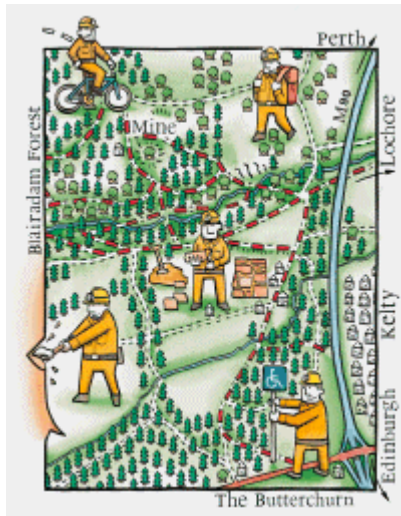


## KELTY



### Summary

- Kelty and Blairadam Forest lie on either side of the M90 between the Forth Bridge and Perth
- Blairadam Forest extends to 2584 hectares, mainly commercial larch and pine approaching the end of the first rotation plus 30% broadleaves.
- The forest is owned and managed by Forest Enterprise with input from the local community, especially on the trails.
- The Heritage Trails group manages the project on behalf of the Kelty Partnership.
- The Kelty Partnership is a partnership of organisations, some community and others from local government, with an interest in the Kelty area.
- The key aim is to develop work opportunities whilst improving Kelty's image.
- The project was born in 1997.

**Why ?** The Kelty Heritage Trails project represents the coming together of a variety of different initiatives in the area. Perhaps the most potent of these was the Lindsay Memorial Committee, composed of ex-miners, who had raised funds to erect a memorial and a statue to those killed in a local mining disaster. They were looking for a suitable way of using the remaining funds to commemorate the local mining industry whilst improving the outlook of the local community.

At the same time several other things were happening. The Kelty Partnership, including Fife Council, was looking for projects to improve the social and economic conditions in the village. Fife Council Planning Services was looking at developing footpath and cycle routes in the area and Forest Enterprise was consulting with local people over the management of the adjoining Blairadam Forest. The Lochore Meadows Ranger Service had had their remit extended to cover land outside of the Country Park.

**Who ?** Kelty is located beside the M90, midway between Edinburgh and Perth. It has a population of 5500 with very strong links to the mining industry. As with all

former mining communities, there is high unemployment and related social and economic problems. Yet there is a strong sense of community and in recent years a plethora of community development groups have arisen.

Foremost amongst these is the Kelty Partnership which is a partnership between various organisations operating in Kelty. It sets up sub groups to target specific initiatives. One such is the Special Projects Group which has the aim of improving the environment, raising awareness, improving access to the countryside, promoting interest in the rich local heritage and catering for the needs of people with disabilities. It has 16 members on its Board of Management and its own simple constitution. The idea came up of developing a network of trails around the village to actively involve the community and attract visitors to the area. The Kelty Heritage Trails project was born in 1997.

The secretary of the Lindsay Memorial Committee, Archie Campbell, himself a retired miner, became the chair of the Heritage Trails project. He commented, 'People gave generously towards remembering the Lindsay Disaster and we feel that it is appropriate to acknowledge the social, economic and environmental impact of mining in this area. Hopefully, our contribution will enable the Committee to secure other funding and we certainly intend to participate in this venture.'

**What ?** Most of the proposed trails link westwards, across the M90, to the adjoining Forest Enterprise's Blairadam Forest and extend through part of that forest. Other proposed trails run eastwards to link with Lochore Meadows Country Park.

The forest, which extends to 2584 hectares, consists mainly of commercial conifer species managed as a crop but there are some mixed areas, high in wildlife value, especially along the burn-sides. Larch accounts for 45% of the area, pines 20% and broadleaves (with beech predominating) for nearly 30%. Most of the conifers are approaching harvesting. There is also evidence of old mineworkings.

**Vision ?** The long term vision for the project is ambitious; the development of the trails is just a start. Together with the trails are associated artworks, play areas and picnic sites. A Heritage Interpretation Centre is being planned as well as a permanent educational/ arts resource in the forest. Most excitingly, is the possible development of community controlled businesses linked to the trails. These businesses will complement existing businesses in the area. The details are in the Business Plan 1999 – 2002.

The group believes that the poor image of Kelty (home of the Kelty Clippie) is undeserved and can be greatly improved through the Heritage Trails and other projects. The natural resources of the area and its industrial heritage are excellent and can be managed to draw in visitors from the surrounding towns and Edinburgh. Already the nearby Butterchurn restaurant and craft centre attracts 120000 people per year, Lochore Meadows Country Park 325000 people per year. As the visitors increase, it is hoped this will encourage an improvement in the facilities of the town and a boost to local businesses.

Archie Campbell described how the forest is rich in memories and stories for the local people; how his father and grandfather took him for walks there when he was young

and told him about the characters out of Sir Walter Scott's novels who are associated with the area.

The objectives for the project are laid out in the Business Plan:

1. Improve Kelty's image.
2. Develop work opportunities.
3. Encourage community participation.
4. Improve the local environment.
5. Record the social, industrial and natural heritage of Kelty.
6. Establishment of links with other areas.
7. Cater for special needs groups.

**How ?** The project began when Kelty Partnership set up its Special Projects Group which then adopted the Heritage Trails concept as its first project. The woodland continues to belong to Forest Enterprise which is very open to approaches from the local community. Representatives of FE have been attending meetings of the Heritage Trails group since the idea was first mooted. The FE Land Agent plays a key role in drawing up the permissions.

The **milestones** have been:

1. Setting up the project in 1997.
2. The support of the Lindsay Memorial Committee.
3. The preparation of the Heritage Trails Business Plan 1999-2000.
4. A successful (despite the rain) Smashing Brashing Day in April 1999 with brashing footpaths, woodturning, Pictish art, stone drilling, medieval weaving and Victorian feather writing.
5. The signing of the partnership agreement with Fife Council's Vocational Training Section in December 1999.

Progress has been smooth to date, partly due to Fife's track record with community development projects. One **challenge** quoted was the delay of organisations in replying to funding applications. This can play havoc with the projected cashflow.

**Greatest achievements ?** It's a bit early to say, but the group is pleased with the support of the community and of all the partner organisations. The majority of the management group turn up at every meeting and everyone including the local councillor seems to want to support this popular project. The challenging part is maintaining communication with such a wide group of interested parties.

**Sources of help and advice ?** Many skills reside within the group and the Community Education Service which supports it. Specialised interests include rambling, local heritage and youth groups. One of the greatest skills is knowing who the key people are in different organisations and being able to ensure steady progress. The group itself is supported by the partner organisations of the Kelty Partnership which includes all the relevant sections of Fife Council, such as the Economic Development Service. All of these organisations have been found to be helpful. There is also a good working relationship developing with Forest Enterprise, which has safeguarded footpaths during felling activities and consulted over restocking

plans. Other landowners affected by the proposals have been consulted at an early stage.

One skill which is being brought in is the training and supervision of the 10 local people who are going to be trained on a 6 month contract.

Funding has been obtained from a wide variety of sources- Fife Environment Trust, East of Scotland European Programme (Rechar), Fife Enterprise, the Employment Service (via New Deal), SNH and the miners' memorial fund. The Scottish Rights of Way Society has offered to put up sign posts, paid for by the Scottish Sports Council. Forest Enterprise will be carrying out a great deal of the associated work. Raising funds has been helped by the existence of the Partnership.

A key part of Phase 1 is the provision of the 10 New Deal places for local long term unemployed young people. They will be paid the going wage for the job. As well as the 'development of work skills within a challenging work environment', the participants will be given every help to get permanent work. The project will act as a stepping stone to give the participants an employment history, customised training (partially at college), job search training and placements.

**Future activities ?** The project is in three phases with the first phase due to start in January 2000. Phase 1 projects include:

- The development of the initial trails in Blairadam Forest with the construction and upgrading of paths, provision of signs and panels, construction of bridges and planting of shrubs.
- The development of work opportunities for long term unemployed Keltie residents under New Deal funding.
- Promotion of local businesses and the establishment of a traders' association.
- The painting of a mural on a motorway bridge, the installation of sculptures, the design of the interpretation panels and a community video.
- The publication of an information leaflet and placing of promotional material elsewhere.

Phase 2 takes the project further with:

- Further trails into the forest and linking with Lochore Meadows.
- Development of a Heritage Interpretation Centre.
- Development of community controlled businesses.
- Development of barbecue areas, play areas and a youth shelter.
- Employment of a part-time ranger
- Further arts installations and residencies.

Phase 3 is as far forward as the business plan looks with:

- Starting up the community businesses.
- Development of a permanent educational/ arts resource.
- Development of links to wider features and visitor attractions.
- Further arts developments.

This is a major project which is expected to make a significant difference to the quality of life, employment prospects and economic viability of the local community. As such, it is expected to run on until its various parts become self-sustaining. Enthusiasm in the local community is high at present and this is underpinned by the active participation of the partner organisations. Individuals in the management group are likely to come and go and the constitution helps to ensure continuity.

**Lessons for others ?** The lesson is to work with as many interested parties as possible and to somehow give them all a sense of ownership of the project. The fact that the project is embedded in the local community is vital.

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