



News Release

Huntly, the town with “room to roam”, launches annual Walking Festival

The town of Huntly – motto “room to roam” - sits in the heart of rural Aberdeenshire. It boasts a plethora of high and low level country walks which are complemented by town heritage and art trails. To encourage more local residents to enjoy the glories of their local landscape and to raise the profile of the town as an ideal base for walking holidays Huntly is to hold its first ever Walking Festival in the Spring of 2010. A joint venture between the Huntly Development Trust, Huntly and District Tourism Action Group and Deveron Arts, the event will see a programme of walking based events taking place in and around the town over the weekend of **16 – 18 April 2010**.

Announcing the Festival Carolina Kenny said:

“Huntly has many different tracks and trails ranging from those that will appeal to seasoned walkers to those for people wishing to take a gentle stroll. The town sits in the heart of rural Aberdeenshire with stunning views across the area from the top of the nearby Cabrach hill. The banks of the River Deveron meanwhile are teeming with wild life. Our annual Walking Festival will be both an chance for residents to enjoy their local landscape and an opportunity for visitors to come and taste the delights that a walking holiday in Huntly can offer.”

As part of the Walking Festival **Deveron Arts** will host a visit by **Hamish Fulton**. A leading artist of his generation Fulton, along with Richard Long and Gilbert and George, led the movement to explore new forms of sculpture and landscape art where the focus is on the art as an expression of the experience of the landscape. He believes that art does not necessarily have to be tied to the production of objects

Other artists pick up a paintbrush or reach for the camera when they want to start work.

Hamish Fulton puts on his walking boots.

The Guardian

In 1969 Fulton followed in the footsteps of Sitting Bull, in a walk over the Little Big Horn battlefield in Montana since which time he has crossed vast tracts of the planet, visiting some of the remotest

places on earth documenting them only in photographs and text. Fulton's latest walk will set out from Huntly during the Walking Festival and ending in Tomintoul thus linking the town to the Cairngorms National Park.

The Walking Festival will culminate in a **mass sponsored walk** to raise money for a range of local charities. The town has had a tangible experience of the value of local charities in recent weeks following November's floods which saw over 100 people evacuated from their homes when the river Deveron burst its banks. *"We want to encourage as many people as possible to enjoy the countryside around Huntly and at the same time support local charities,"* explains Walk co-ordinator, Nathalie Grant. *"We have devised two circuits– a shorter local one in Huntly and a longer route between Huntly and Keith for the more energetic walkers."*

Full details of the Festival programme will be unveiled in the coming weeks with the launch of www.huntlywalks.com. Any charity wishing to participate in the sponsored walk should contact Natalie Grant on hadtag.events@hotmail.co.uk

Events

Fri: 16th April 2010

- Walking this Way? A walk with wheelchairs; with Norma Hunter

Sat: 17th April 2010

- 10 am **Can Walking be Art?** Arts Breakfast with Hamish Fulton and Mary Jane Jacob, Ex-Servicemen's Club, Huntly
- 2 pm **Choreographed Walk** with Hamish Fulton, the Square, Huntly
- 7 pm Walker's Ceilidh, Gordon Arms Hotel, Huntly

Sun 18th April 2010

- 10 am: Hamish will start his walk to the Cairngorms (**21 Days in the Cairngorms**); anybody who likes can join the start of the walk on the day.
- Mass Sponsored Walk from Huntly to Keith

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For further press information on the Walking Festival contact:

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Notes for Editors

- Huntly recently gained **Walkers are Welcome** status - only the 3rd town in Scotland to be recognised by the this innovative community-led scheme
- The Walking Festival is sponsored by **The Getabout Partnership, Forestry Commission, Ricola, Dean's of Huntly and Hilltrek Outdoor Clothing,**
- A follow up organisation to Aberdeenshire Towns Partnership (ATP) Huntly, the **Huntly Development Trust** was set up in May 2009 to lead the town's economic and social development. www.huntly.net
- The **Huntly and District Tourism Action Group** (HADTAG) aims to improve the experience of visitors coming to the area. Formed in 2006 the group comprises local businesses in the tourism sector along with other enthusiasts with a passion to help visitors get the most out of their stay in the town.
- **Deveron Arts**, the acclaimed Huntly based organization, has led the way in taking art out of the gallery with the town itself is becoming the venue for a wide range of visual and performing arts events. Deveron Arts invites artists from all over the world to live and work in the town to meet with local people and exchange ideas on issues of both local and global concern. In the last year resident artists have come from as far afield as South Africa, China and Mozambique as well as Scotland. The latest residencies will see leading visual/performance artist David Sherry exploring how of Health & Safety is encroaching into every area of our lives (the residency will culminate in the *Risk Averse Festival* on 20th March) and musician Shona Donaldson researching the rich archive of Bothy Ballads in the *Bogie's Bonnie Belle* project (performances will be staged at both the 2010 Doric and sound Festivals). **For further information visit www.deveron-arts.com**

Supported by:

SAC, Henry Moore Foundation, Aberdeenshire Council, Leader Cairngorms, Aberdeenshire Leader, Gordon Forum for the Arts, Scottish National Heritage, Walkers Are Welcome

deveronarts
the town is the venue

Huntly
Development Trust

HADTAG