

# JOHN O' GROATS TRAIL

Coastal walking route from  
Inverness to John o' Groats



## News vol. 9 no. 4: Hostel opens in Berriedale



### *A note from the chair*

This is just a quick update. Volunteers and contractors are slashing and strimming, to keep the trail open. Read below the excellent interview by volunteer and trustee Tricia (photo above, along with her husband Ian, trustee John, and me) of trail walker and blogger Emma.

An old house in Berriedale has become a trail walkers hostel.

Nothing fancy, but it'll keep you dry, and we'll try to keep you fed and happy.

As always... Happy Trails!

Jay Wilson, Chair

## ***Berriedale accommodation opens!***

Welcome to the Halfway House, the only nightly accommodation in Berriedale.

Recently purchased and ready to serve the needs of walkers, it fills the gap in accommodation between Helmsdale and Dunbeath. Helmsdale to Berriedale is one of the harder stages due to rough terrain, so walkers often have wished there were a place to stay after the nine tough but beautiful miles (fourteen km). Now there is!



The interior is nothing fancy, but there are three bedrooms, and there will be twin and double rooms available. There is a full bathroom (bath and shower available), and also a small separate toilet.



There's a level grassy area behind the house suitable for tents, and tent campers will have access to facilities inside the house.



And of course, you'll have the amazing Berriedale views from the lounge!



I hope the Halfway House will become a place where trail walkers heading both north and south can gather, refresh themselves, and discuss their walking experiences in a relaxed atmosphere. Hopefully it will not only shelter walkers where shelter is needed, but serve a greater need by nurturing the sense of community along the trail.

Please book the Halfway House in advance. You can call, text, or WhatsApp Jay on 07526281088 or email [halfwayhouse@jogt.org.uk](mailto:halfwayhouse@jogt.org.uk) or contact us through the trail web site. Profits from the Halfway House will go to help build the trail.

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😊 **Join the John o' Groats Trail!** 😊



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## 💛 Keep in Touch Initiative 💛

Hundreds of walkers achieve their ambitions of walking the John o' Groats Trail every year, and we're keen to ensure that walkers can share their memories and experiences with one another.

Our trustee Patricia Pearl has been collating stories from those who have walked the Trail, and this month Patricia has been in touch with Emma of [mylegshurt.co.uk](http://mylegshurt.co.uk) on the web and [@MyLegsHurt.co.uk](https://www.instagram.com/MyLegsHurt.co.uk) on Instagram, who is walking her way round the coastline of Britain.



**Above:** *Emma walking just south of Berriedale*

**Patricia:** When did you walk the Trail?

**Emma:** *I started the trail in August to September last year and finished it in March this year.*

*To be clear it didn't take me half a year to finish it (despite my coastal trek already taking longer than I anticipated)—I had a break in Edinburgh at the end of September to March to work and save a bit of money.*

*I remember starting at John O'Groats in glorious sunshine, and encountering every kind of weather until I finished in Inverness, also luckily in glorious sunshine which felt like I'd come full circle despite the linear nature of the trail.*

*Scotland already has a lot of weather, "Four seasons in one day" locals have repeatedly told me as I've made my way around the country, but it was incredible to rejoin the John O'Groats trail during winter and see snow-capped mountains in lieu of sunshine and mushrooms, and experience the trail in a completely new way.*

**Patricia:** Where is your home base ?

*me where I'm from and occasionally we get stuck in an almost infinite loop of "Where are you from?" "Surrey" "I said where are you from?", which has genuinely happened more times than I can count.*

*Currently my home base is wherever I set up my little tent. I'm currently working my way down the East coast of Scotland.*



**Patricia:** What motivated you to walk the Trail ?

**Emma:** *I've been doing a walk around the coast for over a year now and am always delighted to come across a well-marked coastal trail. It's reassuring knowing despite how perilous some of the cliff paths look, they have been walked before and the little arrow reminds me I'm on the right track.*

*out. I have a lot of gratitude for those who keep the paths maintained.*



**Patricia:** Any good experiences on the Trail?

*Emma - Oh plenty. There's been some absolutely stunning camping spots, I've had seals swim alongside me as I walked along the beach, I even managed to catch some of the Northern Lights, although at the time I was only nipping out*



**Patricia:** Did anything go wrong?

**Emma:** *Walking every day means your shoes and socks will wear out faster than usual. I noticed I had a hole in my waterproof socks which basically rendered them useless. I tried to make my own waterproof socks using plastic bags and Sellotape but this wasn't particularly effective and I had to deal with wet feet for about a week.*



**Patricia:** Thank you so much Emma for taking the time to Keep in Touch. We wish you well with the rest of your adventure and will look out for you on [Instagram](#) which is lots of fun to read with your wonderful photos to enjoy.



Keep in Touch; our Trustee Patricia has been keeping in touch with people from far and wide who have walked the Trail. Email her if you'd like to tell your story.

[keepintouch@jogt.org.uk](mailto:keepintouch@jogt.org.uk)

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### Volunteers and AGM Date

Finally, thanks are due to all the trail volunteers, including the wardens who are our eyes and ears on the trail. In the summer especially, we need as many reports as possible of what's going on along the trail, especially how high the vegetation is. Email Ken at [manager@jogt.org.uk](mailto:manager@jogt.org.uk) to update us.

yet to be determined!

Also, please save the date for our AGM, which this year will be in Wick on Thursday, 26 October at 7:30 pm. All members are welcome!

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**That's all folks!**

I kept in short this time, so you can go outside and have fun now, and so can I!

-Jay

*If you have any questions about walking the trail, volunteering, or donating, please don't hesitate to reply to this email or contact us via the information below.*

**Contact us:**

**Email:** [manager@jogt.org.uk](mailto:manager@jogt.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 07528675774

**Website:** [www.jogt.org.uk](http://www.jogt.org.uk)

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