

# CHANCE TO ENJOY

**ON TRACK:** Walkers get fit and enjoy the lovely surroundings.



## Event combines appreciating region and creative talent

ATHLETICS and art will be combined in a unique endurance event planned later this year.

Up to 100 people are expected to take part in the Slow Marathon 2017 – a 26-mile course passing through some key North-east attractions near Huntly.

Launched in 2012, the event was the brainchild of Ethiopian Mihret Kebede, who had an artist's residency in Huntly.

### EVENTS

By Louise Aitken

The event was inspired by the 6,000-mile distance between her home in Ethiopia and Aberdeenshire, and she asked 225 people to traverse the marathon distance of 26 miles in Scotland and Ethiopia.

She also wanted to get more people interested in the great outdoors and the landscapes around them.

Over the past five years, a different artist has planned a route with a special theme.

German artist and sculptor Andrea Geile has been working on this year's route since August.

Also a keen hill walker, she says the event immediately sparked her interest.

Andrea said: "I started hill walking and mountaineering as a teenager.

"When I heard about this I was straight away interested to learn about the people and thinking behind it.

"I like the idea of walking as an artistic and cerebral process and not just a fitness challenge."

This year's Slow Marathon theme is Energy Landscape.

Andrea has created several sculptures inspired by this theme which will appear along the 26-mile route.

Walkers taking part in the April 15 event will set off from the Correen Hills area to the south east of Huntly.

From there the route will pass through a windfarm site, on to the famous standing stones in Ardlair, and then to Leith Hall near Kennethmont.

Walkers will then make their way over Gartly Moor and finish their trek in Huntly.

Andrea says her selected locations combine a mix of modern day manmade energy, like turbines, and the power of ancient structures, such as standing stones.

She said: "The route itself will be quite twisted and surprisingly variable and passing some interesting sites.

"It's fantastic to get to know the Huntly landscape while exploring some of the ancient and contemporary sites.

"I walked sections of potential routes with local people and sometimes they are showing me places they think have a certain energy about them."



**STEPPING OUT:** Walkers on last year's route.

# ART OF WALKING



**26-MILE SLOW MARATHON STARTS HERE**



**MAPPED OUT:** Those taking part will follow a route round some of the area's natural and manmade wonders.



Organised by Huntly-based Deveron Projects, the event is open to all. But project manager Joss Allen is keen to stress the challenge isn't a walk in the park. He said: "In previous years we've had people use the event to prepare for running marathons. "So we do need people to have a good level of walking fitness. "It usually takes an average of 10 hours to complete the route and people are expected to use a map to find their way."

Walkers will be provided with their maps the night before the Slow Marathon, at a registration event held at The Gordon Arms Hotel in Huntly on Friday, April 14. Anyone interested in taking part can buy tickets at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/slow-marathon-2017-energy-landscape-tickets-30291780531>

[laitken@ajl.co.uk](mailto:laitken@ajl.co.uk)

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