

**Forth Estuary Forum 22nd Annual Conference
Routes of the Forth
19th November 2015**

Presentation Summaries and "Soap Box" Topics

On the Edge: the physical impact of the railways on the Forth

Professor Rob Duck Dundee University

The building of railways in the nineteenth century has had a profound but largely ignored physical impact on Britain's coasts. This talk explores the coming of railways to the fringes of the Forth and the transformation of its coasts through the destruction or damage to the environment. In many places today, such as Culross and Burntisland, railways are the first defence against the sea. It is ironic, at a time when climate change is very much favouring rail as a means of transport, that many lines are increasingly exposed to extreme weather and the very actions associated with their construction have exacerbated attack by the sea. With the benefit of hindsight, many coastal railways have been built in locations that would not have been chosen today. As our climate changes and storminess potentially increases, what might be the implications for the Forth?

Bird Migration Routes

David Anderson RSPA/Inner Forth Landscape Initiative

The Inner Forth Estuary can be a fantastic area for wildlife at any time in the year, however it is only during the winter when it truly comes in to its own. From September onwards the mudflats and saltmarshes that line the river suddenly burst in to life as thousands upon thousands of wildfowl and waders descend in to the area, creating a stunning wildlife spectacle.

But why do they come here? Where do they come from? And what can we do to ensure that the Inner Forth continues to give nature a home? This talk will explore these questions and demonstrate why this particular 'route of the Forth' makes the area so special for wildlife.

The North Berwick/Anstruther ferry

Tom Brock and Scott Aston

Linking Anstruther and North Berwick in less than an hour, the first season of this new ferry service has proved to be a great success. Used by both locals and tourists, the service has proved very popular and has benefited people and businesses in both Fife and East Lothian. The two organisations behind this initiative will highlight how the service has operated and how it has been used. They will also outline their plans for the future.

Long Distance Paths in Fife/Coastal Community Connections

Ken Patterson and Ranald Strachan Fife Coast and Countryside trust

The presentation is a look at how the Fife Coastal Path and coastal communities that host the path interact and how the Coastal path supports community development. Using projects and upgrades along the Coastal path in 2015, designed to improve the Coastal Path experience, the talk aims to demonstrate the Coastal path's role in sustainable development of local communities.

There will also be an update on The Fife Pilgrim Way. Following a 70mile long path this ambitious new project is aimed at linking up Fife's many isolated examples of pilgrim heritage and chronicling the tradition of pilgrimage across the region, from landing at North Queensferry to their final destination of St Andrews. It will engage local communities and visitors with the undiscovered medieval heritage of Fife through the delivery of a newly created, clearly way marked and well-interpreted long distance walking route.

Fife Harbour Study Aim - *“To produce a strategic study and action plan for the development of Fife’s coastal communities and harbours.”*

Ian McCrory

In late 2014 Fife Council commissioned Campbell Macrae Associates to develop a strategic study and action plan for the future development of Fife's harbours. The work involved an audit of all the ports, harbours and other marine structures along the entire coast of Fife from Kincardine to Newburgh. The aim of the research was to update a similar study carried out in 2003, in order to identify the demand and the potential for growing leisure opportunities along Fife's coast. The scope of the study covered all harbours in Fife whether in local authority or other ownership. It involved visits to most of the Kingdom's harbours to audit use and facilities. It also included consultation with owners, clubs, users groups and bodies with an interest in Fife harbours such as the Forth Yachting Clubs Association and Forth and Tay Estuary Forums. Whilst the main focus of this study was on leisure sailing, it also encompassed other water based leisure activity such as sea angling, coastal rowing, cruise ships and water borne passenger services.

The presentation will summarise the outcomes of the study and the steps to be taken in driving forward on its recommendations."

Marine Planning in Scotland

Morag Campbell

This presentation will provide an overview of the National Marine Plan setting out why there is an need for marine planning, what processes are involved in establishing the marine Planning Partnerships which are the organisations that will develop the Regional Marine Plans, and what will be the legislative requirements of the Regional Marine Plans