



BOAT OF GARTEN COMMUNITY COMPANY

Boat of Garten Interpretation Plan

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Summary

This interpretation plan is designed to assist the Boat of Garten Community Company to deliver a meaningful and effective story to visitors and the local community of Boat of Garten.

Interpretive planning provides a focussed approach to identifying and delivering those messages that will best connect with visitors and will most effectively deliver the ambitions of all those involved in this Plan. The Plan identifies those stories that should be told and encourages all involved to maintain this focus in wider dealings with visitors to the village.

Following this integrated approach can deliver many benefits including:

1. More satisfied visitors, leading to
 - Increased visitor numbers and spend in the village
 - More repeat visits
 - More referrals to others to visit
 - An increased profile for the community
2. The development of residents' involvement and understanding in the heritage and tourism economy of the village
3. A context for future heritage developments, which will reinforce partnership working
4. This in turn will lead to increased business and employment opportunities

All this ultimately leads to a more sustainable approach to managing visitors.

The Plan recommends that the village seeks joint promotion between its two principal visitor attractions: the RSPB Centre at Loch Garten and the Strathspey Railway. This should focus on creating a new product for visitors in Aviemore – a visit to Boat of Garten by train with the opportunity to visit the world-famous Osprey hide and to enjoy a range of walking and cycling opportunities in the peaceful countryside around Boat. The key stories of the village will be introduced to visitors using an existing network of paths that will be themed on the natural heritage of the area and the history of the village's development. Visitors to the village will be introduced to the opportunities through an orientation feature at the entrance to Station Square and this will convey three key messages about the village and what it has to offer:

- Boat of Garten – a place for top class walking and cycling in harmony with the outstanding heritage of the National Park.
- Boat of Garten – the Osprey Village - the natural gateway for experiencing the Loch Garten Ospreys and Strathspey wildlife.
- Boat of Garten - a creation of the Age of Steam and still being enjoyed today

A four page summary is available that outlines the main points and conclusions of this full Plan.

1.0 Introduction

This Plan has been developed to provide a focus for how the Community Company takes forward the future development and utilisation of the heritage assets of the area covered by the Community Council of Boat of Garten to benefit the local community. This will provide clear guidance on the messages that should be conveyed to the range of audiences visiting the village. The Plan will also indicate how the developments might fit into the wider developing tourism environment of Strathspey and the Cairngorms National Park. It aims to meet the variety of objectives of the community, the business and the public agencies supporting this development.

1.1 Vision for the Plan

To interpret the features and stories of significance in Boat of Garten in a coherent, cohesive and co-ordinated way that will guide interpretation developments into the medium term.

1.2 Aims

- To improve and enhance the image and identity of Boat;
- attract and hold visitors in the village in a manner that engages them with the heritage of the village;
- develop residents' understanding and involvement in the heritage of their village;
- develop residents' understanding of what attracts visitors to Boat;
- inform the planned Heritage project;
- reinforce partnership working within the village, and
- develop a more sustainable approach to managing visitors.

1.3 Description of Area

The Boat of Garten Community Council Area is situated within the Badenoch and Strathspey area of Highland Region and is located within the Cairngorms National Park to the northwest of the main Cairngorm massif. Boat of Garten is located 9.5 km northeast of Aviemore. (see Map 1 below)

At the time of the 2001 census the population of the village was 520 with an additional 51 in the surrounding settlement zone. Figures from Highland Council (2009) give the Community Council area as having a population of 657 (see Map 2 below). The Scottish Government's website (<http://www.sns.gov.uk/Reports>) records a population of 643 in 2008. In the Highland Council Affordable Housing Assessment of 2009 Boat of Garten was identified as having 25% of the housing stock as second homes. This is the highest percentage for Badenoch and Strathspey, equalled by Kincaig, but higher than Nethy Bridge.

The village lies within a relatively flat part of Strathspey with the River Spey flowing from southwest to northeast through the area. There is rising ground along the west (500m) and northwest (405m) boundaries. One major arterial road passes through the area; the A9 Perth to Inverness road runs south to north through the western quarter of the area. The A95 Aviemore to Grantown trunk road, the B970 Nethy Bridge to Coylumbridge Road and the B9735 Kinveachy to Carrbridge Road also cross the area.

Map 1: General Location

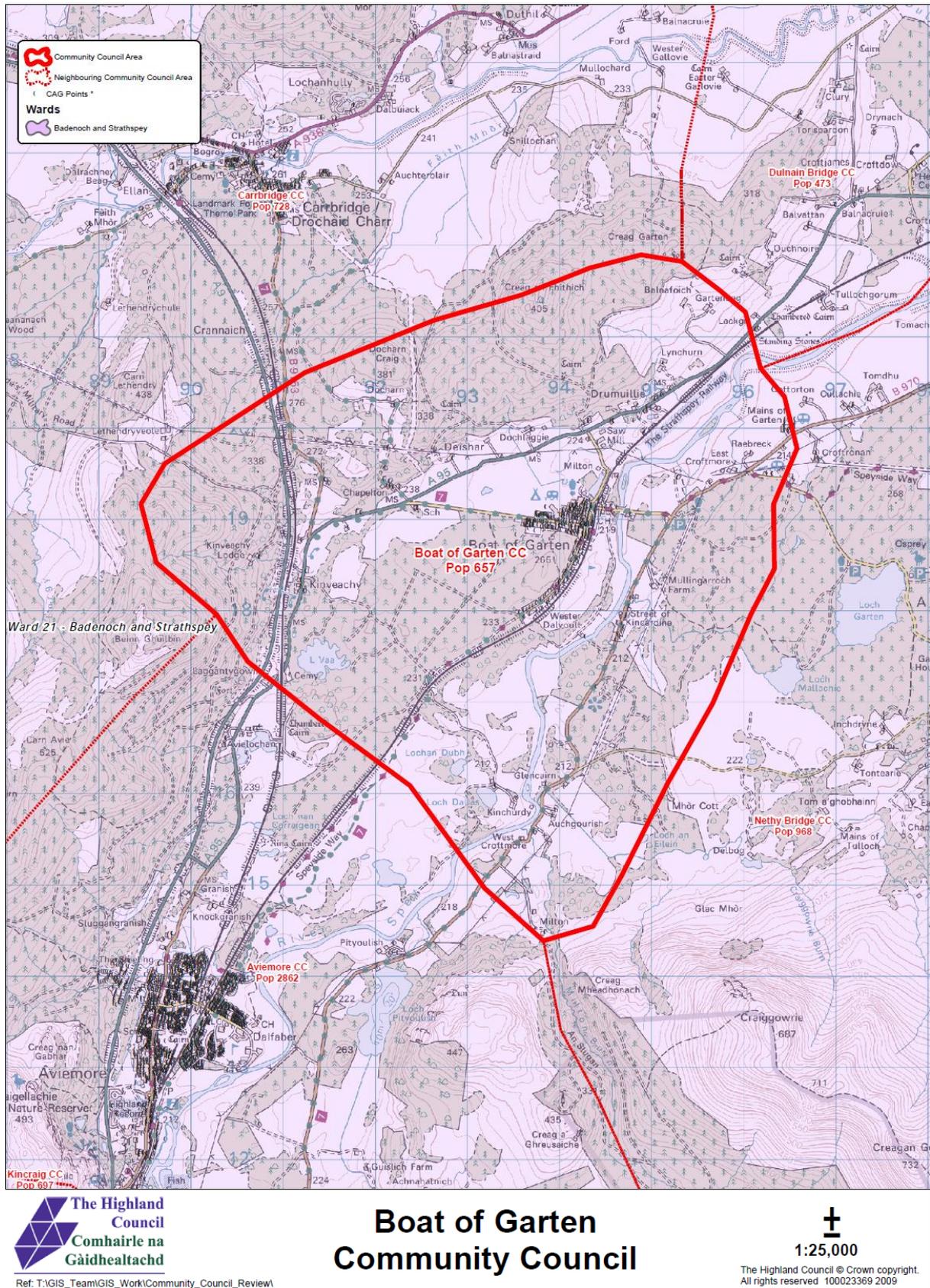


(from Cairngorm National Park Authority Website)

Two railways pass through the area; the main line railway to Inverness runs adjacent to the A9, and the Strathspey Steam Railway runs from Aviemore to Broomhill and has a station and marshalling yard located between the residential area of Boat of Garten village and the golf course.

Boat of Garten did not exist as an identifiable community until the opening of the railway station in 1866, and it is from then on that the village properly developed. The railway station was named 'Boat of Garten' after the chain-operated ferry that ran across the River Spey at Gartenmore. The ferry was replaced by a bridge in 1899, but the name 'Boat of Garten' remained. Boat of Garten railway station closed to passengers in 1965, but since 1978 the station building and the line have been used by the Strathspey Railway Company, which operates a steam train between Aviemore and Broomhill, via Boat of Garten. Loch Garten, which is home to the original Osprey breeding site and popular visitor centre, lies 3.5 km to the east of the village and outside the Community Council area.

Map 2 Location of Boat of Garten Community Council Area



2.0 What is Interpretation?

Interpretation is not an activity like marketing, or campaigning or teaching, but is an approach to communication that can be applied in all these various areas where someone wants to communicate effectively with some kind of audience in some kind of setting. Originally interpretation was developed for a particular kind of audience - park visitors - in a particular kind of setting - national parks in the United States. First fully described by Freeman Tilden in 1957, his principles have stood the test of time and of the latest understanding of the communication process. Perhaps the key to understanding what interpretation is about is Tilden's guidance that:

Interpretation is not instruction but provocation

This is highlighted in two up-to-date definitions from the main professional bodies in the US and UK

***Interpretation** is a mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the meanings inherent in the resource. (USA - NAI)*

***Interpreters**....reveal hidden stories and meanings; bring places, objects and ideas to life; create thought-provoking and memorable experiences; connect us with our natural and cultural heritage; deepen our understanding and expand our horizons. (UK - AHI)*

Recent work by Professor Sam Ham of the University of Idaho has applied the most up-to-date principles of behavioural and cognitive psychology to Tilden's work and has shown it to be as relevant today as it was 50 years ago when first written. Much of the following justification is based upon this recent work by Ham.

2.1 Why an Interpretation Plan?

Boat of Garten Community Company wants to make people care; to make people act and to stimulate people to get involved to help it meet their objectives.

To do this they have to take a purposeful approach to communicating their key messages as they need to capture people's attention and hold it.

For true understanding, more is required than the communication of factual information: understanding will occur only if meanings and relationships have been revealed.

(Professor Sam Ham pers comm)

Visitors to places such as Boat of Garten, and that includes ourselves, want to connect with these places, through meaningful and lasting experiences. When on holiday, visitors are not there to learn facts or to acquire knowledge that will be of use in a later exam or test. They engage with the communication process in a very different way from what we might have experienced at school or at college. They are not required to listen or pay attention and will only do so if their attention is held. Visitors who come to the Village are in a relaxed, non-

formal learning mode; they are effectively seeking pleasure. It is almost certain that they will not concentrate on anything for long if it doesn't fit their idea of having fun, if it isn't relevant to things they know and care about and if it isn't easy to follow. Any curiosity will quickly disappear if they do not find something that brings them pleasure.

Behavioural science studies over many decades have concluded that the only way that we will make a difference in the minds of our visitors is if the interpretation that we provide gets them to think and develop their own ideas in their own mind. These may not be exactly the ideas we seek, but this is the fundamental starting point for any communication process – we need to get the audience thinking.

Interpretation, therefore, is all about making people think; about stimulating the brain to activity and ultimately leading to actions that can deliver the objectives set by the communicator in the first instance.

So, interpretation is an approach to encouraging thinking and subsequent actions. With a rational planning process an interpretive approach to communication can achieve much for an organization that wishes to stimulate thinking and consequent action. Failure to address the basic planning and development of this communication process will ensure an ineffective outcome.

2.2 Why is an interpretation plan important for the Steering Group?

For an organisation that wants to influence how people feel about their community and what it has to offer the visitor an interpretation plan can be a powerful tool. It can deliver on a wide range of fronts, just some of which are identified below:

- More effective engagement with audiences, both existing and potential
The village can potentially tell many stories, the Plan will help clarify what is told to maximise the return from the communication process
- More impact upon and thinking by the audiences
The aim of the Plan is to get people thinking and ultimately talking. Good word of mouth promotion and return visits can underpin the economic sustainability of the village economy
- Stronger connections between the community and their heritage
Providing a clarity of thinking about the village's heritage will make it easier for the community to engage with its past.
- Community support for visitor services
Through meeting the needs of visitors the community stands to benefit as well from improved services and infrastructure

2.3 How is the Plan Structured?

The Plan follows a rational process common to much traditional planning, but the key is that it works towards identifying the key messages that are to be put over, where this should happen and by what means. These key messages will become the focus for the provision of a range of interpretive material. The various elements of the Plan are as follows:

1. Interpretive Inventory
2. Identify Issues
3. Set Interpretive Goals
4. Define and segment the audience
5. Develop themes and messages
6. Production of an implementation plan
7. Recommendations for evaluation

This Plan has been developed through applying experience from an external consultant, but importantly it has embedded a local resident as a community agent within the process. This has been done to ensure that there will always be someone within the community who has a clear understanding of how the process was undertaken; someone who understands the rationale behind the recommendations and who can help take forward the work into the future. The community itself has also been involved and their knowledge and enthusiasm has been critical to the delivery of this final document.

3.0 Interpretive Inventory

It is vital to understand what resources are available for use within the area to help meet the overall aims of the Plan. This was approached in 2 distinct but complementary ways:

- A community workshop and questionnaire
- Research and analysis of local sources of information

3.1 Community Workshop and Questionnaire

This event was held on 24th November 2009 in the Community Hall. 23 people took part. The Meeting was publicised through the following media:

- Posters on all village notice boards, The Boat Hotel and the Golf Club (final copy attached Appendix 1).
- E-mail notifications to Community Company and Community Council mailing lists
- Notice in BOG Standard
- Word of mouth in village

It involved those attending identifying, on large scale maps of the area, those local features that they considered to be of importance to them. The features were categorised as: Natural World; Archaeology; People; Buildings and Activities.

Each category was represented by a different coloured card, and the participants placed a card on the site of the feature identified with identification text and a note of any issues relating to the feature. The only rules were that only one card could be placed by an individual on a specific feature and they could not remove another person's card. Each participant could place as many cards as they wished. Appendix 2 lists all the features identified at the community workshop.

Additionally the attendees were asked their views on the Osprey Village identity of Boat of Garten and if they had any views on the promotion of the village and any key issues in relation to the heritage of the area. This will be discussed further in Section 6.

The Questionnaire was circulated to coincide with community based events at Christmas and a prize was offered for a randomly selected submission.

3.1.1 Community Workshop

This event generated 174 responses and the table below indicates those features that were identified by more than one person. The most popular were:

Archaeology: Tom Pitlac (7)

Buildings: Station Buildings (5), Village Hall (4)

People: John Roy Stuart (2)

Activities: Walking (8), Community Hall (7), Cycling, Golf (6), Community Garden, Bird-watching and Fishing (4)

Natural World: Milton Loch (7), Birds (5), Squirrels (4)

Table 1: Key Features identified at Community Workshop 24th November 2009

Archaeology	
Tom Pitlac	7
Cairn, School	2
Legend of Stone	2
Buildings	
Station Buildings	5
Village Hall	4
Boat Hotel	3
Drumullie Mill	3
Community Hall	2
Deshar School	2
Craigard	2
Strathspey Cottage	2
St Columba Church	2
Kincardine Church	2
Old Forge	2
Ferry	2
Sleeper Cottages	2
Curling Rink	2
People	
John Roy Stuart	2
Activities	
Walking	8
Community Hall activities	7
Cycling	6
Golf	6
Community Garden	4
Bird-watching	4
Fishing	4
Botany	3
Canoeing	2
Tennis	2
Play Park and Football Field	2
Dragonfly observation platform	2
Natural World	
Milton Loch, herons and ducks	7
Birds	5
Red Squirrels	4
Ospreys at Loch Garten	3
Woodland	3
River Spey	2
Grebe	1

3.1.2 Community Questionnaire

The community questionnaire sought responses to the following questions:

1. What is your favourite memory of Boat of Garten?
2. Which of the following features do you think are most interesting about Boat of Garten - number your preferences from 1 for most important, 2 for next most important, etc

Railway, Archaeology, Wildlife, Golf, Walks and Outdoor Activities
Any other (please specify)

3. What do you think of Boat's identity as 'The Osprey Village'?
Score from 1 -10 (1 = don't like it – to – 10 = perfect)
4. Do you think that the number of visitors currently attracted to Boat of Garten is
 - a. Too few
 - b. Just right
 - c. Too many

39 responses were received.

Features of Most Interest

Ranking	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Railway	9	4	9	8	4
Archaeology	1	1	3	5	17
Wildlife	9	9	8	9	1
Golf	13	9	6	1	7
Walks	9	12	8	6	0
Other	4	1	1	1	2

Apportioning a score of 5 for 1st choice and 1 for 5th gives the following ranking of community significance from this questionnaire.

Walks	129
Golf	128
Wildlife	124
Railway	108
Archaeology	45
Other	31

Osprey Village Identity

Community views about the identity as the 'Osprey Village' were supportive with the following distribution of scores:

Scores	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No. (50 people)	5	2	1	1	5	2	4	5	6	19
%	10	4	2	2	10	4	8	10	12	38

The totals above included some of the attendees at the community workshop giving a total of 50 responses. 60% scored the identity 8 or higher with only 16% scoring it 3 or lower

Numbers of Visitors (39 responses)

Too few	14
Just right	24
Too many	1

Whilst not a definitive community appraisal this return shows that there is no clear type of heritage asset that generates overwhelming support within the community. There is also an inherent bias within the surveyed group as it represents an elderly and probably longer resident group than the population as a whole. Despite this the clear message is that outdoor activities and assets, such as walks, golf and wildlife are highly valued whilst the railway is the strongest built and historical heritage asset, by quite a margin.

Additionally there was widespread and strong support for the village identity as the 'Osprey Village' and contentment with the number of visitors although a sizeable minority were supportive of the view that there were currently too few visitors.

3.2 Research

The following sources were used to identify heritage features and assets within the area of the Plan:

- SNH Sitelink – list of designated sites
- Boat of Garten Community Council Area, Local Biodiversity Audit, Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report, June 2006 to June 2007, Prepared by M S Taylor, on behalf of the Boat of Garten Wildlife Group

Other source material:

Online sources:

Am Baile <http://www.ambaile.org.uk/en/>

Boat of Garten <http://www.boatofgarten.com>

Boat of Garten Golf Club <http://www.boatgolf.com>

Boat of Garten Hotel <http://boathotel.co.uk>

Boat of Garten on Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boat_of_Garten

Cairngorms National Park Authority <http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/>

Clan Grant <http://www.clangrant.org.uk/>

Forres to Grantown Railway <http://www.imagine.fm/forres-grantown-railway/index.htm>

Highland Council Historic Environment Records <http://her.highland.gov.uk>

Historic Scotland <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk>

Internet Archive <http://www.archive.org/>

John Roy Stuart <http://www.johnroystuart.org.uk/>

National Archives of Scotland <http://www.nas.gov.uk/onlineCatalogue/>

National Library of Scotland <http://www.nls.uk/index.html>

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/>

Scotland's Places <http://www.scotlandsplaces.gov.uk>

Scottish Government <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Home>

Scottish Interpretation Network <http://scotinterpnet.org.uk>

Scottish Natural Heritage <http://www.snh.org.uk/>

RSPB Loch Garten <http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide//lochgarten/>

Strathspey Steam Railway <http://src.insch.info/>

Strathspey Railway on Wikipedia

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strathspey_Railway_\(GNoSR\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strathspey_Railway_(GNoSR))

I&PJ Railway http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inverness_and_Perth_Junction_Railway

Undiscovered Scotland <http://undiscoveredscotland.co.uk>

VisitScotland <http://www.visitscotland.com/>
Visit Aviemore <http://www.visitaviemore.com/>

Printed sources:

Affleck Gray, *Legends of the Cairngorms* (Mainstream Publishing, 1987)
Ann Glen, *The Cairngorm Gateway* (Scottish Cultural Press, 2002)
Ann Glen, *Old Grantown To Aviemore* (Stenlake Publishing, 2009)
Roy Dennis, *A Life of Ospreys* (Whittles Publishing, 2008)
Arthur Mitchell, *Vacation Notes in Cromer, Burghead, and Strathspey* (Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1875)
Donald and Brian Barr, *The Spey – From Source To Sea* (Luath Press, 2009)
James Chapman (attributed), *The Cromdale Text* (1729)
Rev W. Forsyth, *In the Shadow of Cairngorm* (Northern Counties Publishing Company, 1900; rev, ed Bothan, 1999)
William Fraser, *The Chiefs of Grant* (Edinburgh, 1883)
John Kerr, *A Hundred Years at the Boat* (BoG Golf Club, 1998)
Lachlan Shaw, *History of Moray* (1775)
Neil T. Sinclair, *Strathspey Railway Guide Book*, 1981
A Sense of Place: An Interpretative Handbook
Sharing the Stories of the Cairngorms National Park (CNPA, 2008)
Transcription of talk by George Dixon in Boat of Garten Hall

3.2.1 Heritage Assets of Boat of Garten

The following categories of features are recorded below and within Appendices 3 – 5. The categories are assessed in general for their potential for interpretation.

- Natural World
- Archaeology
- Landscape of Boat of Garten Area
- Buildings
- People
- Activities

3.2.2 Natural World

The Plan area is dominated by the flood plain of the River Spey with the lower lying lands at just over 200m above sea level. To the north lie the hills of Docharn, Creag an Fithich and Creag Garten rising to over 400m; to the west the hills of Kinveachy, with Beinn Ghuilbin rising to 578m on the edge of the area and to the SE lie the Abernethy Hills rising outside the area to the 687m of Craiggowrie.

The area is underlain by highly deformed and metamorphosed rocks from the Precambrian period. These rocks were originally a very thick series of marine sedimentary and volcanic rocks. During the Devonian period a massive body of magma rose upwards in the crust and cooled to form the granite Cairngorm Mountains. Granite is a hard rock resistant to erosion, and it formed a broad plateau, while the surrounding Precambrian rocks continued to be eroded. The last major ice age to affect the area was about 18,000 years ago and ended approximately 13,000 years ago. During this time, the Cairngorms were entirely covered by an ice sheet. However, the area was also affected by a subsequent phase of glacial activity that occurred approximately 11,000 years ago. This later event resulted in the formation of numerous small glaciers in the corries and valleys, and left the landscape we see today, with most of the landscape coated in glacial dumped material. The flatter areas are

characterised by glacial hollows and kettleholes with many small lochans and lochs scattered throughout the farmland and forests.

The vegetation cover is dominated by Scots pine plantations, with a dwarf shrub heath ground layer, open birch woodland, often with clumps of aspen and a shrub layer of juniper and semi-improved grassland. The farmland is predominantly grassed for use by livestock or for silage with very little of the land used for arable crops. There is one medium sized loch (Loch Vaa) and several smaller lochans.

A biodiversity audit was commissioned by the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) as part of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan Project (LBAP) and was undertaken by the Boat of Garten Wildlife Group. The survey was conducted by a small group of volunteers from within the Boat of Garten Wildlife Group, and was completed in June 2007 with the final report prepared by M. S. Taylor. This provides a detailed description of the vegetation of the area.

Designated Sites

The area contains four designated conservation sites:

The woodland east of the B970 is part of the **Abernethy Forest** National Nature Reserve and is owned and managed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). This is part of the Cairngorms SAC/SPA (these are designations that recognise the EU significance of such areas). This is one of the largest areas of native pinewood in Britain. Much of the site within the Plan area is semi-natural, some having been planted since the mid-eighteenth century. Although much of the forest is managed it retains a high degree of naturalness, also a good structural diversity in terms of varying age, height and form of trees and in the presence of a shrub layer of juniper. The area is quite diverse with coniferous plantation dominated by Scots pine with scattered lodgepole pine; unimproved acid grassland with scattered birch; dry dwarf acid heath with scattered patches of wet dwarf acid heath, and pools and mire areas

Many plant species of national and regional importance occur under both the open and closed woodland canopy. Abernethy pinewood is also famous for its northern bird species. Up to 4% of the total British breeding population of crested tits occur here and the forest is one of the most important areas for Britain's only endemic bird species, the Scottish crossbill. Other important species include osprey, as well as capercaillie, siskin and black game. Abernethy is rich in scarce or rare insects characteristic of the native pinewoods. Scotch argus and dark green fritillary butterflies are among the more widespread species that occur here and there are also rare dragonflies. Many species of mammal breed in or use the site. More notable species include wildcat, badger and red squirrel.

The woodland west of the A9 is part of **Kinveachy Forest** and is designated as a SAC due to containing one of the major tracts of remnant Caledonian Forest. Kinveachy Forest is additionally designated as a SPA due to important breeding populations of Scottish crossbill and capercaillie. The area is a mix of planted and semi-natural woodland dominated by Scots Pine with ground layer of blaeberry, cowberry and common heather.

Loch Vaa, on the SW edge of the Plan area, is an acidic and nutrient poor spring-fed loch. The shoreline comprises a series of small bays and inlets vegetated with fen and bog communities. The loch is surrounded by deciduous woodland, with mainly birch to the south and plantation Scots pine to the north. Small seasonal pools around the loch are important for insects, notably water beetles and the northern damselfly. The loch supports breeding waterbirds and pinewood birds in the surrounding woodland. Loch Vaa is designated as a

SPA due to internationally important populations of Slavonian grebe during the breeding season, and a SSSI due to populations of Slavonian grebe and goldeneye.

The **River Spey** is a central feature within the Plan area and a total of 7.6km of this, the second longest in Scotland, flows through the area. Here in the middle reaches of the river the gradient flattens out and the river has a slow and meandering form. The Spey is a dynamic river and during high flows, it carries large sediment loads from undercutting old river terraces and recycling floodplain deposits. Much of the river bed is mobile and the position of shingle banks, riffles and pools change over time. In these middle reaches, woodland and enclosed agricultural land predominates. Here, riparian habitats include broad-leaved semi natural wood dominated by birch with patches of aspen; common alder with scattered bird cherry, rowan, ash and grey willow, and semi-improved and occasional species-rich grassland.

The River Spey is notified for its important populations of the following species:

- **Atlantic Salmon**
The river has a major spawning population and one of the most important salmon fisheries in the north of Scotland.
- **Sea Lamprey**
The sea lamprey spawns throughout the lower and middle reaches of the River Spey. The river supports a relatively large population of this species which is at the northern limit of its distribution within fresh waters in the UK.
- **Otter**
The River Spey supports a healthy population of otters, and is a good representative freshwater site for this species in Scotland.
- **Freshwater Pearl Mussel**
Although stretches have been severely affected by past pearl fishing, it still has one of the largest populations in Scotland including juveniles.

Species interest

The designated sites listed above mention some of the species associated with the Strathspey pinewoods, the river and lochs. All the mammal species are ubiquitous to the Plan area, with otter, wildcat, pine marten, red squirrel and badger all possible to see across most of the area. Red squirrel is perhaps the most immediately charismatic and accessible of these species and there are many opportunities to engage with this increasingly rare mammal within the Plan area.

Bird interest is high with the area containing all the representative species of the Caledonian pinewoods listed above. Of special mention, although just outside the Plan area, 3.5km east of the village, are the Loch Garten ospreys. This is part of the wider Abernethy National Nature Reserve, but is nationally renowned as the location for the return of this bird as a breeding species in Britain in 1954. By the late 50's the RSPB had established a hide and round the clock protection for these birds and although in the past they have succumbed to egg thieves the birds still catch the country's attention every April when the birds return from Africa to breed. Use of webcams and online blogs following the day to day events in the birds breeding has made this site globally renowned. A modern, environmentally sensitive centre gives the visitor good views of the birds from April through to August and annually over 35,000 visitors are attracted to this location.

The biodiversity survey mentions 5 badger setts in the Plan area. One of them is on the edge of birch woodland, south of Street of Kincardine, has been provided with the Strathspey Badger Hide which is managed by the Boat of Garten Community Company Wildlife Group.

Non Designated Sites of Interest

Milton Loch:

The loch is used by breeding waterfowl and contains a heronry with approximately one dozen breeding pairs in the woodland on the NW shore. Trees are dominated by Scots pine to the NW and silver birch to the west with a scrub layer dominated by broom. A circular footpath just to the west of the loch is located within an area of marshy grassland that has recently been planted with Scots pine to provide woodland optimised for wildlife. Plans are in progress to provide ponds adjacent to the footpath for dragonflies and other pondlife. A hide has been constructed, but this is not as effective as it might be as it needs screening provision to hide approaching bird watchers from the Loch.

Auchgourish Gardens and Arboretum (Scotland's Millennium Botanic Garden):

The gardens at Auchgourish extend to some 10 acres / 4 hectares and the general layout is mainly based on bio-geographic regions such as Japan, Himalaya, Korea, etc, along with Chinese and North American rock gardens, as well as a Scottish Alpine and a St. Andrew's garden, in which all the botanical plants flower either to blue or white. In addition to the gardens themselves they have a nursery from which plants for the gardens are produced and surplus rare and unusual plants are sold via the web shop www.thebotanicalnursery.com and to visitors. There is also a small herd of Highland cattle, including the original black ones and the very rare white variety. Auchgourish Gardens are open to the public every Sunday to Friday (closed Saturdays) between early April and the end of October. A modest charge is made for entrance.

The Gardens are a 4 star visitor attraction and have achieved a Silver Award for the Green Tourism Business Scheme.

Community Garden:

Located adjacent to Station Square, The creation of the Community Garden in 2002 was a local initiative in partnership with BBC Scotland's Beechgrove Garden, as explained in an Interpretive Panel by the entrance. This is an important resource for locals and visitors.

Summary

The area is characteristic of the middle reaches of the Spey. Its morphology, vegetation and species interests are of national significance, but have to be set in the context of a similar claim by areas immediately surrounding Boat of Garten. The whole of Strathspey within the National Park holds a wealth of natural riches. The area contains virtually no areas that have not been impacted one way or another by human interference and as such can be considered to be typical but not outstanding for the area in general. Despite this, for the casual visitor the area holds much of fascination and this will be explored further.

3.2.3 Archaeology

The area around Boat of Garten has a range of archaeological features that have been recorded over the last 150 years and detailed on various public databases. Each of these features is listed within Appendix 3 with a description and consideration of their interpretive potential.

Interpreting archaeology successfully is not easy and does rely on good evidence on the ground to allow the casual visitor to get a sense of the significance of a feature. As with all assets to be considered within this plan, the features have to be of significance to justify the cost and effort of overcoming the other associated issues of access, privacy and public safety. This area presents problems in this respect as nearly all the features are either

difficult to see or are cryptic to understand. The archaeology of Boat of Garten can be alluded to in general interpretation about the area, but reference to specific features will be of limited value in delivering the overall aims of this Plan.

The area has only one significant feature that sets it apart from the rest of the surrounding countryside. This is the remains of the fort known as Tom Pitlac. This fort is situated 500m north of the main bridge over the Spey and on the left bank of the river. The fort cannot be easily seen from the road-bridge. The river has already removed at least half of the remains through undercutting and has left a dangerous and unstable morainic cliff. The remainder of the fort and its associated ditch is reached from the track leading to a private house, formerly Drumuillie Mill, after passing under the railway line. Access is across a field that is usually grazed by cattle in the summer. On reaching the fort it is overgrown by gorse and broom and apart from the obvious ditch reveals little of the significance of the site. The history of the fort undoubtedly has a fascinating history but much of this is lost in the mists of time and the rest appears to be informed conjecture.

It is recommended that this feature is not appropriate for onsite interpretation for the following reasons:

- Disturbance to private residence
- Absence of adequate parking provision
- Site access problems
- Need for site clearance
- Site safety issues
- Absence of significant onsite features
- Lack of clarity of the site's significance

Within the area are a number of neolithic, iron and Bronze Age forts, cairns, burial features and stone rings, and the occasional remains of later hut circles. Very few of these are easily accessible or offer anything substantive to comment on apart from the few informed specialists. This limited group will be able to access those features in which they have an interest without recourse to the findings of this Plan.

In general the archaeology has limited interpretive potential, and apart from mention of earlier human occupation there is little that can be specifically alluded to in any interpretive provision.

3.2.4 The Landscape of Boat of Garten

Boat of Garten lies on the west bank of the River Spey, and is surrounded by a combination of forested hills, native woodland, moorland and farmland. The Community Council area encompasses an area on all sides of the River Spey. On the western side of the river there is Drumuillie, Chapelton, Docharn and Kinchurdy; on the eastern side Kincardine and parts of Tulloch Moor as well as Gartenmore down to Cullachie.

Little is known of the people and landscape of the area before the mid 18th century. The local people would have been relatively sedentary, living a subsistence lifestyle with black cattle as a principal source of trading. Historically, the area has been dominated by a few major clan groupings, with the Grants, Stuarts, Shaws, Comyns (or Cummings) and Mackintoshes most prominent among them.

One of the best sources giving an insight into the early nature of the area are the maps of General Roy held in the National Library of Scotland and available online. These were mapped in the years immediately following the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745-46, and they show

the distribution of townships and woodland resource at that time. They were military maps and as such record features of significance such as roads, ferries, fords and settlements. The map below shows no roads, no ferry, indeed no Boat of Garten! A few of the townships are still identifiable in local names: Gartenbeg, Lynchurn, Drumuillie, Dochlaggie, Dashars (sic) and Mullingaroch

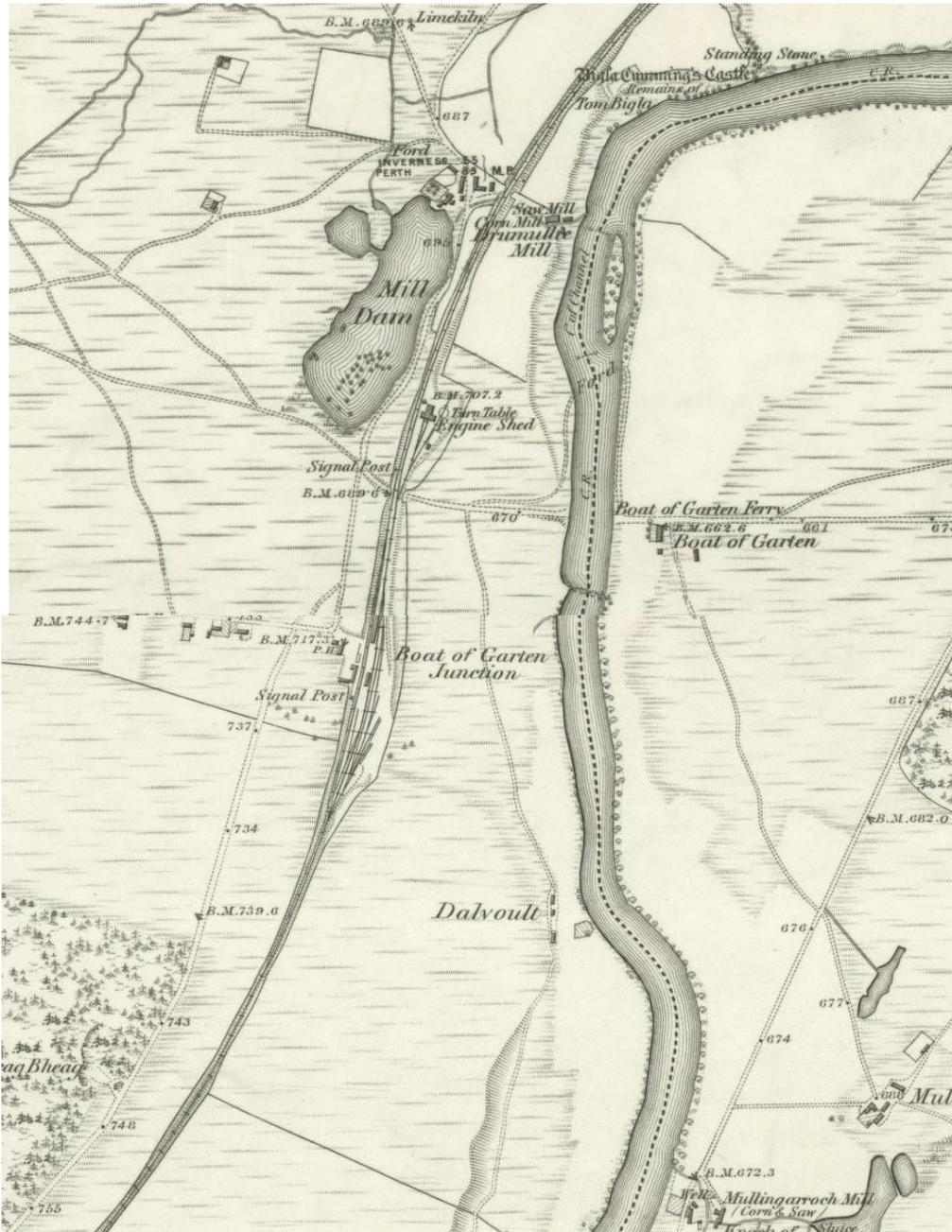
Each of these would have held 20-50 people in close family groupings, raising crops in communal strips and taking their cattle and few sheep to the hills in the summer. This map is a snapshot in time, but probably illustrates a relationship between the local population and the land that had changed little in the previous 1000 years, occasional clan slaughter apart! But all this was about to change.



Roy's Military Survey of Scotland 1747 – 1755 (National Library of Scotland)

The next 100 years would change all this forever. Townships were gradually replaced with single farms and the land was enclosed to form the farmed landscape that we know today. More forest was planted and the remnants of the Caledonian Forest were actively managed. The River was a major transporter of timber and gradually roads and tracks appeared allowing products to be taken out and people to leave to the growing industrialised towns and cities, or to leave Scotland forever.

The first Ordnance Survey of the area also reveals a critical transition period for this area. The map below was surveyed a couple of years after the arrival of the railway and it shows very little development at Boat of Garten. Over the next 100 years this was to change as the importance of the railway junction grew until its ultimate closure. The changes in the wider landscape were more subtle throughout this period, but Boat was to grow through the railway and then with improved road infrastructure with holiday, retirement and more recently commuter housing.



OS 1867-69 (National Library of Scotland)

3.2.5 Buildings

As outlined above, Boat of Garten is a relatively young community built up from the mid 19th century on the back of the railway's development. Prior to the railway early maps show a number of pre-enclosure townships. There are no extant features from this era, excepting the Church at Kincardine. There are few recorded farm or village buildings pre-dating the railway era. For this reason most of the built heritage dates from post-1860. Those buildings that are listed or are recorded on the Highland Council's database are described in Appendix 4. This list also includes those buildings identified as significant to today's community (as identified at the community workshop); those that offer the potential to promote the outcomes of this Plan and those that no longer exist or which have limited intrinsic interpretive value.

The built heritage can be subdivided into the following groupings, with those buildings of significance listed:

- Pre-railway (Kincardine Church)
- Railway infrastructure
(Station, Station Master's House, Signal Box, Footbridge, Gas House)
- Associated with the Railway era
(Boat Hotel, Craigard, railway workers cottages on Kinchurdy Road, Deshar Road and Spey Avenue; growth of holiday villas in village)
- Buildings that can have a role within this Plan
(Community Hall, Public Hall, Holiday Park, Golf Clubhouse, Post Office and Shop)

The railway, and visitor facilities and services associated with it, are inevitably the central focus for the built heritage of the village. The story of how the village grew from almost nothing to be the community it is today is down to the influence of the Railway.

There are a range of issues associated with the built heritage. The principal issue is the fact that many of the buildings that were formerly a significant part of village life are now either private residences or businesses. Any interpretation has to respect the privacy of local residents and must not encourage visitors to treat the village as if it is some sort of open air museum, laid out for their pleasure and enjoyment.

The Railway (from Wikipedia)

The Inverness and Perth Junction Railway Line was built to link the Inverness and Aberdeen Junction Railway with the line between Forres and Aviemore opening on 3 August 1863 and this saw the development of the first station at Boat of Garten.

The Strathspey Railway line was opened on 1st July 1863 between Dufftown and Abernethy (later Nethy Bridge). It was extended to meet up with the Inverness and Perth Junction Railway (later the Highland Railway) at Boat of Garten on 1st August 1866. The Strathspey Railway actually met the Highland line at Tullochgorum, some 3 miles north of Boat of Garten, but the two lines ran parallel until reaching Boat, the physical junction being to the south of Boat of Garten station. The same year, 1866, saw the Strathspey Railway become part of the larger Great North of Scotland Railway (GNSR).

Boat was on the main line to Inverness from the south until the development of the direct line from Aviemore to Inverness over the route still in use today. The line between Aviemore and Carrbridge opened in 1892, between Carrbridge and Daviot in 1897 and the final section to Millburn Junction in Inverness on 1 November 1898.

The Strathspey Railway served the numerous distilleries that operated in the Spey Valley, many of these distilleries having their own small tank engines, or 'pugs' as they were known. In 1923, the railway became part of the London & North Eastern Railway (LNER) and through passenger services were advertised from Boat of Garten to the South via Aberdeen. The line became part of British Railways in 1948 and many cost-saving measures were considered, including the introduction of diesel rail buses in the late 1950s.

The Strathspey line closed to passengers on 18 October 1965, the same date as the closure of the Highland line between Aviemore and Forres. Grantown on Spey, which had previously been served by two separate stations, was now left without any rail connection. Goods traffic lingered on for a further three years, mostly the whisky trains, until this too ceased on 4 November 1968. The track was lifted the following year. Although the two stations at either end of the line are open, serving two heritage railways, (the Keith and

Dufftown Railway at Dufftown and the (second) Strathspey Railway at Boat of Garten on the Highland Railway's Aviemore to Forres route), no part of the original Strathspey Railway has been preserved. However, the section between Ballindalloch and Craigellachie has now been converted into part of the Speyside Way, which runs between Ballindalloch and Spey Bay.

Many of the railway's attractive stone-built station buildings still exist today; some have been converted for private usage, while others are near derelict. Two of the three bridges over the Spey still survive: the joint road/rail cast-iron arch bridge at Carron and the impressive lattice girder bridge at Ballindalloch, the latter is now a Category A listed building.

3.2.6 People

Boat of Garten, and the surrounding area, like all communities can boast associations with a range of famous people through its history. These are listed in Appendix 5 and their potential for interpretation is discussed. People leave little direct evidence of their actions, unless buried locally, and this is the case with Boat. Reference to the famous will usually be by association, and their value lies in how they can be used to enhance the chosen stories. The lives of the common people are rarely recorded and often we have to rely on the casual comings and goings of the powerful and famous. These rarely reflect on the genuine lives of the local community.

For Boat of Garten the lives of the railway workers and how they contributed to the wider life of the Strathspey area are the story of the village. The very development of the village rests on their efforts and activities. Work is ongoing to record the oral history of the village and it is expected that this will identify some characters and some stories relating to the railway history that will assist in helping connect visitors to this important aspect of the village's heritage.

There is one pre-eminent locally born character from the area – John Roy Stuart – and only one significant visitor with a substantial connection to the area, Sir William Beveridge. Three Royal visitors – Edward 1, Victoria and Albert and Princess Eugenie – and the local inn-keeper, Alexander Macgregor, all add some historical colour to other stories. James Braid's involvement with the golf course is of interest to the golfer, but is shared with many other courses. The two 'mythical' figures of Bigla Cumming and Holy Mary of Lurg add some additional colour to the story of Tom Pitlac.

John Roy Stuart's birthplace is no longer accessible to visitors. The entrance to the area is marked with a cairn, but this has limited parking and does not lend itself to onsite interpretation. Craigard, where Beveridge undertook his great work, is now a private house and can only be referred to in the passing.

3.2.7 Activities

Golf Course

Boat of Garten Golf Course, like many courses across Scotland, was developed on the back of the developing railway. The original layout was only 6 holes for the recreation of local businessmen, farmers, railwaymen and the minister (*cf. One Hundred Years at the Boat, p.9*). The earliest surviving accounts are from 1898. By 1930 the course was 8 holes, and then some extra land became available and James Braid was invited to design an 18 hole course which was eventually opened in 1932. The course is renowned as one of the gems of this great designer who is on record saying that the Boat is 'a beautiful course – one of the prettiest I ever designed'. To many a visitor it certainly delivers on its reputation as the 'Gleneagles of the North'.

Fishing (from Boat of Garten website)

The Spey is famous for Salmon, Sea Trout and Brown Trout, and there is a choice of beats available. Salmon fishing on the Spey starts on the 11th February and finishes on the 30th September, whereas the trout fishing season starts on the 15th March and ends at the same time as the salmon fishing season.

The Abernethy Angling Improvement Association offer over six miles on both banks. This stretch of water consists of 15 named pools of double bank fishing available to visitors staying in Boat of Garten, Nethybridge, Dulnain Bridge and Carrbridge. The methods allowed are fly, spinning or worm fishing, with certain stretches reserved for fly only when the river reaches a certain level. Each year well in excess of 1100 sea trout are taken from these waters.

Just upstream from the village is the privately owned Kinchurdy Salmon fishings who offer their waters as double bank fishings in two beats. Each beat will allow up to five people to fish and the Strathspey Estate provides a full time Ghillie.

Paths and routes

- Speyside Way

The Speyside Way is one of four official Long Distance Routes in Scotland (the others are the West Highland Way, the Southern Upland Way and the Great Glen Way). It was first opened in 1981, to run from Spey Bay to Ballindalloch, with a spur to Tomintoul being added in 1990. A northern extension from Spey Bay to Buckie followed in 1999; with the route finally being completed between Ballindalloch and Aviemore in April 2000 making the end route of 65 miles with a 15 mile spur to Tomintoul (plans are ongoing to extend the route to Newtonmore, closer to the source of the Spey). The route now links the Moray coast with the edge of the Grampian Mountains, generally following the valley of the River Spey. The Speyside Way is managed by the Moray Council on behalf of the Access Authorities responsible - the Moray Council, the Cairngorms National Park and the Highland Council. The route is funded jointly by these three authorities.

6km of the route is located within the Plan area. A request was made from the route managers for an indication of numbers of walkers, but this was not forthcoming at the time of writing.

- Route 7 (Sustrans Cycle route)

Inverness to Glasgow via Pitlochry: 214 miles of which 42 are traffic-free

'National Route 7 between Inverness and Glasgow is a stunningly beautiful route that passes through two National Parks. Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park contains picturesque lochs, forests and bustling tourist towns. The Cairngorms National Park extends over the UK's largest mountain range, with heather clad moors and ancient pine forests. A traffic free route through the Drumochter Pass (one of Britain's highest transport corridors) is one of the highlights of the whole network. The route then descends into the wooded hillsides and rich farmlands of Perthshire and Stirling. The route then passes through Queen Elizabeth Forest Park and onto traffic free paths into Glasgow.'

<http://www.sustrans.org.uk/what-we-do/national-cycle-network/long-distance-rides/scotland/lochs-and-glens-north>

The route follows the Speyside Way into Boat and then runs to Carrbridge then north to Inverness. An off road section takes the cyclist from the School past Docharn and through plantations to Carrbridge. This section offers good views to the south and east over Strathspey.

- Community paths - Boat of Garten way marked village walks.

As part of the Community Council's Millennium Project a network of way-marked footpaths in and around the village were set up. The following is from the Boat of Garten website and offers brief descriptions of the routes identified and way marked.

The paths have been there for as long as anyone remembers, but, for visitors in particular, the prospect of setting off into the woods with no map or directions was somewhat daunting. So the situation has now been formalised with sign posting and a map with directions and information. The map is available for purchase at local shops and hotels.

Walk 1

For a summer evening's stroll or a short winter's walk, there are paths in the Pine and Birch woods beside the village. Where, as well as the fine viewpoint of "The Craigie" looking out to the Kincardine Hills and Cairngorm Mountains, you will find the Old "Fairy Hill" hidden among the trees which has been opened up for a wider perspective of the stunning view, with a bench for peaceful contemplation.

Walk 2

A slightly longer walk of around 4 km is that along the Kinchurdy Road, with its fine houses built in the railways original hey-days, turning left at the end of the road, down through lovely woodland, crossing the Strathspey Railway line towards the River Spey, and then back along the track between the golf course and the river, past the old farmhouse of Wester Dalvout, now modernised.

Walk 3

Longer again – about 10 km altogether – is the walk (or cycle) from the village using the footpath laid down for the Speyside Way, towards Aviemore, along a forestry track to an archaeological site set on open moorland with wonderful views across to the Cairngorms – a lovely spot for a picnic lunch.

Walk 4

A pleasant all-abilities walk around the regenerated and re-landscaped old village tip gives views of Milton Loch and its bird life.

Extended Walks

Apart from these immediately local walks, there are longer routes, also suitable for cycling, connecting Boat of Garten with the surrounding settlements of Aviemore, Nethy Bridge and Carrbridge, which all have their own footpath networks. For access to Aviemore and Nethy Bridge, a bonus is to use the [Strathspey Railway](#) for the outward or return journey, thereby combining a delightful walk with the scenic views provided by the railway.

Summary

The Boat of Garten area has much to offer the visitor and the resident alike; golf on what is recognised as a gem of a course; fishing on one of Britain's great salmon rivers, walking and cycling through extensive forests and plantation. These attractions have been a constant attractant over the last 100 years and there is no reason to imagine that this will change greatly in the coming decades. This is clearly a place for the outdoor enjoyment of active and passive pursuits in a typical part of Strathspey at the heart of the Cairngorms National Park.

3.3 Existing Interpretation

In developing an interpretation plan there is never a blank sheet to work with! Every community will have some pre-existing material that endeavours to connect people to their

heritage resources. This is the case with Boat of Garten, where there are a range of panels, leaflets and website provision already partly doing this, but as with other communities this material has developed in an ad hoc organic way and will not have been developed using this planning process.

Existing panels

Community Hall

- Art Work above internal entrance to the new Hall. This was produced by a Community Art project in 2007 through the efforts of 24 village residents who were asked to identify something about the village that they liked. (see front cover)

Station Square:

- Community Garden Board
- Speyside Way Board

Station

- Timetables, etc, only

Old Village Hall

- Walks & Tracks Board (Millennium Project described above)
- B&S District Council Plaque (origin of village name)

By Granlea

- Walks & Tracks Board

Village Green

- Noticeboard only

Bird Platform (Deshar Road)

- Slavonian Grebes
- School Project Board on Red Squirrels

Sawmill

- 2 small panels describing timber source and milling processes (quite technical), in machine by roadside

Leaflets

Boat of Garten Village Leaflet

Millennium paths project

Accommodation leaflet (currently being reviewed, but will mainly be delivered through the website in future)

Annual Leaflet listing Talks in Community Hall

3.4 Key Issues

Any interpretive developments have to take account of local and external issues that may impact on individuals, groups, businesses and the community itself. To ascertain what the key issues are an open discussion session was held at the community workshop and respondents to the questionnaire mentioned above were asked to identify issues of concern. The following issues have been identified:

Access

Many features have physical problems relating to visitor access. Some archaeological features are not readily accessible and present safety concerns (eg, Tom Pitlac). Some access routes are blocked and present problems for wider access – often this is associated with sporting management (eg, locked gate between Wester Dalvout and Kinchurdy Farm).

Many of the buildings identified are now in private or commercial use and cannot be reasonably promoted for the inquisitive gaze of visitors (eg, Craigard).

Infrastructure

Safe parking off road is an issue, particularly for Kincardine Church, and pedestrian access south of Street of Kincardine should not be encouraged on safety grounds.

Visitor pressure

Those who have responded to the work of this plan have been supportive of the need for Boat of Garten to continue to attract visitors, as it has done since the 1860s. It is known, though, that there are other residents of the village who do not share this aim and consider tourists an intrusion and annoyance to their lifestyle. It is not the intention of this plan to significantly alter the visitor use of the area. Any proposals will just be ensuring the continuance of well established practice.

Concern for maintenance of heritage

Older members of the community are concerned that features that used to be important parts of the local heritage are being lost as more new residents settle in the area. There is still an opportunity to retain much of the collective memories, particularly of the railway, for future generations. Some simple, but important issues were mentioned, eg, the arbitrary changing of street names and the loss of old sleeper buildings.

Image of the Village

Boat has been known as the Osprey Village for many years even though the Loch Garten ospreys are in fact located outside the community council area. A range of issues associated with this were identified:

- Need some physical presence in the village to represent the osprey connection
- Need to re-establish village identity as No 1 or Original Osprey village now that they are relatively common across Britain
- Some visitors don't realise how far away the Osprey Centre actually is from Boat
- Need to provide better connections for getting visitors to the Osprey Centre

Other Issues Raised

A few issues were raised that are beyond the scope of this plan, but they are listed to ensure completeness:

- The absence of a public bar in the village was felt to be a loss as it had been an important focus for the old railway workers to meet
- There is an ongoing issue about sewerage that impacts on all building development in the area

Beyond those issues raised above there are several generic ones common to taking forward any such plan:

Funding

The completion of this plan will coincide with the start of a period of public sector austerity. Using this plan will be beneficial as it will provide a context in which possible funders can clearly see how the possible projects fit into a more strategic context. Without this, new developments and achieving community aspirations will face a difficult future.

Community Capacity

Boat of Garten has already demonstrated the ability to deliver projects in a complex funding and management environment. This plan provides a rational context in which individual projects can be taken forward in a way that will provide a joined-up approach to telling the

story of Boat. The use of a community agent ensures that the planning process is clearly understood by someone who is committed to the future of the area.

Relating to neighbouring communities

This plan is designed to take account of existing and proposed developments in neighbouring communities and as such should not be seen as providing direct competition or duplication. The intention is that the plan will mean that Boat of Garten complements what is in the wider Strathspey area and adds to the overall product on offer to the visitor, while at the same time enhancing the quality of life of local residents.

3.4.1 Cairngorms National Park Interpretive Guide

This document was published in late 2008 by the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) on behalf of, and with support from, the people that make up the Cairngorms National Park. Entitled '**Sharing the stories of the Cairngorms National Park - A guide to interpreting the area's distinct character and coherent identity**' this document was designed for anyone interpreting the places that make up the National Park; who communicates with people so that they enjoy, understand and value this its unique landscape and its communities.

The Cairngorms National Park Authority is there to coordinate delivery of the Park's key aims. But it isn't going to present the Park to visitors, or tell the stories that make the Park greater than the sum of its parts. It's not set up to do that: it doesn't own any land, run any visitor centres, or directly employ any Rangers who can talk about the Park. And anyway, it's not really the best organisation to do this important work. For the Cairngorms National Park to have real meaning, its stories need to be told by the people and places that own them, the people and places that are the Park.

The guide presents four key themes that define the Park's coherent character, and that can structure the way different aspects of the Park might be interpreted. These key themes are the big ideas that hold the Park together, or as 'take home messages' – the impressions that will shape what people tell their friends about when they get back home. This is the same approach addressed through this Plan for Boat of Garten.

For the Cairngorms National Park to exist in reality: for visitors and residents to appreciate how exceptional it really is; for it to *work* as a mechanism for maintaining and enhancing the place for the future, there is a need to share the stories that define it. The key themes unite and provide a setting for individual places. Without this, the area will just be a collection of parts, many of them important and interesting, but not exceptional or unique, not part of a shared character, not a National Park.

Alan Rankin (Chief Executive, Aviemore and Cairngorms DMO) explains the relevance of this work in the document.

If people are to get a sense of being in the Cairngorms National Park, of what makes it tick and of what makes it special:

- *The people and places within the Park must see themselves as part of it. They must represent and use the Park as something that adds value to their particular place or interest.*
- *The audience for interpretation – visitors or local people – must get a sense of the key themes that define the Park's character, and that are described in this guide.*
- *Tourism-based organisations and businesses must be clear that the Park is a powerful and over-arching destination, and present themselves within it. If you're working with publications, displays or web sites,*

- *experience has shown that using at least two of the following elements is key in making a link to the Cairngorms National Park:*
 - *use of the words ‘Cairngorms National Park’ in text*
 - *use of the Cairngorms National Park brand*
 - *use of a map or outline map of the Park.*

This doesn’t mean that the existence of the National Park is just another layer you have to add to your interpretation; something you have to tell people. It means using the themes in this guide as an inspiration for the way you communicate; finding ways in which your site or your work is uniquely part of the Cairngorms National Park rather than anywhere else in the world.

The four key themes that make the Cairngorms National Park unlike anywhere else in Britain are as follows:

Key theme 1

The huge granite mountains of the Cairngorms National Park are unique. Their influence has shaped the natural heritage, people, landscapes and culture around them.

Key theme 2

The Cairngorms National Park is made up of a unique mosaic of habitats of very high quality, and exceptional size and scale. It is a stronghold for British wildlife, including many of the UK’s rare and endangered species, and those at the limit of their range.

Key theme 3

The Park is a rich cultural landscape. Separated by the great bulk of the mountains, different areas have their own distinct identity and cultural traditions, but they share deep connections to the same environments. The Park is a place of ‘Mountain folk’ and ‘Forest folk’.

Key theme 4

The Park is a place with a sense of wildness and space at its heart, and it inspires passion both in those who live here and those who visit.

The development of this Plan has to be clearly seen in the context of the above themes, to ensure that it sits well with the overall messages being conveyed throughout the rest of this outstanding National Park.

Boat of Garten and its surrounds connect strongly with themes 2 and 3 and to a lesser extent to theme 4. Theme 1 is less relevant to this area.

3.5 Evaluation

The community evaluation shows that local value is placed on the outdoor activities associated with the village and its surrounds, and on the historical heritage of the railway and its remaining features. There is limited value placed on the archaeology and characters from the past, excepting for Tom Pitlac.

Analysis of these assets indicates that the area does possess excellent walking and cycling opportunities that will allow the visitor to engage with the quality wildlife and landscape of the area. The River Spey and the coniferous and deciduous forest and woodland are typical of Strathspey and are accessible and well served with an existing path network. The area is also traversed by the Speyside Way and a National Cycle Route. The location of the nearby Loch Garten Centre is a significant factor and the adoption of the Osprey Village identity is a

clear statement of this association. Connecting the visitor with these assets is a key aim for the delivery of this plan's objectives.

Golfing is an important aspect of village life, but there is limited opportunity to engage the non-golfer with the attributes of the club without impacting on the players themselves.

The railway and its past and present relationship with the village is critical to understanding the location and structure of the community. Without the railway the community would probably not exist. This is a key asset for meeting the objectives of this plan.

The archaeology, non-railway built heritage and characters from the past have a lesser relevance from the community assessment. Of those features identified, only Tom Pitlac achieves any popular support. It is considered that this feature presents too many problems associated with its location, condition and general understanding to justify the significant investment that would be necessary to allow it to contribute to the objectives of this Plan. All the other features identified are not likely to contribute significantly to meeting the Plan's objectives.

3.6 Conclusions

The assets that provide the greatest potential for delivering of the objectives of this Plan are:

- Access to the landscape and wildlife of the area through the development of walking and cycling opportunities
- Build upon the 'Osprey Village' connection
- The railway heritage of Boat of Garten

4.0 Interpretive Goals

What goals will implementing this Plan help to achieve? This question largely addresses what benefits, or improved condition, is being sought through the delivery of a successful interpretation plan? Some of these will be identifiable within the overall mission of the various supporting bodies. It is important to state these here so that everything that is done, as part of the development can be traced back to the overall aim of the Plan.

The following goals have been identified for this interpretation plan:

Following a visit to Boat of Garten visitors will understand that:

- The village offers a base where visitors can have outstanding opportunities to enjoy the unique wildlife and landscapes of the Cairngorms National Park
- Boat of Garten is a natural gateway for experiencing the Loch Garten ospreys
- Boat of Garten offers a range of sustainable outdoor activities that are typical of the outstanding heritage of Strathspey
- Boat of Garten is a village that owes its creation to the railway and that this past heritage can still be enjoyed today

For residents of Boat of Garten delivery of the recommendations from this Plan will:

- Help them understand the importance of the Railway for the very existence of the village
- Understand that the village is set within an outstanding landscape with unique wildlife typical of the pinewood fringes of the Cairngorms National Park.

5.0 The Audience

This Plan is designed to connect to a range of audiences that will be found in Boat of Garten or can be attracted to the village.

5.1 Local Community

The Scottish Government's website (<http://www.sns.gov.uk/Reports>) records a population of 643 in 2008. 13.7% of the population are children which is below the Highland average of 17.8%. The retired population is proportionately higher within the community with 28% of pensionable age compared with the Highland average of 21.7%. There are 280 households of which 25% have been identified as second homes in the recent Highland Council Affordable Housing Assessment. This is the highest percentage in Badenoch and Strathspey.

The village is, like many around the Cairngorms, characterised by a high retired population, a low number of visitors and many holiday homes. Many of the retired households are people who have moved to the village to enjoy the quality of life available in the area. Many of these people have little traditional connection with the area and apart from enthusiastic individuals many have little knowledge about the heritage of the area.

The website above indicates a primary school role of 34 and 50 secondary pupils who attend Grantown Grammar School.

The local community has been identified as an important audience for any interpretive developments. Of particular interest are the retired population and those of school age.

5.2 Visitors

There are no detailed statistics of visitors to Boat of Garten, but there are 2 significant visitor attractions with a direct connection with the village that give an indication of visitor numbers.

The Strathspey Railway Company

Through the efforts of a team of dedicated enthusiasts this line re-opened in 1978 between Boat of Garten and Aviemore. Boat benefitted greatly from this attraction as many passengers took the opportunity to break their journey from Aviemore before returning again. In 2002 the line was extended to Broomhill and the numbers of passengers visiting Boat fell considerably¹. The Company has an ambition to extend the line to Grantown on Spey by 2015, and are currently fund raising to achieve this goal.

The Company operates a 200 day programme with an almost daily provision of steam trains from early April to late October. The round trip to Broomhill costs from £10.50 (3rd Class) to £16.00 (1st Class).

Currently 38,000 passengers are carried on the railway and this number has been relatively stable over many years. It is anticipated that this figure will increase to 44,000 with the

¹ Pers comm John Partridge

extension to Grantown. The numbers who currently get off the train in Boat of Garten is not known, but is thought to be considerably less than in years before the extension to Broomhill.

RSPB Loch Garten

The RSPB Centre at Loch Garten is a key visitor attraction that impacts directly on Boat of Garten. The return of ospreys as a breeding bird in the UK in the 1950's made headline news and the RSPB responded by providing increasingly sophisticated access to these birds as a means of highlighting their conservation significance. Figures provided by the RSPB show that 2009 was the best year for a while. This is consistent with returns for Highland tourism for that year. During 2009 the centre received their 2 millionth visitor. Many of these visitors are part of the 1 million plus membership of the Society. This facility is one of the flagship centres in the UK. Visitors are attracted by the presence of ospreys from early April until early August. The arrival of these birds is regularly a matter covered by the national news and many people who are unable to visit the site follow the progress of breeding online through detailed feedback and CCTV webcam coverage.

Osprey Centre Visitor numbers:

year	annual
2005	33,048
2006	35,604
2007	31,259
2008	35,643
2009	40,114

The RSPB also provide guided early morning capercaillie watches in an effort to make seeing these impressive birds as sustainable as possible. These attract enthusiastic attendees many of whom travel long distances to arrive for a start that is often around 0500 in the morning. Numbers for this have been consistent over the years as below:

Caperwatch numbers:

2005	2,020
2006	2,161
2007	2,064
2008	1,866
2009	2,013

As part of the wider Abernethy National Nature Reserve a draft interpretive strategy has been produced and this has identified the potential for renaming the existing trails based on iconic pinewood bird species such as crossbill, crested tit and capercaillie.

There are a number of other visitor attractions in the immediate area. Visitor numbers for these are given below, taken from the VisitScotland Visitor Attraction Barometer for 2008 (figures for 2009 were not available at time of writing).

	2008	2007	% change
Cairngorm Mountain Railway nr Aviemore	145,154	149,699	- 3.0
Rothiemurchus Estate, by Aviemore	106,561 E	110,834	- 3.9
Highland Wildlife Park, Kingussie	78,683	62,676	+ 25.5
Glenmore Forest Park Visitor Centre, by Aviemore	68,752	105,143	- 34.6
Highland Folk Museum, Newtonmore	2,322	36,904	-12.4
Revack Estate, Grantown on Spey	30,000 E	30,000	
Inshriach Nursery, Aviemore	22,850	23,500	- 2.8
Cairngorm Reindeer Centre, Aviemore	21,361 E	19,357 E	+10.4

Tomatin Distillery, Tomatin	21,146 E	21,772 E	- 2.9
RSPB Insh Marshes Nature Reserve, nr Kingussie	12,422	12,000 E	+3.5
Clan Macpherson Museum, Newtonmore	4,188	4,164	+0.6
Auchgourish Botanic Garden, by Boat of Garten	2,200 E	2,300 E	-4.3

Figures for other local attractions such as Landmark in Carrbridge and Grantown Museum were not available.

Summary:

Both Loch Garten and the Strathspey Railway attract c 40,000 visitors. There are no detailed figures for how many of the railway passengers visit Boat of Garten other than by passing through on the train. The great majority of visitors to Loch Garten will pass through the area and many will pass through the village itself which is the nearest service centre to this visitor attraction and carries the Osprey Village brand.

It is to be expected that there will be many longer stay visitors who visit both sites during a holiday, but the specific products on offer does suggest that there will be a certain amount of separation between these groups. It can only be an estimate but it is expected that visitors to these 2 attractions probably represent a minimum of 60,000 visitors in the area.

5.2.1 2009 National Park Visitor Survey

Interim results were obtained for this extensive survey conducted throughout the National Park.² These results are quoted comprehensively in Appendix 6, offering the most up to date record of the visitor characteristics representative of those to Boat of Garten.

The results are part of a year long study and the results cover up to the end of June 2009. During the preceding 6 months 1311 face to face interviews were undertaken, of which 1109 were of people living outside the Park. Of these, 717 were conducted on the west side of the hill and are directly relevant to Boat of Garten. None of the interview locations have a large enough sample to be analysed independently, but the collective results give a good picture of visitors to the area. Most of the information below concentrates on the short and long break visitors as these make up over 80% of the total of those interviewed.

Summary

There is a good distribution across all age classes, but with slighter older proportion for longer stay visitors. Visitors show a higher proportion of ABC1s than the Scottish average, and about half the visiting groups are couples. Short stay visitors are overwhelmingly UK based, while about 1/3rd of longer stay visitors are from overseas. Half the visitors stay for 5-7 nights and a 1/3rd for more than 8 days. Visiting Friends and relatives is not a large part of the tourism market. Long stay visitors have a very high proportion staying in self-catering and camping and caravanning is well above the national average. Most visitors have been before, and reliance on the internet for information is unusually low. The private car is the mode of transport for around 75% of visitors, but a relatively high proportion travel on coaches. Sightseeing and walking are by far the most popular activities, and for the longer stay visitor going to heritage sites and watching wildlife are above the national average. Aviemore is a key location as half of all visitors to the National Park will visit this town. Visitors generally are very satisfied with their experiences in the area.

² Cairngorms National Park, Visitor Survey, Interim Report, December 2009, CELLO mruk research limited

5.3.1 Where do people stay?

Boat of Garten offers a range of hotel, B&B and self-catering accommodation. The total number of beds is estimated as follows with this list being current at the time of writing:

Hotels, Guest Houses and B&B	117
Self Catering	100-150
Holiday Parks – Chalets	130 – 200
Caravans	c 200
Camping	c 50
Total	600 – 720 beds

Hotels, Guest Houses, B&B:

Total Beds -

The Boat Hotel

www.boathotel.co.uk - 01479 831 258

Moorfield House

www.moorfieldhouse.com - 01479 831 646

The Boat House

www.theboathouse4u.com - 01479 831484

Fraoch Lodge, Deshar Road (Mountain Innovations Ltd, offering outdoor activities)

www.scotmountain.co.uk - 01479 831 331

The Old Ferryman's House

<http://www.beautiful-scotland.co.uk/bed-and-breakfast-scotland.htm>

Steornabhagh, Deshar Road

<http://www.bedandbreakfast-directory.co.uk/uploads/estate/hotels/hotels46048.htm>

Self-Catering:

27 separate locations identified and listed in Appendix 7. Total numbers of beds are not known, but it can be assumed that this will number between 100-150

Holiday Parks:

Boat of Garten Holiday Park

www.boatofgarten.com - 01479 831 652

The BoG Holiday Park is in the centre of the village, and has 65 privately-owned chalets, 25 of which are let on holiday lets. They are licensed for 97 caravans and have c. 20 touring pitches, as well as a small tent area sufficient for c. 10 tents.

Loch Garten Lodges and Caravan Park

www.lochgarten.co.uk - 01479 831 769

This is a smaller site for static caravans and lodges, for rent or purchase. It is situated on the road linking the B970 to Loch Garten. Rental accommodation numbers 2 Vans (sleeps 4 and 6) and 3 lodges (each sleeps 4).

5.4 Current Marketing

Aviemore and the Cairngorms Destination Management Organisation

Aviemore and the Cairngorms Destination Management Organisation (ACDMO) was the first true destination management organisation (DMO) to be established in Scotland. It was born out of an active business led marketing group that established ACDMO in November 2006. The aim is to create Aviemore and the Cairngorms as a world class mountain destination making it a great place to live and work.

DMO's are being encouraged by VisitScotland as a key mechanism for growing the Scottish tourism economy and meeting the Government's stated target of 50% growth by 2015. They are being supported in key locations across Scotland where there is an identifiable and strong 'destination' that the market will recognise. These are areas where the potential to add value through marketing the destination offer the best returns.

This DMO has won significant start up public sector funding and is slowly gaining private sector involvement and investment. The DMO web site <http://www.visitaviemore.com/> is a key communication tool promoting the full range of tourism services. It has embraced Web 2.0 applications and is promoting the entire destination through visitor feedback. Through the web portal visitors can really see what there is to see and do and read about other people's experiences through blogs, see images through Flickr, and watch the action on YouTube; Survey Monkey is used to get feedback.

The DMO openly encourages feedback through TripAdvisor and 95% of businesses listed have their TripAdvisor reviews displayed on their promotional pages. The DMO provides training for local businesses on how to elicit and respond to visitor feedback. They encourage cross selling between businesses to share services. The DMO works closely with the Cairngorms Chamber of Commerce and other public bodies like the Cairngorms National Park Authority.

The DMO identifies individual communities such as Boat of Garten and promotes businesses within them.

Boat of Garten is presented as....

Boat of Garten, a peaceful Highland village, is set amongst heather clad hills and native woodland of the Cairngorms National Park. Boat of Garten bed and breakfast, hotel and guest house accommodation is perfect for a highland break or as a base for wild life watching.

Boat of Garten has abundant wildlife, magnificent scenery, many sporting and leisure activities and a traditional Highland welcome awaits you. Play our superb James Braid designed 18-hole golf course or fish the Spey. Unique bird watching opportunities abound; tranquil woods and dramatic hillsides to walk, climb or ski. Cycle on excellent tracks and quiet roads or travel on a scenic steam railway - it's all here for your Highland experience at Boat of Garten.

Ideally located... Lying adjacent to the mighty River Spey in the Cairngorms National Park, Boat of Garten lies in an area of outstanding natural beauty, centrally located in the Highlands of Scotland. The perfect place from which to explore the Highlands or simply unwind. Sample our unrivalled hospitality with Bed and Breakfast, hotel, hostel and guesthouse accommodation to suit everyone in and around the village. All are privately owned with each establishment offering their own style of Highland Hospitality.

It should be noted that the DMO gives priority marketing to those businesses who are members. 21 accommodation providers are listed. The approach to membership is shown in the section covering Attractions where the only locally based attractions listed are Mountain Innovations Guiding and the Golf and Tennis Club. The RSPB Centre and the Speyside Railway are not specifically mentioned, but the village is referred to by the Osprey Village brand.

The DMO website is a key source of online information for new visitors to Strathspey. From the survey information above it appears that only 10% of those interviewed actually used the

web for information, as most had been to the area before. This is a very low reliance on the web for tourism information.

Boat of Garten website

The comprehensive Community site <http://www.boatofgarten.com/> provides considerable layers of information for the visitor on all aspects of the tourism experience. It makes good links to the main attractions.

The site lists details of the following accommodation:

Hotel	1
Guest House	1
B&B	1
Self Catering	28
Camping and Caravanning	1
Hostel	1

As quoted above the site contains good quality information on the full range of activities that can be pursued within the village and the immediate surrounds.

Osprey Village

The village is currently branded as the Osprey Village, a brand that has been used since the early 1970s. The brand image is the head of an osprey, which is found on the Village entrance signs, on the website and also on the DMO references to the village. When first adopted ospreys were a very rare breeding bird in the UK. They are now well distributed and even breed in England. Despite this they are still an iconic conservation success story known well beyond the interests of the wildlife enthusiast.

Since the use of this brand the National Park has adopted a logo of an osprey carrying a fish (below). This image is more identifiable to the non-birder. For a brand to work effectively it has to convey a strong recognisable message. The current image is not as effective as it might be, but any enhancement must take account of the National Park brand image. If possible some means should be found for using this image to enhance the status of Boat of Garten as the Original Osprey Village.



5.5 Fit with Tourism Market Trends

In 2006 VisitScotland undertook a comprehensive study to identify clear segments within the UK visitors to Scotland. These are targeted in all VisitScotland's marketing programmes for the UK. Appendix 8 gives some information on the 6 segments identified – 4 'warm' segments that are already visiting Scotland and 2 'cold' ones that are considered to show

potential for growth. All of the 4 'warm' segments are specifically relevant to what Boat of Garten has to offer as a tourism product. These segments are:

WARM 1: Affluent Southern Explorers

This group have a high share of total holiday spend in Scotland. They generally use B&Bs & self catering and tend to take long breaks. They like to broaden their mind on holiday and enjoy outdoor activities and golf. 84% visited Scotland in last 2 years.

There are 2.3 million households in UK that fit this profile with 39% based in London. This is the most affluent UK market segment and has an average age of 49.

WARM 2: Younger Domestic Explorers

Strong advocates of holidaying in own country, but with relatively low spend. 81% visited Scotland in last 2 years. They like to plan where to go on holidays, but they can be spontaneous! They like to be active on holiday.

This segment represents 2 million households and is more northern based with 70% in Yorkshire and above. Often consist of families or young professionals. Convenience is very important and they have busy lives. They are high internet users.

WARM 3: Mature Devotees

A segment with holidays focussed on the UK, they spend the highest number of nights in Scotland using guest houses/B&Bs/small hotels (3*) – they seek out offers. 81% of these 1.9 million households visited Scotland last year where they like to explore local area, tour & watch wildlife (by car). Again they are predominantly northern based – 80% Yorkshire & above, with a high percentage retired. They tend to be traditional in outlook.

WARM 4: Affluent Active Devotees

A loyal group of visitors to Scotland, with the 2nd highest total holiday spend. 85% visited Scotland in last year and they tend to stay in quality/boutique hotels where they seek out good food & drink. They enjoy active pursuits on holiday.

This segment consists of 1.4 million households in UK and is northern based (80%), with 48% Scottish. They have a high level of affluence and are upmarket and traditional. They are financially savvy and enjoy finer things in life.

5.5.1 Key International Trends

There are key trends in tourism and in society in general that point to a good match between what is being proposed in Boat of Garten and what the market is looking for.

Key international and societal trends are:

- Concern for the environment and climate change
- The absolute need for security and safety
- Demographic changes and an ageing population

These are reflected in the tourism market place through the following trends:

- The need to express individualism
- The desire to feel closer to nature
- The rebellion against a sedentary existence
- The increase in social and spiritual awareness
- The quest for 'experience-based' tourism products
- The search for authenticity
- The quest for quality and value for money

The following features characterise the growth in heritage based tourism worldwide:

- Well educated tourists with above average incomes
- Increasingly diverse range of product options: walking, climbing, fishing, bird watching, etc.
- Combine 'Experience' and 'Education' (guides, experts, interpretation, courses, etc.)
- Sustainability is key to preserve product quality

5.6 Conclusions

The Strathspey visitor profile appears to match 4 of the key segments, representing 7.6m households in the UK. These segments of the market are actively being promoted through VisitScotland marketing campaigns. These segments also reflect the strong international trends in tourism.

The heritage inventory identifies activities, wildlife and railway heritage as the key assets of the community and interest in these assets is a good match for the segments above. The overall aims of the National Park also fit well with these audiences and are reflected in the international tourism trends listed above.

Boat of Garten is well placed and well endowed with heritage assets to allow tourism activity to grow to meet the overall objectives of this Plan. The village provides an extensive range of accommodation which can lead to a doubling of the local population at the height of the season. What is not in place at the moment is the optimum connection between the visitor and the heritage of the village. The following sections will outline how this can be achieved.

6.0 Themes

Section 2.0 indicates the justification for taking an interpretive approach to communication. This is based upon the reality that visitors will not remember facts and cool statistics. By taking a thoughtful approach to the communication process we have a chance to implant key messages that can build a strong and lasting connection between the visitor and the community of Boat of Garten. These messages have to relate to the interests of the visitor but must reflect the key heritage assets of the area. These messages are:

- Boat of Garten – a place for top class walking and cycling in harmony with the outstanding heritage of the National Park.
- Boat of Garten – the Osprey Village - the natural gateway for experiencing the Loch Garten ospreys and Strathspey wildlife.
- Boat of Garten - a creation of the Age of Steam and still being enjoyed today

Developing interpretive material should focus on delivering these messages to the visitor as they are designed to make the strongest connection that will benefit the community and meet the objectives of this plan. It is not necessary to deliver the specific wording above, but these themes should be a clear focus for all future developments.

7.0 Implementation Plan and Next Steps

A clear objective of this plan is to encourage visitors to enjoy the range of heritage assets that Boat of Garten has to offer. There are a number of existing facilities that are currently promoted, but these do not apply the principles of interpretive planning and do not endeavour to convey key messages to the visitor. It is proposed that this is done in a number of key ways that centre on building on the connection between the village and the iconic ospreys of Loch Garten. This can be achieved in a number of ways which will be expanded upon below:

- Development of the new 'product' based around the Railway, the Osprey Centre and trails and bike hire
- The trails around the village are 're-branded' as the Osprey Trails, to raise their profile and to convey stronger messages and consequently stronger experiences to the visitor;
- The village establishes an Osprey Fair to coincide with the approximate time of the ospreys return from Africa
- The village seeks to develop linkages with an appropriate community in Gambia, making the link between the summer and winter homes of the osprey.

7.1 Create new 'product' based on Railway and Osprey Centre

The analysis above identifies the RSPB Centre at Loch Garten and the Strathspey Railway as key existing visitor attractions and it is proposed to seek a stronger connection between these through the creation of a themed network of trails based on existing footpaths and minor roads.

The principle focus will be on travelling by train and then either walking or cycling to the Loch Garten Centre, or around the village of Boat. This will reduce the reliance on the car and the need to create additional car parking in the heart of the village. This could invite visitors in Aviemore to leave the car behind and 'Follow the Osprey Trails'.

Initial discussions with the RSPB indicate that they would be happy to consider additional promotion through attracting visitors in Aviemore and promoting the use of the train to Boat, then walk or hire a bike to access the Centre. An additional 10% of visitors would be seen as readily accommodated. Linking these 2 key attractions offers the potential for joint ticketing and we are aware that both partners would be open to discussion on this issue, but there may be a problem as many of their visitors to RSPB are members who do not pay for admission. It would be important to link in with the cycle hire operator in Station Square.

Through this joint approach the 3 organisations would stand to benefit and Boat of Garten would receive additional visitors, bringing benefits to other local businesses. The visitor would be offered a new 'product' that would help them connect with 2 important attractions in the Strath, but also give the chance to enjoy and understand the relationship of the village to the surrounding countryside.

There is a clear opportunity to market this new product within the area. Such a product would enhance the visitor offer within the DMO area and would prove attractive to all of the audiences identified earlier. All partners involved have the potential to benefit from this development, but it does need an integrated and holistic approach, so that all aspects of the 'product' ensure a quality experience. Fitting into the timetabling of the Railway does not appear to present problems, but there may be issues about the sudden influx of visitors, particularly in terms of bike hire. This requires focussed thinking by all involved.

The development of a clear brand for this new 'product' is an important part of the development and this marketing aspect is initially addressed below in 7.9. If some agreement can be reached between the various parties then this proposal presents itself as an innovative partnership between community, charitable trusts and commercial operator. This has the potential to interest non traditional funding providers who may well prove vital in such times of financial constraint.

7.2 Create the Osprey Trails

It is proposed that the village establishes a clear identity of a network of trails that connect directly with the themes above. Existing trails are promoted in a way that is similar to those in nearby communities, generally through the use of locational names, which will convey little about the character of the area to the potential walker. In Boat the trails are simply numbered. Appendix 9 briefly describes other local path networks.

It is proposed that there is a focus on 5 Trails: a new Osprey Trail and the 4 existing walks that will be re-branded to better connect the visitor to the key themes. There are no other similarly branded trails in the UK. Such a proposal will compliment the possible re-naming of the trails within the Abernethy National Nature Reserve which will focus on the iconic pinewood bird species. The Osprey Trail itself could be common to the 2 trail networks and would offer a natural link between the community and the reserve.

The overall intention is to attract people to the village from Aviemore, by way of the train, and offer them the opportunity to visit a smaller, less 'frantic' community and have access to a range of walking and cycling options in a typical part of Strathspey. The existing summer timetable offers chances for 3 or 5 hour visits to the village, and the Trail network is intended to offer a range of walking and cycling opportunities in the quiet countryside around Boat that will fit in with this timetable. The Trails offer visitors a chance to connect with the themes listed above and come away with a better appreciation of what is important in the area. Promotion of the Trails should also indicate the opportunities to eat, drink and shop in the village, so that the visit is a complete package for the day tripper from Aviemore.

7.2.1 Osprey Trails Network

- Osprey Trail
- Red Squirrel Trail
- Salmon Trail
- Heron Trail
- Pine Marten Trail

The Trails offer an opportunity to explore the area, and they will be introduced at the proposed orientation feature in Station Square (see below). It is not proposed that they be supported by individual leaflets. At the orientation feature they will be set in the context of a village created by the Railway and the fact that it is surrounded by a countryside that has changed little in the last 100 years and contains outstanding wildlife of European importance. A new leaflet for the Trails promotion (with the participation of CNPA) is being taken forward and this presents a clear opportunity to re-brand the existing Trails.

To guide and inform the user it is proposed that at specific points on the trails 'flip-up' interpretive signs are installed to highlight specific points relevant to the theme of the Trail. These are known as SignalSigns and were developed by Bob Jones, former Head of Design and Interpretation within the Forestry Commission, and are now much used throughout the UK (see below for example). It is proposed that these should be set within posts that are similar to the existing waymarking finger-posts. These signs are set within the body of the

post, within a slot, and are rotated on a single bolt, so that when not in use they are within the body of the post, but can be revealed when rotated by the trail user. These should be located at points where the user needs directional information and they can actually point out the route. It may be possible to incorporate these into the existing finger posts, but the strength of the post would have to be carefully assessed. The potential to graphically use the species focus of the trail in the design of the pointer should be seriously considered to further enhance the trail identity. This can bring some graphic humour to the panels and encourage children to seek them out.

These 'flip-up' signs should be limited in number and should be located at positions where they will provide confidence to the walker that they are on the correct route. It is important that they focus on the species identity of the trail, but should use this as a hook to convey the key themes. They can provide interpretation as well as essential trail guidance for the user. They should have no more than 100 words and should display a hierarchy of text. Appendix 10 offers some guidance, produced by SNH, on taking forward interpretive 'products'.



7.2.2 The Osprey Trail

This will be the 'centre-piece' of the network. It is 5km (3.1 mls) from the Railway Station to the Centre and the route allows connections with the Spey, the local farmland and the pinewoods finishing at the Osprey Centre. The local network of quiet roads offer a range of options for the cyclist, returning to the south or northwards to Broomhill rejoining the train and taking the bike back to Boat. Cyclists should be encouraged to use the roads as many of the pinewood paths are more suited to the walker. It should be noted that the RSPB would not wish to see the additional promotion of the route round by Loch Mallachie as this is already showing signs of unacceptable wear and tear.

The route is already waymarked, as the Red Trail, from the T junction on the B970, until it meets the Blue Trail at the road at NH 965194. It is hoped that the RSPB could consider renaming this trail to fit in with the aspirations of the village and as an addition to the new trail names for the reserve. Clear guidance will be necessary from the village to this point and the trail user advised to take care at the junction. The community and RSPB could explore the possibility of a joint interpretation panel at the junction. This would introduce the importance of the pinewoods and point the walker towards the Osprey Centre, with a brief introduction to the immediate landscape. Existing waymarking on the reserve points towards the Centre, so additional waymarking will not be required.

The key interpretive points on the trail will be:

- In the village at the Orientation Feature. This will introduce the trail and direct the user towards the junction below
- At the junction of the B970 (see above)
- 800 metres SW of the junction, at the bog woodland boardwalk. (existing interpretation)
- At the Osprey Centre

The use of additional interpretation through the proposed 'flip-up' signs is not thought necessary on this specific trail.

7.2.3 Red Squirrel Trail

This will concentrate on the pine plantation to the SW of the village and should invite the visitor to explore a relatively flat and easy footpath. Opportunities should be explored about how easy it will be to actually see squirrels. The use of the Craigie viewpoint should also be investigated as this offers an excellent view over the Abernethy and Kincardine Hills and the chance to talk about the general environment of the Strath and the National Park. Advice should be sought from the National Park Authority on the safety issues associated with this suggestion. The Fairy Hill Viewpoint should not be mentioned as it provides only a partial view, and this will just lead to disappointment on the part of the visitor.

The trail route is along Deshar Road and Sustrans 7 to the bird platform with the school interpretation board on Red Squirrels; enter woods at car park just before this; right turn at path junction; left turn at next junction to end of Kinchurdy road; optional left turn on signed path behind houses to Creag Bheag, or return by Kinchurdy Road. Approximate walking time should be 1 hour (not counting stops).

The Trail commences at the Orientation Feature, with background about the nature of the Trail. This will set the scene providing an introduction to the general area and the importance of the railway and the river. The plantation woodlands to be encountered are a common

feature with the timber initially being floated down river and later carried by the railway. The Trail is relatively straight forward and the key interpretive points on the trail will be:

The proposed 'flip-up' signs can be used in 5 locations:

- At the entrance of the woodland off Deshar Road. This will direct the trail user into the woodland, but first encourage them to the bird platform and to the existing school panel on squirrels. Interpretation here should focus on red squirrels and the importance of this area for their conservation.
- At the first right turn junction. Focus on the management of the pinewoods and how this affects squirrels.
- At the next junction. Focus on what is being done to conserve red squirrels
- At the junction for the optional route to Creag Bheag. This must emphasise the roughness of the path and the existence of the crags. The alternative is back along Kinchurdy road. For those who do not wish to visit Creag Bheag the wider national Park conservation role can be stressed.
- At Creag Bheag there is an opportunity to interpret the view over the Spey valley to the Abernethy Hills. The view is a good one and can be used to connect to the wider National Park context and its conservation importance. There will be a need to provide advice on how to get down from Creag Bheag and back onto Kinchurdy Road.

An opportunity should be identified for a quiet sitting area and if possible feeders could be put out for squirrels and visitors invited to sit and enjoy the woodlands and the peace and quiet of that area.

It is suggested that before any installations are finalised the materials are tested on a non-local audience to ensure that directions provided leave no room for confusion.

There is potential to make connections with the work of the Highland Red Squirrel Project, hosted by the Forestry Commission and they are looking for communities to work with to promote this species.

7.2.4 Salmon Trail

This follows the same route as the Riverside Walk, but the potential to take this along a safe section of the river should be investigated further as the current walk is too dislocated from the actual river. Discussions should be held with the Angling Association regarding an upgrade of the former track in from Garten Bridge to the car parking area below the power-lines across the river. This would be advantageous to them as well as to the visitor. Interpretation explaining salmon fishing and asking users to respect fishery activity would reduce concerns about public access. Such an upgrade would allow the trail user closer connection to the river itself and allow them to better understand this important waterway, its local economic significance and the EU conservation values.

Proposed route: Along to end of Kinchurdy Road; turn left to cross railway line and follow track to Wester Dalvout and along to join main road at golf course. If the track along to Garten Bridge proves impossible the trail user should be encouraged to the middle of the bridge to enjoy the view to the south. Walking time is about 1 hour.

The key interpretive points on the trail will be:

- Start at Orientation Feature and introduce the importance of the river and its economic and conservation values

- ‘Flip-up’ sign at end of Kinchurdy Road instructing the crossing of the railway and the role of the river in shaping the landscape
- South of Wester Dalvout (Beat 12) – subject to agreement ‘flip-up sign on Salmon fishing for the uninitiated, ask for respect of fishing activity by trail users – return to track
- At car park by power lines. If track along river is possible then this will provide orientation and reinforce respect for anglers. Sign to cover the river ecology and the life of the salmon
- Southern view from the middle of the bridge. Investigate the potential for interpretive material on the bridge, but this should clearly not restrict the footway. This will set the importance of the river and mountain in the National Park.

7.2.5 Heron Trail

This is a short stroll to Milton Loch and the hide. This is an opportunity to connect the visitor with the history of the village, the role of the Railway in its formation, and the historic and present day importance of timber and saw mills. The existing hide needs better screening to encourage more bird use of the loch in front of the hide. Walking time c. 30 mins at most.

The key interpretive points on the trail will be:

- At the Orientation Feature introduction to a brief railway history and ‘making of the village’ (Note specific stories cannot be identified at the moment as we await the outcome of the oral history work)
- Finger post at the right turn down to the golf course and river. This will provide guidance for the returning users of the Salmon Trail and also for this Trail
- ‘Flip –up’ sign at sleeper houses/Old Forge noting unusual construction and link to railway
- Flip at approach to Mill pond, focusing on sawmill history and importance of railway
- Panel inside hide indicating current conservation interests.

7.2.6 Pine Marten Trail

This offers a longer and quieter out and back route to Loch nan Carraigan that ends at one of the few archaeological features (a chambered cairn near the loch) that can easily be introduced to the visitor. The existing 1:25,000 map provides poor guidance due to significant forestry activity, so a good initial description will be required at the orientation feature. A key feature of this walk is the outstanding view of the Lairig Ghru and Ben Macdhui to be enjoyed at the end. The walk offers the opportunity to walk back to Aviemore following the Speyside Way. There is also potential to bring the visitor back by the return leg of the Squirrel Trail, which will add variety to this walk (or cycle). Walking time is 2.5 – 3 hours, cycling 1.5 – 2 hours

The key interpretive points on the trail will be:

- Good route descriptor at the orientation feature.
- ‘Flip-up’ sign at end of Kinchurdy Road where Salmon Trail goes down to railway. This should be about the habitat of the pine marten and a brief account of their conservation story.
- ‘Flip-up’ sign where Speyside Way branches to go under the railway. This should tell the story of the other major predators that used to inhabit the

- pinewoods, wolf, bear and lynx. This should stimulate the visitor to think about what it would have been like to walk in these woods in the past.
- ‘Flip-up’ sign by gate pointing to the chambered cairn and telling what we know about the people who built this, at a time when the forests were truly wild.

The view needs little interpretation!

7.3 Cycle Routes

In addition to the walking trails, we propose a number of cycle routes, identified in a separate leaflet, which could be simple A5 sheets for each with a simple map and some description of the route and points of interest. These could be photocopyable and free. These routes would be more targeted at ‘real’ users, particularly through the cycle hire company – this could be promoted through self catering outlets, and also promoted through the dual marketing of the Railway and Osprey Centre.

Two of the proposed routes follow the same routes as the walking trails – The Osprey Trail and the Pine Marten Trail, but with options to extend in the first case.

7.3.1 The Osprey Trail Cycle Route

The Osprey Trail Cycle Route follows the walking trail, with an option to use the B970 and the minor road signposted for Loch Garten if cyclists don’t want to go off-road. From the Osprey Centre, we can offer an additional route which continues on the minor road to Duackbridge on the outskirts of Nethy Bridge, then returns to Boat of Garten via the B970 (15km / 9.3 mls). Alternatively, cyclists can carry on from Nethy Bridge to Broomhill Station and return by train.

7.3.2 Pine Marten Trail Cycle Route

As per walking route. Suitable for off-road bikes. (10km / 6.2mls).

7.3.3 Loch Garten via Kincardine Church Cycle Route

This route leaves Boat of Garten to join the B970; turn left at junction though Street of Kincardine, then pass the John Roy Stuart Memorial Cairn; continue to visit Kincardine Church; return to Tulloch Moor and take minor road over moor; at junction turn left, then left again at next junction to reach The Osprey Centre. Return to Boat of Garten by road or the Osprey Trail (16 km / 10mls).

7.3.4 Four Bridges Cycle Route (alternatively Salmon Trail)

A longer route taking in Carrbridge, Dulnain Bridge, Nethy Bridge and returning to Boat of Garten by Garten Bridge. The Osprey Centre can be visited on the return leg after Nethy Bridge. Around 2 hours. (30 km / 18.5 mls). This route can provide a direct link to the story of the river Spey and its tributaries, the Dulnain and Nethy, which we can tell at each of the bridges – different aspect at each. This may be sellable, and able to be provided to different community groups in other villages. This could be seen as a cycling version of the Salmon Trail.

7.4 Existing Signage, Panels and Leaflets

At the time of writing this plan a replacement leaflet was being designed for the trails. It is hoped that the re-branding proposed above can be incorporated. It is also hoped that with

the completion of all the recommendations that a new leaflet using the 3 key themes can be developed. This is just a first step in replacing the previous interpretation to meet the recommendations of this plan. Suggestions are made above about new signage and interpretation and for a new orientation feature (see below). Existing panels should be ultimately removed as they will lead to confusion for the visitor. There may be constraints associated with earlier funding about how soon this can be done, but this should not be considered until the recommendations relating to the trails are delivered in full.

7.5 Osprey Fair

Many communities around the world celebrate specific times in the calendar when an important species returns to the area. Examples, mostly in the USA, are:

- The American Birding Association lists all the festivals associated with birds in the US and there are many, visit this link - <http://www.aba.org/festivals/index.php/search/results>

There are many **salmon** festivals celebrating the life of this migratory fish. Here are a few examples:

- Music Festival in Newfoundland celebrating the Atlantic salmon. Has been running for 26 years <http://www.salmonfestival.com/>
- Wenatchee River Salmon Festival, Washington State <http://www.salmonfest.org/>
- Issaquah Salmon Days, celebrating 40 years of great returns, Washington State again <http://www.salmondays.org/>

There are many festivals celebrating migratory **whales** eg.

- On Vancouver Island for the migrating grey whale - <http://www.pacificrimwhalefestival.com/>
- In South Africa the Hermanus Whale Festival is held annually to celebrate the return of the Southern Right whales and the arrival of Spring. <http://www.whalefestival.co.za/>
- On Hawaii the Maui whale festival draws together visitors and residents, and offers opportunities to enjoy live music and local culture, learning about whales and the environment and children's activities <http://mauiwhalefestival.org/>
- Hervey Bay in Queensland celebrates the Humpback whale <http://www.herveybaywhalefestival.com.au/information.php>

Even invertebrates are celebrated -

- **Monarch Butterfly** Festival in Minnesota, celebrating the departure of the butterflies to Mexico <http://www.monarchfestival.org/>
- There is even a **Slug Festival** in Eatonville Washington State celebrating the banana slug an important element in the old growth forest of the Pacific North West.

No similar events have been located in the UK, where they are not either year long or directly associated with a nature reserve. There is a bird festival just over the Channel near Abbeville in France <http://www.bird-nature-festival.co.uk/>

The scale of the bird-watching public is enormous with the RSPB having over 1 million members and many more watching birds on a regular basis. The success of programmes such as Springwatch and Autumnwatch attracting over 6 million viewers nightly demonstrates this love affair the British have with wildlife and birds in particular. There is one pre-eminent event in the bird watchers calendar and that is the Annual Bird Fair, held at Rutland Water every August. <http://www.birdfair.org.uk/>. This is described as the birdwatcher's Glastonbury encompassing the whole spectrum of the birdwatching industry.

There are hundreds of stands selling the latest products for wildlife enthusiasts. It is suggested that representatives visit this to experience the scale of the activity.

What is proposed is that, building slowly, the Community develop a Festival that celebrates the return of the osprey. The obvious time to hold this would be any time from late March to mid April, but this is when the RSPB are at full stretch at the start of their season. It is recommended that this is held in late April/early May and this would coincide with the ospreys hopefully laying their eggs. Such an event, with focussed marketing, could become a venue for a wide range of activities associated with the birds and the pine woods – walks, talks, stalls, performances, art, photography and educational events are all possible. This can start small over a weekend, but could develop into a well known week long event with a unique identity. The RSPB have indicated that they would assist (Jeremy Roberts pers comm.) as resources allow, but clearly getting the dates right will help appreciably.

7.6 The Gambia Connection

The ospreys at Loch Garten spend about 5 months in Scotland. For the rest of the year they fly down to West Africa for the winter. Gambia is one of the key destinations, an English speaking area that has become quite a popular tourist destination. Initial connections have already been made between Deshar School and the area and last year the school was involved in a project with the RSPB tracking the journeys of the Loch Garten birds. Much more could be made of this and it is suggested that stronger linkages are investigated with an appropriate community in Gambia and that this becomes a strong bond and connection between the two principle homes of this species.

This suggestion is a very clear and positive way in which the community as a whole can come together behind all the other suggestions within this plan. There are clear educational, social, environmental and community benefits to gain from taking forward this Gambia Connection.

7.7 Orientation Feature

The key focus for the Trails network is for visitors arriving by train, but we have to recognise also that there are many existing visitors in the village, either staying or just passing through. It is recommended that an orientation feature is created, to the left of the current entrance to the Community Garden. This could replicate a pine tree with an Osprey's nest and a bird above, if possible replicating the National Park logo. Other designs may be revealed, but it is critical that the feature reinforces the communities links with the surrounding environment. Around the base of this should be located a series of information and orientation panels. These will introduce the visitor to the village through using the key themes, and give them a sense of the opportunities to explore that exist.

The area available is approximately 5m x 6m, but advice would need to be taken from roads engineers regarding the area required for bus use for customers of the Boat Hotel. It is also recommended that the 2 existing panels to the right of the entrance to the Community Garden are relocated so that they are integrated into the wider design. It will be important to keep them discrete as they are separate issues from the key themes that should be promoted at this location. The following subjects will be relevant to the themes:

1. Enjoy your visit to Boat of Garten – use the Osprey Trails and visit Loch Garten. Need for a good map showing the range of walks.
2. What was here before the Railway – this allows possible use of the Roy Map and gives the chance to introduce the birthplace of John Roy Stuart and the Clan massacre in Kincardine Church. These will be linked together through one of the

promoted cycle routes. Why is the place called Boat of Garten? What happened to the existing townships?

3. The Railway Story - 1860's to 1960's
4. Boat of Garten today – opportunities to fish and golf
5. Come and enjoy our community – walks, cycle. Brief descriptions of the Trails and how they will give you the chance to explore the natural environment of Strathspey

All text should be kept to a minimum with a focus on delivering the clear messages contained within the 3 key themes.

7.8 Website

The Boat of Garten website is a good comprehensive site that is clear and concise, but still holds significant information about the village and what can be done in the area. This is now invariably the first point of contact for the visit, particularly for visitors coming to stay in the village. When the site is next being revised it is recommended that the 3 main themes are highlighted as the key assets of the area and they are used as the basis for restructuring the content provided. Little has to be done in terms of the content itself. This will ensure that the visitor is made aware of these key assets before they even arrive in the village and the other developments outlined above will serve to reinforce the key messages.

7.9 Local Guided Walks

Although outwith the direct influence of the Community Company there are a number of providers of guided services within the area. It is recommended that they are approached and asked if they can deliver their services using the 3 key messages. Doing this will further strengthen the visitors understanding of the area's assets and may provide some specific focus for guided walks in the area.

7.10 Relevance of Themes to Media Options

The key audiences identified earlier can be assessed against the range of proposals identified. The ability of these to deliver the main themes is identified through assessment of the audiences characteristics. This inevitably requires some generalisation, but does demonstrate that each of the themes has a means of being connected to the range of audiences identified as key to meeting the objectives of the Plan.

Themes

Boat of Garten...

1.a place for top class walking and cycling in harmony with the outstanding heritage of the National Park.
2.the Osprey Village - the natural gateway for experiencing the Loch Garten ospreys and Strathspey wildlife
3.a creation of the Age of Steam and still being enjoyed today



This is very important for delivering this Theme

Important for this Theme

Less important for delivering this Theme

Audience Local Community

Media	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3
Orientation Feature	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
Trails Panels	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
Cycle leaflets	✓✓✓	✓	✓
Day Visit	n/a	n/a	n/a
Railway poster	✓	✓	✓✓
Osprey Fair	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
Local guided walks	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Website	✓✓	✓	✓

Audience Affluent Southern Explorers

Media	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3
Orientation Feature	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Trails Panels	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Cycle leaflets	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓
Day Visit	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
Railway poster	✓✓	✓	✓✓✓
Osprey Fair	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Local guided walks	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Website	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓

Audience Younger Domestic Explorers

Media	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3
Orientation Feature	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Trails Panels	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
Cycle leaflets	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
Day Visit	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓
Railway poster	✓	✓	✓✓
Osprey Fair	✓✓	✓✓	✓
Local guided walks	✓	✓	✓
Website	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓

Audience Mature Devotees

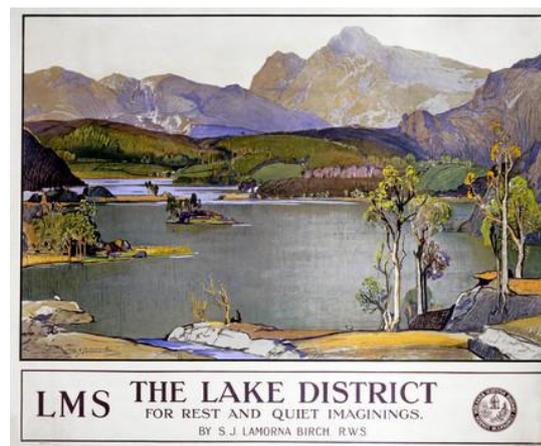
Media	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3
Orientation Feature	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Trails Panels	✓✓	✓✓	✓
Cycle leaflets	✓	✓	✓
Day Visit	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Railway poster	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
Osprey Fair	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
Local guided walks	✓	✓	✓
Website	✓	✓	✓

Audience Affluent Active Devotees

Media	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3
Orientation Feature	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Trails Panels	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Cycle leaflets	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
Day Visit	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
Railway poster	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Osprey Fair	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
Local guided walks	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓
Website	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓

7.11 Marketing the Product

The link between the Ospreys and the Railway lends itself to promotion through a similar style of poster to the traditional Railway posters of pre-nationalisation. Two examples are given below. It is recommended that an artist be commissioned to produce a poster that contains the essential elements of the Railway, the ospreys, the pinewoods and the Cairngorms in the background. An alternative approach would be to hold a competition, and the artist could retain some of the marketing value of the artwork. Mention should be made of the National Park on the poster, and it should be produced in a form that can readily be used online. This will promote the principle product that will bring and hold visitors within the community



This artwork should be produced as small A3 and A4 posters which can be distributed locally to accommodation providers and other visitor attractions. It can also be sold to visitors as a souvenir of their visit.

7.12 Future – Proofing the Plan

The 3 key themes are solidly based on the heritage assets of the community. These are unlikely to change, with the only occasional threat being the failure of the ospreys to breed. This will not detract from the identity of the trails significantly unless it was to be a regular occurrence and this would inevitably lead to other stories to be told. It is recommended that the Community Company seeks to take this plan forward and holds the 'ownership' of the themes as the most effective way of engaging the visitor. They should seek to encourage the use of the themes as a guide to future un-foreseen developments, as this will reinforce any investment in the delivery of this plan.

7.13 Next Steps

The following steps can be identified for taking forward this plan and for delivering the various recommendations:

Adoption of the Plan

- Seek community support through making the full plan available for review within community hall and other community outlets.
- Make the full plan available on the Boat of Garten website
- Distribution of the four page summary through copies available within community hall, post office and shop
- Four page summary available on website
- Members of community given one month to respond following the delivery of the above
- At the same time the full Plan is forwarded to RSPB and Strathspey Railway for comment and hoped for support in principle
- Following any necessary amendments and consideration of any strong concerns the Plan is endorsed and/or amended by the Community Company
- Full Plan circulated to key local agencies (CNPA, A&CDMO, SNH, RSPB) indicating community support
- Meet with key agencies to consider future funding opportunities
- Following delivery of initial planning and costing of elements below develop integrated development plan
- Development plan circulated to potential funders already identified
- Funding package created
- Recommendations delivered

Create the new Osprey Trails 'product'

- Full Plan circulated to key partners
- Community Company convenes meeting to get potential partners 'around the table'.
- Development plan agreed for staged delivery of new 'product' linking into timescale for delivery of other recommendations
- Key issues to be addressed: marketing, ticketing, capacity issues, project management and monitoring

Delivering the Trails

- Incorporate new 'branding' of Trails into new leaflet
- Adoption of full Plan
- Approach landowners for in principle agreement for location of new signs
- Seek funding package for design and delivery of new signage and interpretation. This should be done in conjunction with interpretation proposed for Orientation Feature.
- Tender for design, manufacture and installation of new signs and new themed leaflet for Trail network (if one is replacing existing walking leaflet)
- Develop new cycle trails leaflet and seek distribution through cycle hire company

Delivering the Orientation Feature

- Adoption of full Plan
- Approach designers for orientation feature and selection of preferred design
- Detailed discussion with Railway Company and Boat Hotel regarding preferred proposal
- Work up costs
- Approach potential funders to sound out suitability of project
- Work up funding application
- Commission development of Feature which will incorporate interpretive works separately commissioned based upon key themes
- Dependent upon funding completion could coincide with Osprey Fair

Making the Osprey Fair happen

- Steering Group established
- Development funding sought
- Development plan produced and date of initial Fair agreed in conjunction with key partners
- Visit Bird Fair (Rutland) August 2010
- Deliver initial Fair 2011

Building links with Gambia

- Steering Group established including school and RSPB
- Advice sought of similar initiatives
- Initial contact made with possible Gambian communities using existing contacts
- Options for future considered
- Launch initiative at first Osprey Fair

8.0 Evaluation

The Plan is not complete without some consideration of how, or if, your intended interpretive actions have worked. It is important for the Community Company to know that these actions are actually making a difference; that they are putting the key themes into the minds of visitors and making a strong connection between them and the heritage assets that Boat has on offer. It is important that the developments are seen to have an impact and are not seen to be an end in themselves.

It is also clearly important for funders to have the comfort of knowing that their financial commitment is actually going to deliver what it set out to do. In the past many funders were driven by what is known as outputs – i.e. a certain number of installations, x hundreds of metres of paths or similar developments. Increasingly they are actually more concerned with outcomes – what difference will this make; to the community, to the visitor and to the heritage assets involved.

8.1 Setting Objectives

Evaluation can only be tested against ‘something’ and before this can happen every intervention should set out with some measurable objectives. It is said repeatedly that these should be SMART objectives, but too often this is not the case and when someone comes to assess a project in the future they find that the absence of SMART objectives makes this all but impossible. Objectives should be:

- **Specific:** you know exactly what you want to happen
- **Measurable:** you know how you will measure it
- **Appropriate:** to site and audience
- **Realistic:** you have a reasonable chance of achieving it
- **Timetabled:** you know by when you want it to happen

None of these criteria above should prove too challenging if you focus on what difference you want to make through delivering the Plan. It is for the Community Company to determine this in discussion with those who will be impacted by the developments. Objectives can be set for what percentage of the audience you want to consciously connect with the themes; how many people you want to walk the trails, what increase you would wish to see in visitor numbers and possibly how many increased bednights accommodation providers have. All of these are just examples that could be set at the beginning of the implementation phase and then tested several years down the line. There will be other matters that the Company might wish to evaluate as the project develops.

8.2 Undertaking Evaluation

Evaluation can take place at a number of stages. By far the most cost effective is to do this before any installations are finalised by testing the power of the words and graphics used to convey the themes, BEFORE you finally commit to the end product. Often this is seen as too time consuming but if this is built into the development phase then it will allow you to check that what you say actually is read, understood and if possible retained by the visitor.

A range of approaches can be applied.

Firstly, before anything is done. In the jargon this is known as formative evaluation. Panels and leaflets offer a minimum time necessary to access all the interpretive material being provided. Simple mock-ups can be used, and visitors observed as to whether they actually take the time to read what is provided. Too often we observe visitors arriving at a panel and leaving after a few seconds as the design, story or style of writing has failed to connect. It doesn't matter how interesting the material is if people don't even bother to read it then it fails.

Most plans would advocate evaluation of what messages are taken from an interpretive encounter, and who is accessing them as opposed to who was planned to access them. This can be difficult to determine adequately and some plans promote complex quasi-academic approaches to this. This will not happen in most cases. What is advocated in this situation is that some effort is expended in assessing what messages the visitor takes from

the interpretation provided, and who these visitors are. This can often be delivered through encouraging local under-graduates, who may be studying heritage based subjects, to undertake project or thesis based studies that will provide them with a local study, in an area they know which is applying an academic approach to this discipline. It has to be pointed out that what they will provide will be a snap-shot and will always be questioned in terms of statistical approach, regardless how rigorous, but it will be a means of bench-marking what was intended against what is actually happening.

A further approach is to assess if the interpretation makes any long term difference in terms of people's understanding and behaviour. This is a very complex matter and is probably beyond the scope the Company at the moment. It should never be dismissed though and there is always the potential of building this into subsequent funding bids. With the developing UHI structure there are now academics who may wish to work with a community who would offer the potential location for such studies.

There are more general issues to do with evaluation. The intention of the Community Company is to enhance the visitors experience in Boat and a range of other objectives stated earlier in this Plan. For those involved with tourism the bottom line is the number of visitors, their spend and how often they come back. With the suggested joint working between the Railway, RSPB and the community it is possible to monitor visitor numbers and spend after the works are done and a clear enhancement of these factors will suggest that the measures have had a positive effect, all other external factors considered. For many tourism businesses the number of bed nights and spend is vital and some businesses might be prepared to share this information and the Company should seek to encourage this to demonstrate that their actions have borne fruit for the area.

Some of the proposals might be perceived to generate negative environmental impacts through increased public use of potentially sensitive areas. Measurement of this is beyond the scope of this Plan, but if these are issues that might be raised against some of the developments then the Company should always be open to accepting the need for some additional monitoring to ensure that any fears can be allayed. Again local student input can be useful in this approach.

In summary, evaluation is often stated as essential, but is often dealt with in a tokenistic way. The recommendation is that this is not the case and that sound evidence of success is the precursor of future positive developments.



BOAT OF GARTEN COMMUNITY COMPANY

HERITAGE INTERPRETATION MEETING

BOAT OF GARTEN COMMUNITY HALL

Tuesday 24 November, 7.30pm-9pm

The Community Company is currently planning heritage projects for the village, and we need your help in identifying the aspects of Boat of Garten – past and present - that are important to you

Come along and share with everyone what you know about your village. There will be a display of maps and memorabilia – please bring your artefacts and photos along!

(a complimentary dram will be on offer)

If you are unable to attend but would like to make comments or suggestions, please contact Kenny Mathieson on 831492 or e-mail: kennymathieson1@mac.com

Many thanks to the Funders of our Interpretation Plan:



Appendix 2:

Features identified at Community Workshop 24 th November 2009	
Archaeology	
Tom Pitlac	7
Cairns, Toumtylich	1
Cairns, Deshar Wood	1
Cairn, School	2
Chambered Cairn, Loch nan Carriagean	1
Hut Circle, Craigowrie	1
Legend of Stone	2
Buildings	
Station Buildings	5
Village Hall	4
Boat Hotel	3
Drumullie Mill	3
Community Hall	2
Deshar School	2
Craigard	2
Strathspey Cottage	2
St Columba Church	2
Kincardine Church	2
Old Forge	2
Ferry	2
Sleeper Cottages	2
Curling Rink	2
Police Station	1
Post Office and Shop	1
Old Butchers	1
The Sneck	1
Allens / Andersons	1
Caravan Park	1
Georgie's Yard	1
Old Co-op (?)	1
Sawmill	1
Pilmuir (formely inn at Drumullie)	1
Docharn Farm House	1
Deshar (? - maybe school?)	1
Military Roads	1
Sewerage	1
Names of Roads	
People	
John Roy Stuart	2
Bigla Comyn	1
Queen Victoria	1
James Braid	1
William Beveridge	1
lots of living locals (see list)	

Curse of Mullingaroch Bridge	1
Everyone's stories	1
Activities	
Walking	8
Community Hall activities	7
Cycling	6
Golf	6
Community Garden	4
Bird-watching	4
Fishing	4
Botany	3
Canoeing	2
Tennis	2
Play Park and Football Field	2
Dragonfly observation platform	2
Swimming	1
Badger hide	1
Horse riding	1
School activities	1
Railway history	1
Logging down Spey (an access issue on riverside)	1
Natural World	
Milton Loch, herons and ducks	7
Birds	5
Red Squirrels	4
Ospreys at Loch Garten	3
Woodland	3
River Spey	2
Caperwatch	1
Grebe	1
Otter	1
Badgers	1
Orchids	1
Fungii	1
Craigie Rock and Fairy Hill	1
Loch Dallas (osprey)	1
Loch Vaa	1

Tom Pitlac

LOCATION: Northern outskirts of village, between River Spey and Railway line near Milton NH 9473 1963

General description:

HC HER ID MHG4649. Classed as a Motte, it is the site of an ancient fortification, meaning hill of Bigla or Matilda, after Bigla Cumin, a notable historical figure (although local historian George Dixon dismisses the stories and seems to doubt her actual existence). All that remains is a V-shaped ditch, probably medieval. Currently heavily overgrown with broom/gorse. Access is under a railway bridge in front of Mill Cottage, then through a field (no track).

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Scheduled Monument 9110 (Historic Scotland). No proper access route.

Interpretive Potential:

Has potential, but would need significant expense and site works with a proper access route; considerable clearing of the site, site investigation and an imaginative artist to re-create what might once have been there.

Tom Pitlac – Miracle Stone

LOCATION: In River Spey near Tom Pitlac, NH 944 196

General description:

HC HER ID MHG4684. A broken stone originally raised to commemorate the alleged miracle of the parting of the Spey, a story with several variants from different centuries. The stone was raised in 1865, but subsequently broken by antagonistic locals and thrown in the river in 1867, where it still lies, according to George Dixon. A drawing of the original exists. Mitchell (1873, pp. 678-683) provides a drawing of the stone, and describes its erection and destruction.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Still in the river, if there at all.

Interpretive Potential:

Local folklore potential for interpretation, with the Holy Mary of Lurg story.

Burial Cairn

LOCATION: In woods near Fairy Hill at NH 9390 1860

General description: HR HER ID MHG33476. Possible burial cairn, undated.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Little to see on the ground that would mean anything to a non-specialist, just a big hole. It is close to one of the woodland walk paths, and thus accessible.

Interpretive Potential:

Part of a suite of features that can be referred to in general terms

Carn na Feola

LOCATION: NH 9502 1795, on moor to east of Mill of Kincardine at Street of Kincardine

General description: HC HER ID MHG41000, MHG4676. A cairn surrounded by an earth rampart. Dated as Neolithic (4000 BC to 2401 BC).

There is another Carn na Feola at Delbog on Tulloch Moor, a little outside our CC area, MHG24838. Means 'The Cairn of the Flesh'; account quoted from Forsyth, In the Shadow of the Cairngorms.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Ready access may be an issue.

Interpretive Potential:

Part of a suite of features that can be referred to in general terms

Crannog, Loch Vaa

LOCATION: NH 9121 1745

General description: HER MHG4691. (Area NH 914 175)

An island in Loch Vaa is said to be artificial. 'Wooden beams have been looked for and seen round the edge of the stone of which the island is composed'. It only shows above water in very dry weather. F O Blundell 1913.

At NH 9129 1745 are the remains of a crannog visible as a pile of stones just protruding above the surface of the loch, which was at a very low level at the time of investigation. It measures approximately 15.0m in diameter overall and on the N and W resting on the submerged stones, are two logs, 1.0 to 1.5m long, which may be displaced piles.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Private fishing on loch. Only visible in low water conditions. Conservation issues in summer with important and sensitive breeding bird populations. The loch is protected with an EU conservation designation.

Interpretive Potential:

Little to be seen and local concerns about any additional disturbance to the loch.

Fort and Cairns on Garten Hills

LOCATION: Fort on Creag Garten at NH 9513 2197; Cairns at NH 9405 2055 and NH 9280 2015; Carved Stone at NH 9500 2180

General description: Fort: HER MHG4634:

On Craig Garten, an isolated rocky knoll in an afforested area, are the remains of a fort commanding extensive views to the N and S (Information from G A Dixon, 13 Thirlstone Rd, Edinburgh). It is roughly D-shaped on plan conforming to the summit of the knoll and measures c.20.0m NNE-SSW by c.15.0m transversely within a ruinous stone wall spread to about 2.0m in the N and gradually increasing to c.4.7m at the entrance in the SSW.

The wall has tumbled over the crag in the NW, but outer facing stones are visible intermittently elsewhere with the face standing to a height of three courses in the SSE where it is best preserved. No inner facing stones are evident. The entrance is c.1.8m wide with

most of the base stones visible on its E side and two on the W side. There does not appear to be a door check. (George Dixon recalls finding the Iron Age Fort in 1956 before re-planting took place, and reporting it to the OS).

HER Record MHG2912: Carved Stone

A stone, 140mm by 115mm by 25mm thick, decorated with a crudely pecked human figure. The design suggests it is folk-art of post-medieval date. The fort and cairns are marked on the OS Map 403, but with the exception of the Cairn at NH 9405 2055, are in mature plantation.

The Cairn at NH 9405 2055 is on a raised bank immediately beside the forestry road, and is now level, but clearly a circular site. The stones are heavily overgrown with moss.

The sawmill marked on the OS map at NH 943 224 has a partly visible foundation, but no other structure.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Access likely to be difficult to Fort and one of the Cairns; not much to be seen on the ground

Interpretive Potential:

Limited due to access difficulties and limited on site significance

Hut Circle, Boat of Garten Woods

LOCATION: In woods at NH 9340 1820

General description: HC HER ID MHG33475, where it is described as a possible hut circle: "what appears to be footings of a large roundhouse lie in a forest clearing at this location".

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Difficult access in woods, nothing obvious on the ground.

Interpretive Potential:

Part of a suite of features that can be referred to in general terms

Bronze Age Hut Circle, Deshar School

LOCATION: In field on opposite side of road near Deshar School, NH 9246 1920, and another adjacent to school?

General description: HER Description NH91NW 16 9264 1920 and 9247 1915.

At NH 9264 1920 is a stone-walled oval hut measuring 17.5m SE-NW by 16.5m SW-NE between the centres of a wall spread to 4.5m. The entrance is in the SE.

SW of the hut, at NH 9247 1915 is a curving bank spread to 4.5m which maybe the S arc of another hut, otherwise destroyed.

There are traces of walls, and stone clearance heaps of contemporary cultivation on both sides of the road.

Mentioned in the history page of the BoG website as having diverted the Sustrans route:

'..... at the time of writing in March 2000, for example, the Sustrans route through the village and along Deshar Road has had to divert just by the school because it would have gone over a Bronze Age Hut circle. Generations of children of the Primary School have probably

played "King of the Castle" on it without realising its significance! In the field opposite there are signs of another hut circle.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Interpretive Potential:

Possible opportunity for the school to develop interest within the pupils in the local archaeological assets. This is not felt to be a feature that can directly contribute to the delivery of this Plan, but can be part of a suite of features that can be referred to in general terms.

Kiln (undated)

LOCATION: NH 941 197

General description: HCHER ID MHG29146. Site of former kiln or still in field opposite site of the BSW sawmill, under pylon line; HER describes it as

A robbed out kiln or still, on south bank of small E/W drainage, in hummock above boggy ground. It measures 4.80m E/W and 4.70m N/S with an internal diameter of 2.90m. The flue measures 3m in length, on an alignment of 340 degrees N. Only footings remain, quite clearly defined on the west side and in the interior. An ancillary structure lies to the east.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Access may be difficult.

Interpretive Potential:

limited

Petriny

LOCATION: NH 9650 2015, behind Mains of Garten Farm

General description: HER Record MHG29145

Reported to Highland Council and Historic Scotland by Gunnar Henni in about 1994. The mound has been a focus of local interest and research for several years.

Visited by Graham Robins, Community Archaeologist for Badenoch and Strathspey in 1999, who proposed a survey and trial excavation at the site to establish its nature and extent. A proposal was submitted to Historic Scotland for funding, but this was not successful. Instead the motte was scheduled by Historic Scotland on 18 August 1999.

The Entry in the Schedule describes the site as 'the site of a small medieval timber castle, with traces of buildings visible on its summit. The area to be scheduled is concentrated on the motte and the area or filled moat which are likely to contain significant archaeological deposits.'

Petriny is mentioned in the history on the BoG website:

There is little to show for the period from the Bronze Age into the middle Ages other than the two local fortlets of Tom P(B)itlach and Petriny (the latter being perhaps also a much earlier Broch). Petriny lies on the Nethybridge Road and was clearly a fairly substantial dwelling place of greater age - perhaps from the time of Malcolm Canmore and Queen

Margaret. Its precise ownership is uncertain but perhaps it belonged to one of the royal tax collectors of the time.

There is also a Barrow Cemetery revealed by aerial photography at NH 9605 2034 (MHG35390).

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Scheduled Monument 8296. Access would impact on workings of farm and little clear knowledge of the sites significance.

Interpretive Potential:

Part of a suite of features that can be referred to in general terms

Round Cairn

LOCATION: In woods near track junction at NH 93023 18099

General description: HC HER ID MHG51140.

Probable/possible burial cairn notified to HER by local archaeologist. Also Plane Table Survey record, ref. EHG3015.

Notification was received from a member of the public that a possible burial cairn is present in woodland to the south west of Boat of Garten. The cairn is approximately 11m in diameter and contains several depressions that may be the result of relatively recent disturbance. The cairn is potentially at risk from forestry work and several seedlings were seen to be growing on the mound. This is possibly the same cairn as MHG33476. The cairn lies at the top of a small rise by the junction of forestry tracks and is as described above - however the disturbance may not be recent. Site was visited 04/08/08.

The cairn was planned and photographed in April 2009 by local archaeologists. A distinct line of stones was noted at the west side and running up into the cairn, with a large boulder at the foot of the line. Another band of large stones appeared to cross this line - possibly the remains of a kerb but no conclusion appears to have been reached about this. As noted above, the disturbance may result from pits made by treasure hunters long ago, or from fallen trees which have rotted away.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Close to main forest tracks, so access possible. Possible damage issues.

Interpretive Potential:

Part of a suite of features that can be referred to in general terms

Additionally there are a number of other features close to the Community Council boundary which are worth recording here, but which have limited potential to enhance the role of archaeology in meeting the objectives of this Plan.

Features outside the Community Council Area

Chambered Cairn

LOCATION: NH 9093 1672

General description: HER MHG4650.

A Clava passage-grave about 40' diameter excavated in 1909 was visited by Henshall in 1958 when the Kerb, chamber and passage were still exposed. Finds (in the NMAS) included a fragment of a jet armlet (EQ 310) from the passage, probably secondary, and a few fragments of charcoal and microscopic snaps of bone, not certainly human, from the passage and chamber. There was another smaller and much robbed cairn about 36ft to the SW on an extension of the knoll; about 24ft in diameter with a few low kerbstones projecting through the roof.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

In field.

Chambered Cairn, Tullochgorm

LOCATION: NH 9648 2130

General description: HER MHG4604:

A Clava cairn, greatly robbed though the greater part of the kerb still exists, outside which is a considerable bank of cairn material. Within the centre are five stones, apparently earth-fast, but some probable monoliths are situated at similar distances (i.e. 16') from the kerb on the N and NE sides. A S Henshall 1963, visited 1957.

The remains of a Clava-type cairn as described and planned by Henshall. Visited by OS (N K B) 16 September 1966.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Scheduled Monument 2412

Chambered Cairn and Stone Circle

LOCATION: NH 9078 1550. Also Cairn within 30 yds at NH 9081 1548

General description: HER Record MHG4647

NH 907 154. An impressive Clava ring-cairn, its form perfectly apparent despite some interior disturbance. The kerb, diameter 56', is almost complete. The outside circle of monoliths is now represented by two prostrate slabs (probably over their original positions) part of another, and 4 hollows probably indicating the former positions of stones removed (Henshall 1963)

This Ring Cairn at is a better known local feature than the Dykes near Granish, and is obvious on the ground. It is close to Loch nan Carriagean, one of the sign-posted destinations in the village walking/cycling trails.

Also Cairn MHG4648, which may be just a clearance heap.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Scheduled Monument 899

Craig Chaisteal: Prehistoric ruined fort

LOCATION: On Creag Phitulais above Loch Pityoulish, NH 9295 1390

General description: Outside CC boundary, but mentioned in the history page of the BoG website:

Across the river, on the hill above Loch Pityoulish on the outer boundary of Kincardine there is the Craig Chaisteal - a prehistoric ruined fort.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Access difficulties.

Dykes

LOCATION: NH 9054 1484 and NH 9046 1406

General description: HCHER ref. MHG32791 and MHG32790. Sections of medieval dyke.

A section of the dyke which probably belongs to another longer stretch that runs from the Aviemore dump towards Boat of Garten (see NH91SW0096). This feature may be that shown as the 'forest edge' on RHP 13923, Plan of Kinchurdy and the plantation of Grenish 1809, and RHP 13912, Contents of Sliabh Ghraenesh 1801.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

None identified

Kincardine Church**LOCATION:** NH 938 155, off B970**General description:**

Historic Church (still used), possibly founded in 7th century by missionaries from Iona. Story of a notorious massacre From “History” on BoG website:

The Middle Ages were a time of great unrest in the whole of Scotland - in the Highlands characterised particularly by endless clan battles, large and small and this area was no different - the local clans of the Shaws, the Comyns and the Grants were constantly at each other's throats. The Hollow of the Comyns on the Pityoulish/ Rothiemurchus march was the scene of one such massacre when a raiding party of Comyns were cornered by the Shaws and slaughtered. Kincardine Church was involved in another unsavoury event. Grants of Rothiemurchus and their allies the Stewarts of Kincardine surrounded some Comyns near the Church. The Comyns took refuge in the Church but were burnt alive when the thatched roof was set on fire by a Grant arrow.

In Legends of the Cairngorms, Affleck Gray notes more stories linked to the church, and identifies the ancient tree at the church gates as a laburnum.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Very limited parking, no walking access.

Interpretive Potential:

Good sense of place, but due to safety concerns for pedestrian access and difficulties of parking safely this is only considered for promotion to cyclists

Boat of Garten Railway Station**LOCATION:** NH 943 188, Station Square**General description:**

HC HER ID MHG4683. Boat of Garten Station dates from 1863, although it burned down in 1907, so the current building is Edwardian. It was opened by the Inverness and Perth Junction Railway, and was the first line to Inverness via Grantown, Dava and Forres. It became less significant after the opening of the current the more direct route via Carrbridge in 1898. The section between Aviemore and Forres ceased operations in October 1965. It was re-opened between Aviemore and Boat of Garten by the Strathspey Steam Railway in 1978 (extended to Broomhill in 2002).

It is a three-platform junction station, with the station building situated on the down platform. The station once served as a junction between the I&P – re-named the Highland Railway and the Great North of Scotland Company's Speyside railways (the latter served the whisky industry at Craigellachie via a branch line crossing the Spey beyond Broomhill), and signal boxes were provided by both companies (see sheet for signal boxes). The main station building is single-storey and wooden, with station house adjoining (see Railway Master's House). Now owned and run by the Strathspey Steam Railway.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Listed Building (B) 258 (also footbridge, signal box, Station Master's house)

Interpretive Potential:

The village of Boat of Garten grew around the railway station, and this building and its associated infrastructure is central to the story of Boat and the delivery of this Plan.

Station Master's House

LOCATION: Station Square, NH 943 188

General description: HC HER ID MHG22800.

Former Station Master's House. Historic Scotland note it as "later 19th century" date.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Listed Building (B) 258

Interpretive Potential:

As above part of Railway story.

Signal Box, Boat of Garten Station

LOCATION: Boat of Garten Station, NH 943 186

General description:

HC HER ID MHG40098 & 22801 (seems to relate to same building, but there are two in the station complex). Signal box (according to Scotland's Places record card, the box may have been moved from elsewhere).

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Listed Building (B) 258

Interpretive Potential:

Important part of railway story but an issue over access to an operational railway.

Railway Footbridge

LOCATION: Boat of Garten Station at NH 943 188

General description: HC HER ID MHG46523.

Metal footbridge crossing line at Station.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Listed Building (B) 258

Interpretive Potential:

As part of railway infrastructure. Good viewpoint revealing scale of railway infrastructure.

Gas House

LOCATION: Railway station at NH 943 189

General description: HC HER ID MHG51521.

19th Gas House. An adjoining wooden tool store is now demolished (HC HER ID MHG51520).

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Listed Building (B) 258.

Interpretive Potential:

As part of railway infrastructure.

Boat Hotel

LOCATION: Station Square at NH 943 189

General description:

Built in early 20th century by George Grant and his wife, Bella Sangster, whose family moved here in the late 19th century (Braeriach on Deshar Road). Formerly known as the Station Hotel. An earlier Inn established by Alexander McGregor of Drumullie stood here (or hereabout) Dixon.

A Hundred Years at the Boat says: "Some years after the early death of her husband, Mrs Sangster married George Grant, and together they were to make a significant impact on the development of the village. They built the Boat Hotel, then Craigard, Moorfield and The Cottage as well as managing three large farms and expanding out of the village to build the Carrbridge Hotel." Also a prominent golf club member, with a trophy still in her name.

According to George Keir (Dodo), The Cottage is the building which is now Glenavon House.

The Hotel has a good collection of reproductions of old views of the village in the days of the original railway.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Commercial Business

Interpretive Potential:

Central location vis-à-vis any interpretation in Station Square.

Craigard

LOCATION: Kinchurdy Road at NH 942 187

General description:

Built early 20th century by George Grant and his wife, Bella Sangster (see above). Summer rentals to Sir James Coats of Paisley and A E Pullar of Perth mentioned in A Hundred Years at the Boat. Sir William Beveridge stayed here (see his sheet). Used as a hotel. Now converted for private use.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Private Home that can only be viewed at a distance from Kinchurdy Road.

Interpretive Potential:

By association with Si William Beveridge and his historic works, rather than as a visitable location.

Garten Bridge

LOCATION: Crosses the Spey at NH 946 191

General description: HC HER ID MHG18643.

Modern road bridge built in 1974, replacing wooden trestle bridge of 1899. A stone plinth which was part of that 1899 bridge remains on the west (village) side of the river, with an Inverness County Council plaque explaining its origin and describing the construction and

makers of the new bridge. Current parking is informal and could be improved. Access to river banks for fishermen. Fencing in poor repair.

The bridge stands on or close to the site of the ferry which gave the village its name.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Busy road requiring care in crossing

Interpretive Potential:

Site of the original ferry crossing and provides good close views of the River Spey and surrounding flood plain.

The Old Forge

LOCATION: Off Birch Grove at NH 9425 1925

General description:

The Old Forge was identified on two cards at the meeting on 24 November.

A former blacksmith's forge, it is situated off the present Birch Grove. There are two now rather dilapidated wooden buildings on either side of the entry to the Golf Club practice range and Community Woodland Walk at Milton Loch. One (southern/left) is in a fenced off enclosure, the other (northern/right) on open ground. Both are locked and have faded keep out notices.

Both are now rare sleeper huts, and the sleeper construction is clearly visible, although in poor repair.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Private ownership, locked, but can be examined externally.

Interpretive Potential:

As part of walk around Milton Loch and visit to bird hide

Strathspey, Deshar Road

LOCATION: NH 942 189

General description:

HC HER ID MHG15410. 19th century house, private occupation. Historic Scotland description: Mid 19th century single storey dwelling, symmetrical 3 bays. Whitewashed rubble. Centre narrow side lights. 12-pane glazing; end stacks; slate roof. One of the few pre-railway houses still in existence

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Private House, Listed Building (C(S)) 259.

Interpretive Potential:

Walk past only although potential is limited

St Columba's Church

LOCATION: Deshar Road at NH 941 190

General description:

HC HER ID MHG22799. Church of Scotland. Completed in 1900. Church Hall added to rear in 1934, the Manse nearby in 1932. A War Memorial stands at the front of the church, originally commemorating dead of 1914-19, with 1939-45 later added.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

None identified

Interpretive Potential:

Limited significance to non residents and locals

Buildings to be utilised for delivering the outcomes of this Plan

Community Hall

LOCATION: NH 937 189, adjacent to football ground

General description:

The Boat of Garten Community Hall was opened in 2007 after a big community fund-raising effort, and offers a multi-use venue with ecological features.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Interpretive Potential:

Possible location for interpretation material (boards, etc).

Boat of Garten Public Hall

LOCATION: NH 942 190 on Deshar Road

General description:

The Public Hall was built in 1896, and was active as a centre of village activities until superseded by the new Community Hall in 2007. The community has now agreed to sell the Public Hall with the proceeds going to the Community Hall.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Interpretive Potential:

Significant built heritage credentials, but will depend on what is decided on its future.

Boat of Garten Holiday Park

LOCATION: NH 9395 1810, on Deshar Road behind M&B Stores

General description: Identified by one card at meeting on 24 November.

<http://www.boatofgartenholidaypark.com/index.html> Chalets lodges, caravan and camp site open all year around. Award winning site.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Commercial business

Interpretive Potential:

Links should be made with Plan to ensure customers have access to the resources developed following the implementation of this Plan

Post Office and Shop

LOCATION: NH 9420 1890, on Deshar Road next to Public Hall.

General description:

Identified by one card at the meeting on 24 November.

Village Post Office and Shop, recently award-winning under its current owners, David and Beth. The shop occupies the bottom left quarter of the two-storey building, with residential accommodation on the rest of the ground floor, and above.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Private house and commercial business

Interpretive Potential:

Possible outlet for material from Plan

Golf Clubhouse

LOCATION: Boat of Garten Golf Club at NH 944 191

General description: HC HER ID MHG22797.

The original club house was a timber shack opposite former Craigard Hotel. The present site of the club house followed leasing of additional land to expand the course in 1910. It was extended in 1924, and replaced by what was effectively a new building on the site in 1968. The present building was completed in 1995, and was designed by Henry Gibson. (Source – A Hundred Years at the Boat).

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Commercial property and Private Club

Interpretive Potential:

Central part in village story, but unlikely to welcome non-golfing visitors being directed to them. Golf club should be encouraged to promote interpretive material to non playing partners and guests.

Built heritage with little interpretive potential**Andersons Restaurant**

LOCATION: NH 9405 1895

General description: Identified by one card at the meeting on 24 November.

The building now houses Anderson Restaurant and private accommodation (occupied by the Andersons). It was formerly the tackle shop owned by Andrew Allen.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Private House

Interpretive Potential:**Tyndrum**

LOCATION: NH 944 192

General description:

Now a private house, mentioned in A Hundred years at the Boat. A M Grant, the club secretary from 1904-48, ran a business here which at various times functioned as a bakery, grocery, drapery and tearooms. He lived at Monadlaith on Kinchurdy Road.

“His business acumen was reflected on the one hand in the restriction of teas being served only on Saturdays at the Clubhouse while his tearooms were operating round the corner during the week, but also in the fact that he masterminded the transformation of the Boat from nine to eighteen holes under the guidance of James Braid, the most notable golf course architect of the day.” (p. 44)

The building is 20th century.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Private house.

Interpretive Potential:

Limited and very local only really in association with golf course story.

Telegraph poles

LOCATION: By railway at NH 94 18

General description: HC HER ID MHG36582.

Photo on Scotland's Places shows “David Stirling and accomplice” climbing a pole, but doesn't say who they are, or why.

Interpretive Potential:

Low interest unless there is a good story attached (none known).

The Yard

LOCATION: NH 926 173

General description:

The house at The Yard (often referred to as Geordie's Yard) stands on the track to Kinchurdy Farm, which is also part of the Speyside Way, and is one of the signed destinations on the village path network. It was formerly a local attraction when occupied by its previous owner (Geordie) on the basis of the odd models and life-size figures in the garden. It is architecturally significant as a sleeper house, but has been modernised (it now belongs to John Allen, and the garden decorations are gone, although still mentioned in the Boat website under cycle routes).

See article in Strathy:

[http://www.strathspey-](http://www.strathspey-herald.co.uk/news/fullstory.php/aid/3036/Councillor_issues_call_for_survey_of__sleeper_houses_.html)

[herald.co.uk/news/fullstory.php/aid/3036/Councillor_issues_call_for_survey_of__sleeper_houses_.html](http://www.strathspey-herald.co.uk/news/fullstory.php/aid/3036/Councillor_issues_call_for_survey_of__sleeper_houses_.html)

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Private house.

Interpretive Potential:

None now

BSW Sawmill

LOCATION: NH 944 198

General description:

Industrial sawmill owned by BSW Timber, who bought the mill from Cameron's (Chapelton) Timber Ltd in 1965, and expanded and modernised it.

There are two small interpretation boards adjacent to the roadside which seemed aimed at the public rather than employees.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Industrial site, not open to visitors.

Interpretive Potential:

Only in respect of the continuation of timber operations in the area and the importance of the timber assets of Strathspey.

Deshar Primary School

LOCATION:

NH 924 191 - Deshar Road at junction with A95, 2km from Station Square

General description:

Original school building dates from 1875/6, opened in 19876. the architect was A M (Marshall) Mackenzie.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Working school on busy road

Interpretive Potential:

Limited interest to the visitor.

Docharn Farm House

LOCATION: NH 9220 2025

General description:

Identified by one card at meeting on 24 November.

Farmhouse, now empty. Stands on off-road alternative of Sustrans Route 7 for Carrbridge, and provides a superb viewpoint for walkers or cyclists.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Relatively remote from village, and low numbers

Interpretive Potential:

Potential to build into any possible cycling promotion material

Drumullie Mill

LOCATION: NH 9460 1945

General description:

Drumullie Mill was identified by three cards at the meeting on 24 November.

It is a former mill across the road (and under the railway) from Milton Loch, which was the original mill dam. The stream still runs from the loch past the house and into the Spey, but now by-passes the metal frame of the waterwheel, which is still visible on the side of the building.

It is close to the site of Tom Pitlac, and is now a private house

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Private house.

Interpretive Potential:

Limited due to concerns regarding privacy. Potential to mention but not to direct any visitors to location.

Railway Overbridge

LOCATION: Over road adjacent to Golf Club NH 944 191

General description:

HC HER ID MHG36581.

Bridge carrying railway over road. Maker's plate dated from 1866. This bridge was replaced by the current bridge in 1996.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

None

Interpretive Potential:

No longer had the bridge referred to here.

Pilmuir (formerly Drumullie Inn)

LOCATION: Drumullie

General description:

Identified by one card at the meeting on 24 November.

The house is either the old Drumullie Inn (see Alexander McGregor and Queen Victoria), or stands on its site. Now a private house.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Private House

Police Station

LOCATION: Deshar Road at NH 941 189

General description:

HC HER ID MHG22798. Recorded in Scotland's Places (and OS map), but now a private house.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Private house

Interpretive Potential:

Heidi's parrots might be part of Nature trail!

Curling Rink

LOCATION: NH 9395 1880

General description:

The Curling Rink was identified in two cards at the meeting on 24 November. It is situated in the woods behind Granlea on Deshar Road, but is now disused and in very poor repair. The only remaining infrastructure is the level area of the two rinks and some old lighting poles. A portakabin on the site was used as a youth club for a time, but has now been removed.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Disused, in poor repair.

Interpretive Potential:

Limited and recommended that this is not mentioned unless the area is tidied up and made more presentable

Buildings no longer there

General description:

Two properties were identified at the meeting on 24 November (mainly by Dodo) which are no longer there, at least in their original form.

The Sneck, an old cottage on Deshar Road

The Butcher's Shop, once opposite Granlea on Deshar Road

Old Co-op – Tyndrum

Turntable

LOCATION: *Within station complex*

General description:

No details on Scotland's Places or NAS. Now gone. (Dodo verbally confirmed it had been removed).

Sleeper Hut

LOCATION: Stood in field at NH 9325 1920

General description:

HC HER ID MHG32788.

A sleeper-built wooden building. This is now demolished, with only a couple of sleepers left standing. Another building previously nearby (HER MHG15086 at NH 9327 1925) is also demolished. Also at NH 9355 1935

Site of former limekiln in poor repair (HER MHG15085)

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

No longer there

John Roy Stuart or Stewart

LOCATION: Small memorial cairn at NH 940 165

General description:

Born within the area of this Plan. John Roy Stewart or Stuart was born at Knock of Kincardine in 1700, and is a significant historical figure, notably for his involvement in the Jacobite cause. He died in France c. 1752. His name is given in variant spellings above in different sources, but "Stewart" predominates, although not on the website dedicated to him (see below).

A memorial cairn was erected near his birthplace in 2000, at the entrance to a private fishing lodge (Croft Kincardine) on the B970 at NH 941 166. Badenoch & Strathspey Local History Group and 'Sinne' Gaelic Group host a website celebrating his life at <http://www.johnroystuart.org.uk/>

Website biography:

Iain Ruadh Stiùbhart ... John Roy Stuart

John Roy Stuart is one of the most important historical and cultural figures to originate in Strathspey. Born at Knock of Kincardine in Strathspey in the year 1700, John Roy became one of Strathspey's best-known and best-loved heroes. In the Jacobite Rising of 1745-1746 he was made Colonel of the Edinburgh Regiment, in which he led men from Strathspey, as well as from Edinburgh. His loyalty and devotion to the Jacobite cause led him to become one of Prince Charles' most trusted men. He is generally considered one of the most colourful and charismatic characters of the 1745 Jacobite Rising, whose narrow escapes and adventures became legendary, so much so that they are widely believed to have provided Robert Louis Stevenson with the inspiration for the character of Alan Breck Stewart in the novels *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*.

John Roy's military skill and aptitude, especially his swordmanship, were greatly admired as were his skills as a piper and poet. His Gaelic songs, some of which are still sung to this day, earned him lasting renown throughout the Highlands. For many years previous, and for some years after the 1745 Rising, John Roy operated as a Jacobite agent, making often hazardous trips between France and Scotland, in the hope that the people of Scotland would "rise again for Scotland's own sake."

Some of these trips he paid for out of his own pocket, which led him into serious debt. He died in France c.1752, his cause of death and place of burial unknown. Every year, on the anniversary of the raising of the Jacobite standard at Glenfinnan on 19th August, John Roy Stuart's standard-bearer – James MacIntyre from Beglan in Glenmore (who carried the Green Banner of Kincardine at the Battle of Culloden and who saved it from falling into the clutches of the redcoat soldiers and certain destruction) – would walk to the summit of Cairngorm and unfurl the banner in memory of John Roy Stuart and the other men from Strathspey who fought for the Jacobite cause.

In 2000 the 1745 Association funded the building of a cairn near to his place of birth in Kincardine as a lasting memorial to John Roy Stuart. Until now this has been the only recognition that John Roy has ever received in his native land.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Memorial cairn is at the entrance to a private lodge and offers little opportunity for the car-borne visitor to park and consider the location and the story of the man. As with Kincardine Church the road is not suitable to encourage pedestrians but has potential for cyclists.

Interpretive Potential:

Charismatic character from the area – the only historical one of note. Should be mentioned at the same time as the nature of the community of the area in the mid 18th century is mentioned. This was a pre-enclosure landscape, and Boat of Garten did not exist.

Sir William Beveridge (later Lord Beveridge)

LOCATION: Associated with Craigard (Hotel) and golf course

General description:

Sir William Beveridge worked on The Beveridge Report while staying at the Craigard Hotel in Boat of Garten (sources and more info – A Hundred Years at The Boat, p. 24; George Dixon talk, possibly local memories reported by Julia?).

From Wikipedia

William Henry Beveridge, 1st Baron Beveridge (1879 – 1963) was a British economist and social reformer. He is perhaps best known for his 1942 report *Social Insurance and Allied Services* (known as the *Beveridge Report*) which served as the basis for the post-World War II Welfare State put in place by the Labour government.

The Report to the Parliament on Social Insurance and Allied Services was published in 1942. It proposed that all people of working age should pay a weekly *national insurance* contribution. In return, benefits would be paid to people who were sick, unemployed, retired or widowed. Beveridge argued that this system would provide a minimum standard of living "below which no one should be allowed to fall". It recommended that the government should find ways of fighting the five 'Giant Evils' of Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness. Beveridge included as one of three fundamental assumptions the fact that there would be a National Health Service of some sort, a policy already being worked on in the Ministry of Health.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Craigard is a private residence and clearly seeks privacy.

Interpretive Potential:

Mention can be made of the role of the railway access, the golf course and the fishing as key attractants for Beveridge, making it possible and attractive for him to base himself in the Boat.

Royal Visitors**Edward 1 of England****General description:**

Edward I (1239-1307), known as Edward Longshanks, was a probable visitor to Tom Pitlac/Gartenroth in 1303 while on a hunting trip in the Garten Hills. It was a significant historical moment; Scotland had briefly tasted success at Stirling Bridge in 1297 under Wallace, but Edward had struck back falling heavily on the Scots at Falkirk one year later. Scotland paid a heavy price. Edward continued his brutal campaigning through 1300 and 1301 and eventually subdued the country although no major battles were fought again. In 1303 he signed a peace treaty with France and his struggles were at an end in Scotland. It was at this time that he was able to relax a bit and enjoy some hunting. The Highlands would have offered much, red deer in wild open country, wild boar in the woods and the continuing presence of wolves and folk memories of bear. He did not have long to enjoy this as he died in 1306, although he lived long enough to see Wallace captured and horribly put to death.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Limited information available and issues relating to the access issues at Tom Pitlac.

Interpretive Potential:

Interpretation could include evocation of the countryside at that time – wolves, boar, stags, etc. What would the area have looked like at this time when one of the most important people in Europe chose to hunt in the area?

Queen Victoria and Albert**General description:**

Queen Victoria (1819-1901) and the Prince Consort, Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (1819-1861), stopped at Drumullie in September 1860 to water the horses, where the inn-keeper, Alexander McGregor, is said to have slipped the prince a wee dram

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Pre Railway and pre Boat Hotel

Interpretive Potential:

Good story, but they travelled extensively around the Highlands, so this is only of local significance when added to other Royal visitors

Empress Eugenie (wife of Emperor Napoleon III of France)

LOCATION: Associated with railway and inn.

General description:

The former Empress of France, Eugenie, wife of Louis Napoleon, called at Boat of Garten by train from Inverness in August 1872, where she put up with Alexander McGregor, who had moved from Drumullie Inn with the coming of the railway, and ran an inn (presumably on or around the site of The Boat Hotel). See Dixon talk for more detail on visit.

María Eugenia Ignacia Augustina de Palafox Portocarrero de Guzmán y Kirkpatrick; (1826 – 1920) was the 18th Marchioness of Ardales, 18th Marchioness of Moya, 19th Countess of Teba, 10th Countess of Montijo and Countess of Ablitas. She was the last Empress consort of the French from 1853 to 1871 as the wife of Napoleon III, Emperor of the French.

When the Second French Empire was overthrown after France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), the empress and her husband took refuge in England, and settled at Chislehurst, Kent. After his death in 1873, and that of her son in 1879, she moved in 1885 to Farnborough, Hampshire, and to her villa between Menton and Nice, where she lived in retirement, abstaining from all interference in French politics.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Relevance to Boat Hotel, but a previous building

Interpretive Potential:

Intriguing character, visiting at a critical time in her life. Limited value but does illustrate the importance of the railway and the links with the British Royal Family

Other Personalities**James Braid****General description:**

James Braid (1870-1950) designed the 18-hole course at Boat of Garten. He was responsible for quite a number of courses in the Highlands, but at the time he was the

outstanding golf course designer of his age. He was a member of the Great Triumvirate of the sport alongside Harry Vardon and John Henry Taylor. He won The Open Championship five times - in 1901, 1905, 1906, 1908 and 1910. His 1906 victory in The Open Championship was the last successful defence of the title by a European until Pádraig Harrington replicated the feat in 2008.

In 1912, Braid retired from tournament golf and became a club professional at Walton Heath. He was involved in golf course design, and is sometimes regarded as the "inventor" of the dogleg. Among his designs are the "King's Course" and the "Queen's Course" at Gleneagles, and the 1926 remodelling of The Open Championship venue Carnoustie Golf Links.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Private and sporting nature of the Golf Club

Interpretive Potential:

By association with golf club.

Alexander McGregor

General description:

Alexander McGregor is mentioned in relation to both the visits of Queen Victoria and the Empress Eugenie, the first as the inn-keeper at Drumullie, and then as inn-keeper at Boat of Garten

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Drumullie is private house

Interpretive Potential:

Little known about him beyond this. Possibly only a passing mention in relation to Royal visitors.

Myth and Legend

Bigla Cumming

Associated (perhaps wrongly but certainly in local tales) with Tom Pitlac

General description:

Bigla (or Matilda) Cumming (or Comyn) is said to have been the wife of Sir John le Grant, and resided at Tom Pitlac, where stories about her include setting a fishing line with a bell attached from a castle window into the river, and drawing up the salmon when the bell rang (where documented?).

George Dixon refutes all of this as myth and tall tales ("This place gathered myths like barnacles round a boat"), and argues that Bigla did not exist – there was a Matilda, mother of Sir Duncan Grant, but she was not a Comyn (Cumming), and did not live here. Moreover, the name Tom Pitlac (as Tom Fouclac) does not appear in estate records until quite late (1770s). He cites Sir William Fraser's *Chiefs of the Grants* (1883) as his source. She is mentioned in the Rev. A Sinclair's *The Grants of Glenmoriston* (1887), and in Lachlan Shaw's *History of Moray* (1775), and *The Cromdale Text* (c. 1729). Not mentioned in Forysth.

Source - Sinclair:

Sir John Le Grant, who, in 1434, was Sheriff of Inverness, is said to have married Bigla, or Matilda Cumming, and with her to have got the dimming lands in Strathspey. This Sir John

had a son, Duncan, by Bigla Cumming, who succeeded as first of Freuchy, 1434-1485. Freuchy was then, with other lands, erected into a royal barony, and for generations thereafter was the family designation.

Source - Shaw:

I cannot, indeed, instruct that these five gentlemen were the successive representatives of the family, although I think it highly probable. But the following descents, from father to son, admit of no question, viz: (6) Maude or Matildis, heiress, married Andrew Steuart, son of Sir John Steuart, Sheriff of Bute, who was son of King Robert II; and their son was (7) Patrick, who married the daughter and heiress of Wiseman of Mulben, and by her was father of (8) John Roy. This gentleman married Bigla Cumming, heiress of Glencarnie [or Duthel]. He had two sons, viz., Duncan, his heir, and Duncan, progenitor of the Clan Donachie or family of Gartenbeg.

Source - Fraser:

There are other variations of the story of this alleged intermarriage between the Grants and the Comyns, but the above will suffice to show the inconsistencies of local tradition, and to illustrate the statement as to the obscurity added to the Grant history by such legends. Passing from these to the testimony of authentic records, there is proof indeed of an alliance between the Grants and a descendant of the ancient family of Glencarnie, but divested of the many romantic accessories assigned by tradition. In the muniments of the Grant family, the first mention of Matilda of Glencarnie, the reputed heiress, is found in a precept from the Chancery of King James the First, bearing date 31st January 1434. This document narrates that the deceased Matilda of Glencarnie, mother of Duncan le Grant, died last vested as of fee in the fifth part of the barony (*etc*)

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Not even sure who this person was!

Interpretive Potential:

Good story of fishing as part of any reference to Tom Pitlac.

Holy Mary of Lurg

LOCATION: Associated with the Spey at Tom Pitlac and the Miracle Stone

General description:

The subject of a story about the parting of the Spey just below the site of Tom Pitlac to allow her coffin to be carried to Duthil from Abernethy for burial. See Forsyth, *In The Shadow of Cairngorm*; Mitchell (1873, p. 677); and Gray. *Legends of the Cairngorms*, p. 190. Mitchell reports various forms of the story, which has been a persistent local myth.

Identified Constraints or Sensitivities:

Good local myth

Interpretive Potential:

Good, possibly linked to any interpretation of Tom Pitlac.

Interim results of National Park Visitor Survey 2009**Age Range**

Visitors to the area show a remarkable even spread across the different age groups. There is a higher preponderance of the over 55's within the longer stay category, and a lower % of the under 24 age group.

	Short break (1-4 days)	Long break (5 days +)	Scottish Visitor stats 2008³
Total No.	286	658	
16-24	8%	7%	10%
25-34	19%	15%	17%
35-44	20%	16%	21%
45-54	19%	19%	18%
55-64	19%	23%	17%
65+	15%	20%	17%

Social Class

A large majority are ABC1 (higher managerial, administrative or professional; intermediate managerial, administrative or professional and supervisory or clerical, junior managerial, administrative or professional)

ABC1	71%	73%	62%
C2	18%	15%	20%
DE.	11%	12%	18%

Nature of Group

Half of all those interviewed were travelling with one other person. 10% have a dog with them.

Partner only	38%	41%
Family group	24%	28%
Friends	17%	14%
On own	13%	12%
Group of 2	49%	52%
3	17%	16%
4	11%	12%

Origin of Visitor

The visitors show a higher than average (compared with Scotland wide tourism data) of non Scottish visitors amongst the short stay. Amongst the long stay visitor there is a very high overseas element – nearly 1/3rd.

Other Scottish	44%	27%	40%
Other UK	50%	42%	43%
Overseas	6%	31%	17%

³ VisitScotland 2009

Average Stay Time

Short stay visitors averaged 2.77 days, whilst the longer stay visitor an impressive 11.17days. Of those surveyed:

29% were staying	1-4 nights
53%	5-7 nights
34%	8-14 nights
9%	15+ nights

Accommodation Used

The area has very different characteristics to the Scottish average with high levels of self catering, camping and caravanning and low levels of visiting friends and relatives.

	Short break (1-4 days)	Long break (5 days +)	Scottish Visitor stats	
			UK	Overseas
Hotel/Motel	44%	34%	38%	46%
Self catering	13%	31%	10%	5%
Camp/caravan	15%	12%	6%	2%
VFR	13%	10%	35%	29%

Information Sources

This area is very popular for return visits, which clearly indicates a high level of satisfaction with what is on offer. Of note is the relatively low level of internet use for accessing information.

Previous visit	62%	45%
F&R	18%	18%
Internet	9%	12%
Brochure	10%	14%
Guide book	5%	10%
Agent/operator	4%	10%

Transportation

The destination is popular with self-driving short stay groups, but longer stay groups have a higher than average use of hired cars. Both groups have a higher than average use of coach transport.

Private car	76%	62%	67%
Hired car	6%	12%	
Bus/coach	14%	17%	3%

All Activities Undertaken

Visitors to the area, like most visitors to the Highlands, come for a mix of activities, with sight-seeing and walking the main ones for both groups. Inevitably the longer stay visitor has more opportunity to follow additional activities and visiting heritage and wildlife sites are the next most popular activities.

	Short break (1-4 days)	Long break (5 days +)	Scottish Visitor stats
Sight-seeing.	59%	76%	13%
All walking	52%	48%	47%
Hill walking	25%	22%	-
Walks 2mls+	27%	30%	-
Walks < 2mls	25%	21%	-
Heritage sites	13%	26%	23%
Wildlife	4%	11%	9%

Main activity Undertaken

When we look at the main activity the focus on general sight-seeing is further emphasised and is easily the most popular one identified. Curiously those on longer stays seem to identify less involvement with some of the key activities.

Sight-seeing.	41%	54%
All walking	24%	16%
Hill walking	13%	8%
Walks 2mls+	9%	6%
Walks < 2mls	2%	2%
Heritage sites	3%	3%

Towns and Attractions Visited

The survey asked which of the key settlements in the National Park had been visited during their stay. The results below show the central importance of Aviemore, this is bearing in mind that the data below covers the survey for the whole Park until end June. The following popular towns/villages visited were as follows:

- Aviemore 50% (45% in 2005)
56% of long stay but only 29% of day trippers
- Grantown-on-Spey 19% (25% in 2005)
- Kingussie 13% (18% in 2005)

Sources of Local Information

74% of long stay visitors seek local information and 48% of short stay visitors. 24% do this from a leaflet display and only 22% from a Visitor Information Centre.

Level of Satisfaction

Visitors were asked to rate the area out of 10 with 1 being the lowest rating. The level of satisfaction was very high with the following percentages ranking the area 8 or above.

	Short break (1-4 days)	Long break (5 days +)
	83%	83%
Average Score	8.26	8.27

Likes and Improvements

Visitor's likes were a reflection of what attracted them to the area in the first place and the activities they expected to enjoy. The variety of activities seem to be taken a bit for granted,

and wildlife does not score as high as might be expected. The key message is that it is the general character and ambiance of the area that is most valued.

	Short break (1-4 days)	Long break (5 days +)
scenery	48%	46%
hills/mountains	29%	28%
peace and quiet	25%	24%
variety of activities	11%	7%
wildlife	8%	11%

Improvements

The high level of satisfaction does not preclude improvements and the survey identified issues that would be recognised by residents. 16% sought improved mobile phone reception/Wi-Fi; 7% wished better public transport (this compares with 16% in a similar survey in 2005); and 6% wished better public toilet provision (13% in 2005).

Membership of Organisations and Groups

80% of those interviewed said they were not members of any of a range of groups and organisations identified (heritage and conservation). 11% were members of the National Trust/National Trust for Scotland, and of relevance to the presence of Loch Garten, 7% were members of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

Self- Catering Accommodation

Aldon Lodge <http://www.aldonlodge.co.uk/>
 Beechgrove Mountain Lodges, Mains of Garten <http://www.beechgrovemountainlodges.co.uk/>
 Ben Macdui, Birch Grove
<http://www.boatofgarten.com/accom/selfcatering/benmacdui/index.php>
 35 Birch Grove <http://www.35birchgrove.co.uk/>
 Burnside Log Cabin, nr. Drumullie <http://www.scottish-logcabin.co.uk/main.php>
 But 'n' Ben Cottage, Street of Kincardine <http://www.bmserv.freeserve.co.uk/>
 Chalet Morlich (Moorfield House)
<http://www.boatofgarten.com/accom/selfcatering/morlich/index.php>
 Chapleton Cottage, Chapleton
<http://www.boatofgarten.com/accom/selfcatering/chapletoncottage/index.php>
 Chapleton Steading, Chapleton <http://www.chapletonsteading.co.uk/>
 Cherry Cottage <http://www.boatofgarten.com/accom/selfcatering/cherry/index.php>
 Conifer Cottages, Chapleton <http://www.boatofgarten.com/accom/selfcatering/conifer/index.php>
 Corrour <http://www.corrour.com/>
 Craigowrie Cottage, Kinchurdy Road (self-catering)
<http://www.speyvalleycottages.com/>
 Craigview Cottage, Deshar Road
<http://www.boatofgarten.com/accom/selfcatering/craigview/index.php>
 No 1 Craigview, Deshar Road
<http://www.boatofgarten.com/accom/selfcatering/1craigview>
 Easter Cullachie Steading <http://www.eastercullachiesteading.co.uk/>
 Finchwood, Kinchurdy Road
<http://www.unique-cottages.co.uk/cottages/highlands/inverness-shire/finchwood>
 Garten House, nr. Drumullie <http://www.gartenbeg.co.uk/location.htm>
 Heath Cottage <http://www.heathandshore.co.uk/heath.asp>
 Keppoch, Kinchurdy Road <http://www.cairngormholidays.co.uk/>
 Logie Cottage, Kinchurdy Road <http://www.logie-cottage.co.uk/index.htm>
 Pilmuir, Drumullie <http://www.speysidecottage.co.uk/>
 Spey Cottage <http://www.boatofgarten.com/accom/selfcatering/speycottage/index.php>
 The Tree House, Kinchurdy Road <http://www.treeouselodge.co.uk/>
 Tyndrum <http://www.boatofgarten.com/accom/selfcatering/tyndrum/index.php>
 Wester Balvattan, Croft James <http://www.balvattan.co.uk/>
 Woodland Lodge, Kinchurdy Road <http://www.woodlandlodge.net/>

UK Target Markets

WARM 1: Affluent Southern Explorers

Affluent Southern Explorers spend the most nights away on holiday. Whilst they are affluent high achievers, they are not overly materialistic, and prefer simpler, local accommodation such as B&Bs and self catering. They tend to take longer breaks, both in the UK and abroad, and are particularly seeking to broaden their mind and to mix with the locals – they like to engage with, and understand, the culture of places they visit. They enjoy discovering new places as well as returning to familiar places, and are always open to suggestions from articles in newspapers and from reading guide books. Even though they are geographically distant from Scotland, they have a strong connection with the destination – perhaps originally through family or friends, but it goes beyond this: Scotland fulfils their emotional and practical needs, as it helps them get off the beaten track, they enjoy the outdoors, and they love the things that Scotland has to offer on a break. They consider Scotland as a main holiday destination, not just for short breaks.

Profile

- 2.3 million households in UK
- Southern based (39% London)
- Most affluent segment
- 4th oldest segment (average age 49)

Holiday Behaviour

- 3rd highest total holiday spend
- High Scotland share of spend
- High usage of B&Bs & self catering
- 84% visited Scotland in last 2 years
- Take long breaks
- Like to broaden mind on holiday
- Like outdoor activities/golf

WARM 2: Younger Domestic Explorers

Younger Domestic Explorers are very strong advocates of holidays in their own country. They believe that breaks in England and Scotland enable them to get away at short notice, offer good value for money, and offer plenty to see and do. They also believe there is always more of the UK to discover and explore.

There are 2 sub segments in this group – couples/singles and families. The families group, which make up 36%, will have school age children and will have limited disposable income. They love breaks in their own country and will prefer to stay in self catering accommodation due to the freedom that it provides them. They love to tour, watch wildlife but also enjoy cultural and educational activities such as visiting museums. For the singles/couples segment, as they are just starting out on their career and enjoying life to the full, they also have limited disposable income to spend on holidays. Breaks in the UK are therefore well suited to this group – they will also stay in self catering, hotels and bed & breakfasts whilst on a break to Scotland. This group are more likely to research their roots, as well as touring, visiting museums and watching wildlife.

Profile

- 2 million households in UK
- Northern based – 70% Yorkshire & above
- Low affluence
- 2nd youngest segment (25-45)
- 36% have children (school age)

- Families or young professionals
- Convenience important (busy lives)
- High internet users (online purchasing & booking)

Holiday Behaviour

- 3rd lowest total holiday spend
- Strong advocates of holidaying in own country
- 81% visited Scotland in last 2 years
- 3rd highest holiday nights spent in Scotland
- 2nd lowest holiday nights abroad
- Like to plan where to go on holidays (but can be spontaneous!)
- Like to be active on holiday

WARM 3: Mature Devotees

Mature Devotees are mid and lower affluence, older couples from the North of England and Scotland, who are particularly committed to holidaying in Scotland, spending the most nights here of all the segments. They are a little below average for spend on holidays in general, but Scotland takes a disproportionate share of their spend.

When they go away, they tend to take longer breaks, often touring in their own car, sometimes with a caravan, or arranging accommodation directly in a B&B or small hotel, quite possibly somewhere they already know, as they like to revisit special places. They think of Scotland as an affordable destination, and are no doubt good at seeking out offers. The internet has passed them by.

Profile

- 1.9 million households in UK
- Northern based – 80% Yorkshire & above
- Low affluence
- Oldest segment (average age 50)
- High percentage retired
- Traditional in outlook

Holiday Behaviour

- Holidays focussed on UK
- Low-medium total holiday spend
- Highest no. of Scotland nights
- 81% visited Scotland in last year
- Guest houses/B&Bs/small hotels (3*)
- Will seek out offers
- Like to explore local area, tour & watch wildlife (by car)

WARM 4: Affluent Active Devotees

Affluent Active Devotees enjoy living life to the full, taking plenty of short breaks and occasional longer holidays. They are well-travelled experience-seekers. They will revisit special places, but also try new destinations, and they make sure they mark special occasions. Whilst they like to plan where they go, they are also quite spontaneous, and will often book accommodation close to time of travel, reflecting their confidence and knowledge. Some of them use the internet actively, for convenience, booking accommodation online, whilst others are less internet-savvy. Scotland is a close destination for them, and one they love. They are the highest spenders of all on Scottish holidays. This is because they participate in activities, including golf and other sports, but also because they treat themselves to the finer things in life: preferring to stay in hotels, and enjoying good food and drink.

Profile

- 1.4 million households in UK
- Northern based – 80%; 48% Scottish
- High affluence
- 2nd oldest segment (average age 50)
- Upmarket & traditional
- Financially savvy
- Enjoy finer things in life
- Eat in good restaurants
- Medium internet use

Holiday Behaviour

- 2nd highest total holiday spend
- Adventurous in foreign travel
- UK neutral, Scotland loyal
- Scotland high share of spend
- 85% visited Scotland in last year
- Stay in hotels (quality – boutique)
- Enjoy good food & drink
- Enjoy active pursuits on holiday
- Like to plan where to go but will also book last minute

Cold 1: Southern Travel Junkies

They believe Scotland is difficult to get to, and, like the rest of the UK, is not particularly good value for money compared with destinations abroad.

Cold 5: Northern Sometimers

They prefer to travel abroad for holidays whenever they can afford to, as they believe the UK does not offer good value for money. They also believe that it is easier to plan a holiday abroad than stay in the UK. They are slightly warmer towards Scotland than the rest of the UK.

Other Path Networks

Nethy Bridge

A network of eight waymarked footpaths runs through the village of Nethy Bridge. There are links with Granttown-on-Spey and Boat of Garten via the Speyside Way, and also links to the RSPB Osprey Centre and the Strathspey Steam railway's Broomhill Station. They are named after local features rather than the local environmental qualities

Carrbridge

3 walks around Carrbridge, but again they are based on local names and provide a woodland experience but do not theme the walks on this basis

Landmark Centre

red squirrel trail, treetop trail, wild forest maze, timber trail, microtrail

Where else in the UK can you rock climb, 'skydive', flume ride, meet wild red squirrels face to face, walk through the tops of tall pine trees, watch logs being sawn on a steam powered sawmill, wonder at the sheer strength of a Clydesdale horse, explore the hidden microscopic universe and learn all the secrets of Scotland's ancient Pine forest all in one day?

Grantown

Anagach woods website doesn't identify the walk themes

Most info is about the history and ecology; website does not give info about walks, you have to buy the leaflet.

Rothiemurchus Trails

Enjoy some of the most beautiful scenery in Scotland on foot. Rothiemurchus has a 50km network of carefully maintained paths which take you through beautiful forest, around stunning lochs and to the foot of vast mountains. Rothiemurchus is home to a wealth of different plants and animals such as; Red Squirrels, Pine Martens, Red Deer and rare birds such as Crossbills, Crested Tits and Capercaillie.

Lochs Walk	3 miles	1-1 .5 hrs
The Quiet Walk	3.1 miles	1-1 .5 hrs
Views of the Mountains Walk	5.6 miles	2-3 hrs

Glenmore Forest

The Loch Trail	1.1 miles
Ryvoan Trail	4.5 miles
Rieunachan Walk	1.2 miles
Allt Mor Forest Trail	3 miles
Lochan nan Nathrach	3.5 miles
The Woodland Trail	1.5 miles
Allt Mor All-Abilities Trail	0.2 miles

Appendix 10:

The following general guidance should be followed as you move forward to implementation of this interpretation plan. This good practice checklist is taken from years of experience from practitioners in Scotland and can be found on the Scottish Natural Heritage website. (<http://www.snh.org.uk/www/Interpretation/pdf/goodpractice.pdf>)

Follow this and it will help you produce good quality, effective interpretation.

1. An interpretation plan is essential.
Without knowing why, what, who for, when, and how you should interpret, you'll be in a right muddle.
2. Know your visitors and do what's right for them.
Don't just interpret what you are interested in.
3. Make sure you relate to your audience,
and that they can connect with what you want to say.
4. Each piece of interpretation should communicate a single, clear message or idea.
This is the main 'theme' of your interpretation, and can hook your visitors into a more detailed story.
5. Don't interpret everything.
Some things are best left for people to discover or wonder at for themselves.
6. Get specialist help if you're not sure what you're doing.
Interpretation looks easy, but is difficult to do well.
7. Don't assume that your visitors know much about what you are interpreting, but don't underestimate their intelligence either.
8. Dull and boring is bad.
Fun and provocative is good.
9. Be prepared to take risks -
Your visitors are not cautious bureaucrats but normal people who will enjoy being excited, amused, challenged and entertained.
10. Stimulate all the senses.
What can your visitors see, hear, feel, smell and taste?
11. Be interactive.
Get your visitors doing things and playing games.
12. Don't preach.
You may want to change people's attitudes or behaviour, but it pays to be subtle and to let people think for themselves.
13. Layer your interpretation so that everyone gets the message,
Regardless of how bothered they can be to read / watch / listen to or do the whole thing.
14. People like stories and puzzles,
Even simple ones such as 'how the anemone got its legs'.
15. Mix your media:

Don't rely on ever more panels and leaflets.

16. A 'book on the wall' is a definite no-no.
Keep any text short and sharp.
17. Think about how accessible your interpretation is.
Can people get to it, and then can they understand it?
18. Good design is part of your message,
But bad design will obscure it. Don't be seduced into doing something that looks good
but isn't easy to read.
19. Don't spend all your money on a nice-looking building only to run out of money when it
comes to the interpretation inside. Your real 'product' is the interpretation, not the
building.
20. Do encourage your visitors to explore further.
Link your site to a relevant facility such as your local museum.
22. Do include responsibilities and budgets for maintaining the interpretation in
your annual work programme.
23. Do measure how well your interpretation is working.
24. And finally,
Once you've learned all the rules, be prepared to creatively 'bend' them. The most
successful interpretation is often deliberately 'different'.