

JOHN O' GROATS TRAIL

Coastal walking route from
Inverness to John o' Groats



News vol. 9 no. 6: Season's Greetings!



A note from the chair

After an amazing year in which we kept the trail open all summer and also built many new bridges and stiles, you'd think we'd be resting on our laurels come autumn... Instead Ken has been busy developing our

If you walked the trail this year, or at any time in the past, you may want to purchase one of these, which will also support our ongoing efforts.

Thanks for your support and I hope

As always... Happy Trails!

Jay Wilson, Chair

👟 Walkers Report 👟

After a summer of slashing and strimming and an autumn of organising bridges and stiles being built, the Trail looked in fantastic shape.

The latter half of 2023 saw bridges and stiles installed at Nybster, Wick, Niandt (below) and Sarclet - with more on the horizon. Work was made possible thanks to grants from the [Bad a Cheo Fund](#), the Council Ward Discretionary Fund and [Tannach & District Fund](#).



Huge thanks to the volunteers, especially Martin Polson for his construction of stiles at Keiss (below), and especially to the contractors Andy Pope and Iain Maclean in their assistance for this. And, of course, to the landowners who made it all possible to begin with!



The area north of Keiss has often proved to be a challenge, and so it was great to get the blessing of the landowner(s) towards trail improvements - four bridges in one day!

Big thanks to Andy, Iain and Trail Warden Owain Jones for helping out here.



One example can be found at Culgower, where we once had a lovely bridge:



After various storms though, our coast took a battering - and that also means that our infrastructure was hit pretty hard.

You'll note in the second image below that all that remains of poor Culgower Bridge - just the handrail!

So, while we work with a local contractor to get this bridge re-installed, in the meantime we advise caution when crossing this burn.



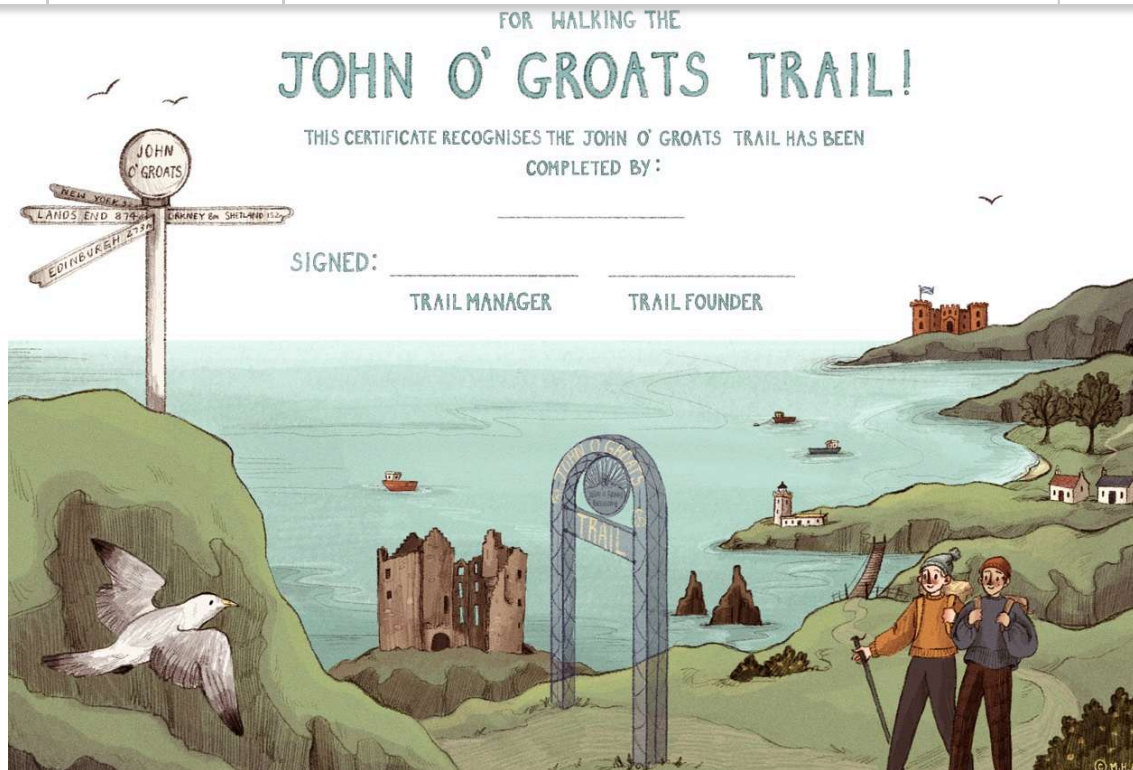
All of this work takes time, effort - and perhaps most importantly of all... money.

So, donations towards Trail infrastructure improvements are very much welcome - if you can spare a few pennies, then please donate towards trail improvements on the link below:

[DONATE TO THE TRAIL](#)

✔ **Completed the Trail?** ✔

...then get your TRAIL CERTIFICATE!



Have you completed the John o' Groats Trail?

Celebrate this fantastic achievement with a beautifully-designed, high-quality certificate of completion - a perfect present for an ambling aficionado!

Beautifully illustrated by Scottish designer [Morvern Anderson Art](#), this A4-sized certificate is printed on luxurious textured card, and looks lovely as a framed print, or even just to hang on the fridge. It's your call.

The certificate cost £10 and includes P&P (to UK), so please ensure that your donation is £10 or more.

£11 for Europe (price includes P&P)

£12 for Canada/America/Australia (price includes P&P)

Please remember to email manager@jogt.org.uk with your name and address so we can post this out to you.

To buy yours, just click on the link below:

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/JOGTcertificate>

John o' Groats Trail Guidebooks - a Great Gift!

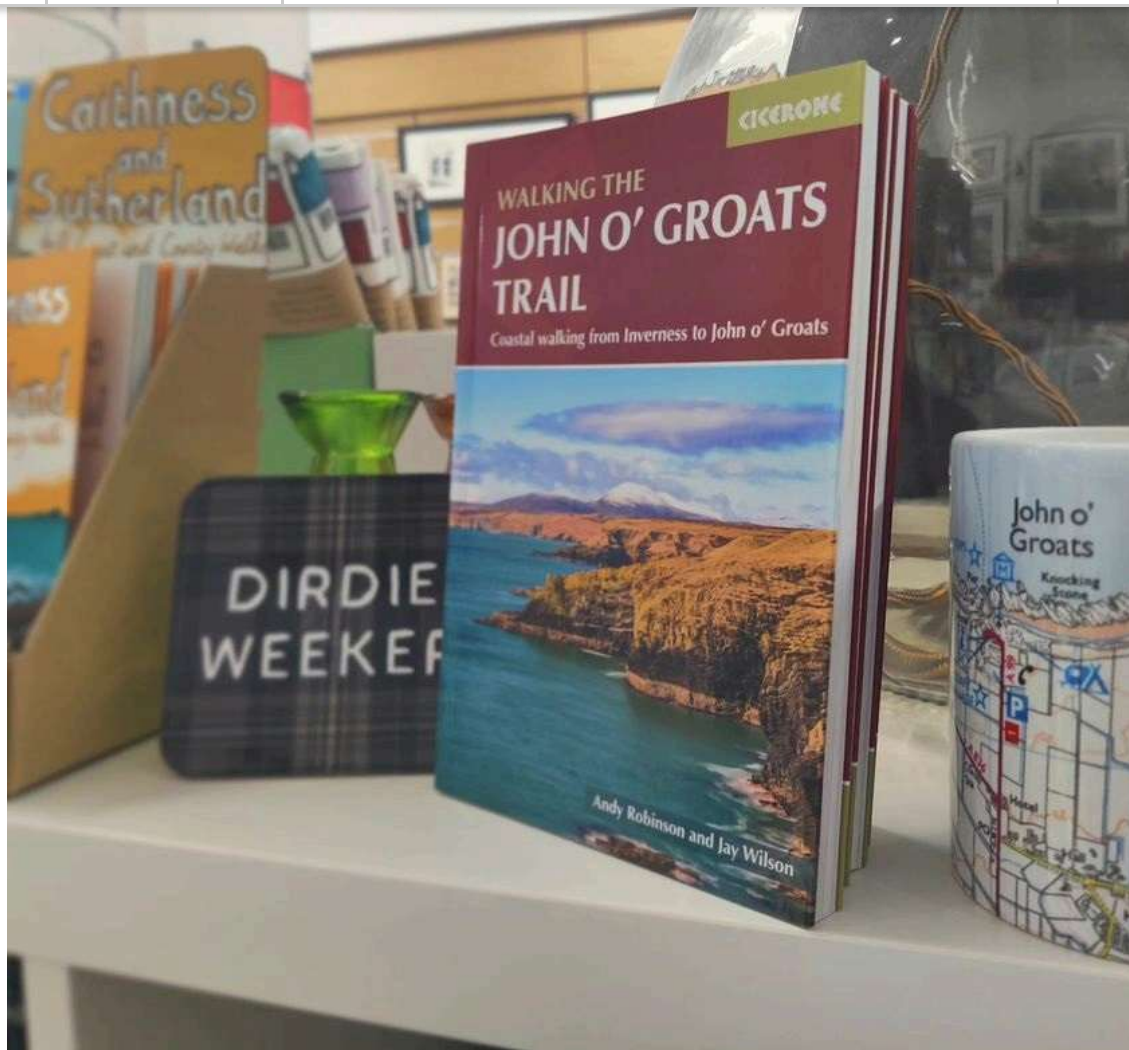
Guides for Trail walking - to fill those stockings!

Our lovely Cicerone JOGT guidebooks are now available to buy in Thurso from the lovely purveyors of local crafts and gifts [Coo's Tail Gallery](#).

Whether you're a Dirdie Seeker or Teanabowlie, our guidebook is the perfect hiking-sock filler.

If you're not in the Caithness area, then you can also pick them up from the [Dornoch Book Shop](#) and several other outlets - or why not get one online? The JOGT gets 10% from every sale if you use the link below:

[**Get Your JOGT Guidebook Here!**](#)



Walking the Trail Next Year?

Don't forget to book our Half Way Hostel, located just north of Berriedale. A cheap but cheerful way to hunker down for an evening on the Trail - details below!



Please book the Halfway House in advance. You can call, text, or WhatsApp Jay on 07526281088 or email halfwayhouse@jogt.org.uk or contact us through the trail web site. We're also on Facebook, search for "Halfway House Berriedale". Income from the Halfway House will go to help build the trail.

😊 Join the John o' Groats Trail! 😊

Membership is crucial to the survival and sustainability of the Trail. It allows us to demonstrate support for the Trail to funders - and so it means our applications for larger pots of money are strengthened by the local or walking community!



**YOU DON'T NEED A POT OF GOLD
TO SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY.**

(...I MEAN, THAT'D BE NICE.)

**BUT WITH JUST £10,
YOU CAN HELP TO
ACHIEVE SPECIAL
THINGS!**

**VISIT WWW.JOGT.ORG.UK TO
JOIN AS A MEMBER TODAY AND
HELP SUPPORT THE JOHN
O'GROATS TRAIL!**

So - your £10 a year can help us access £10,000 and more! Just click on the link below to join - it's quick and easy.

Join as a member! Just visit our [Membership Page](#) and join for only £10 a year!

🌵 Arizona Ambles 🌵

One of our trustees, Brian Dickson, recently walked the Arizona Trail. Here's Brian's walker report - on a Trail which is only 653 miles longer than the John o' Groats Trail...



"I recently hiked the 800 mile [Arizona Trail](#) from the Utah stateline in the north to the Mexican border. Overall it was an incredible walk through a diverse mix of desert and high mountains including a Grand Canyon crossing. Wildlife was rich with sightings such as lynx, bobcat, elk, deer, many tarantulas and the unforgettable evening serenade of howling coyotes. Another hiker even had a close encounter drinking coffee one morning finding a scorpion in her mouth-yuck!"



The trail itself is enviably well built and maintained, with cast iron signs and gates. It was opened in 2006 and has massive support from government agencies, non-profits, volunteers, and 'Gateway Communities'. It was amazing that almost everyone I spoke to had heard of the trail and were enthusiastic about it.



I wild camped most of the way, made easier by mostly moderate autumnal dry weather -only one day with rain (!). My favourite moments were hiking pre dawn watching the sun rise in the morning, the shadows of the wonderful saguaro cactus lengthening before dark and the incredibly clear starry nights from the tent.

[Photos here](#) for anyone interested in more!

 **KEEP IN TOUCH!** 



Let's Keep in Touch; our Trustee Patricia has been interviewing people from far and wide who have walked the Trail - we'd love to hear from you! Please email Patricia if you'd like to tell your JOGT story.

Volunteer Day

In October we installed new marker posts along the Badbea > Ousdale section, and helped bash through a section of gorse along the Helmsdale loop north of Navidale, with volunteers from [RSPB Forsinard Nature Reserve!](#)

A wet start to the day, but it soon cleared up into glorious sunshine. Lovely to swap tales with one another and learn about what's going on in the interior of the county. A fine day.

Look out for more volunteering events - or, if you're an organisation and you'd like to do something with us, just drop us a line!



Happy Trails!

Thanks for reading this. Now go outside!

-Jay

don't hesitate to reply to this email or contact us via the information below.

Donate today to help keep the trail open this summer:

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/jogt-summer-trimming>

Contact us:

Email: manager@jogt.org.uk

Telephone: 07528675774

Website: www.jogt.org.uk

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