locations were on the coast and 8 were inland. (Table 1 and Figure 1).

The whole report can be found on the internet at [http://www.caithness.org/caithnessfieldclub/bulletins/2008/survey\\_aspens\\_dunnet\\_head.htm](http://www.caithness.org/caithnessfieldclub/bulletins/2008/survey_aspens_dunnet_head.htm)

**Fig 1.**

'First published in Caithness Field Club Bulletin Vol 7 No 4, April 2008'



**members since 2008**

## Publications

A guide to Dunnet Head is available on our web site at <http://www.iberacal.com> under “Publications” – cost £4.50. The publication includes the plans of the WWII installations at Dunnet Head and Burifa Hill. If you would like a copy of the guide, or any of the other publications listed below, please send SAE to Windhaven, Brough, Thurso, Caithness, KW14 8YE. Cheques should be made payable to the Dunnet Head Educational Trust. Alternatively you can download them from the site.

There are a number of self guided walks in the area on <http://www.walkingworld.com> which take in Mary Ann’s Cottage, Dunnet Forest and other local attractions and they also include information about the geology, geography, archaeology and wildlife of the area. There is a whole Caithness section.

Another new guide is 10 Tours of Caithness & Sutherland by Public Transport which can also be found at <http://www.iberacal.com/publications.shtml>.

## Thank you....

We got a terrific response to our last newsletter and it seems that most supporters are glad that the Trust is continuing, albeit in a different form. We have nine Caithness projects in hand, and three Aberdeenshire projects. They are not all listed here, as some, such as the Peatlands Project, are ongoing.

Thank you to those people who have recently donated funds to the Trust. This really helps our ongoing operations. You can help the Trust by donating on line to raise funds for the Walking Festival <http://www.activities.iberacal.com/sponsors.html>. We are currently trying to raise £200 to get the maps of the Dunnet Head and Burifa Hill WWII installations framed so we can display them publicly. Your help would be much appreciated.

Name:..... Date: .....  
(Please print)

Address: .....

Send to: Dunnet Head Educational Trust, Monlettie Croft, Street of Monteach, Methlick, Aberdeen, AB41 7JS



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