

THE
TOWN
IS THE
VENUE

Deveron Express



/ Economics as if people mattered

Spring 2017

People's Café, Food Chain, Ecopoetics, ArtRole, What If?, Small is Beautiful, Real Energy Food, The Town is the Garden

In the nine years since Jacques Coetzer worked with the people of Huntly to develop the town branding *Room to Roam*, it has been accepted and adapted to suit various projects, Room to Run, Room to Ride and Roam to Sing being a few examples. Jacques returned to Huntly in January to get to work on a new vision: Room to Reinvent.

Here to think of ways to regenerate Huntly, Jacques has taken inspiration through a Small is Beautiful approach, focusing on people as the most important and most relevant factor

in town regeneration and local economy. This recognises human capital and sees value in the trade of time, ability and skills, focusing on cooperation and friendship in our community.

Jacques initiated the People's Café - popping up in 11 Gordon Street and the Huntly Hotel - to hear from the community in one to one discussion and group feedback, regarding what they think of their place.

Huntly is described as a market town, but with two large supermarkets directing business to its outskirts, the centre of town is looking more and more dilapidated. Jacques is keen to encourage people that we need to offer what supermarkets cannot.

The Square has unique architecture and is a hub for potential activity, with routes branching off in multiple directions. The issues of empty shops, lack of good signage, little green space, and poor connectivity to the surrounding district are popular opinions, along with the need for youth oriented hang-outs and more of a cafe culture.

Through the People's Café, Jacques has been experimenting with the introduction of

a central multi-use, neutral and accessible space. Music nights, a soup kitchen, weaving workshops, discussion events and film screenings are some of the ways townsfolk have responded to the invitation of the People's Café. Potential ideas also include a working town museum and a space for seasonal produce exchange.

Over the next few years, Deveron Projects will be working with partners in the town to prioritise and realise the regeneration of Huntly.

Jacques put it to us, that if Huntly were human, The Square would be its cultural heart. The butcher, the baker, cafes and local shops would be the belly; the school, the brain looking towards a fruitful future; and the railway, bus links, roads and streets, the veins - life blood - keeping it all moving.

With much information being collected, one thing is clear: we must start at the heart.

Deveron Projects



In Huntly there are a vast and varied amount of groups, clubs and activities, but something Jacques found is that often people don't know what is going on and when. Two options were suggested: a digital display in The Square, or a large blackboard in a local cafe.

What do you think?

Energised Landscape

Skype Conversation

10 March 2017

Deveron Projects' Director, Claudia Zeiske, and artist Andrea Geile

CZ: You have been working on the route for the forthcoming Slow Marathon over the last year. Can you tell us about the project, *Energised Landscape*, its rationale and purpose?

AG: The idea for the project was triggered by hearing about how communities were very unhappy with new energy developments in their areas. I was wondering how in my role as an artist I could contribute in a positive and meaningful way to the discussions around Scotland's energy future. I decided to undertake a survey of sustainable energy in Scotland: where we are now and what the future might hold. In conversation with local people I soon realised that on closer inspection there is a lot more in the landscape than meets the eye. Subsequently I decided to examine varied places of energy, innate or man-made, real or perceived. From Neolithic sites and hill tops, to renewables and new pylon constructions. For instance, by looking at old farms and their ingenious energy supplies in Victorian times I can draw conclusions about contemporary energy forms.



CZ: One thing you have done is the mapping of energy sites, but the other is the interpretation of new energy forms. What are those conclusions that you have drawn?

AG: I have found evidence of a lot more energy forms than I could have ever imagined. And most 'industrial' energy technology is only around for a limited time. It soon is overtaken by new technology which is more

efficient and environmentally friendly. Of course this is all relative. A Victorian threshing contraption powered by a water wheel was new technology for thirty odd years before it was overtaken by the electrification of



farms. I believe the same will happen to wind turbines, for example. There is very exciting new research into using buildings and road surfaces as energy collectors. I believe the future will bring more renewable, integrated and localised energy production.

CZ: When we talk about those kinds of energies, we tend to talk about producing electricity, etc. We seem to need more and more of this to feed the capitalist driven economy. Why do we need so much energy in the first place? And what does this kind of energy have in common with the ancient neolithic sites, on the one hand, and with the walkers of the Slow Marathon on the other?

AG: Big and complex questions indeed. Most people would like to be comfortable in their own homes, buy unseasonal food, and travel a lot. It all takes a toll on our energy consumption and of course, the first

thing should be to reduce this figure. Most houses in Aberdeenshire are built from stone and difficult, if not impossible, to insulate. There goes the entire low-energy house idea. I have learned there are no quick fixes and answers but I believe in knowledge. And there is a lot of energy in conversations and community spirit. Nobody knows for sure what the purpose of the neolithic sites was but I think they at least helped with community bonding. And that ultimately is the idea behind the Slow Marathon. It is a time for fun and consideration. And I hope the walkers might take a moment to contemplate the energy of the land and the people around them.



CZ: Andrea, I thank you for your energy and enthusiasm throughout this project.

AG: Thank you Claudia and Deveron Projects! The residency was an energising experience!

Pictured: Energy Walk at Greenmyres Community Turbine; Imagining Turbines with Really Cool Club; Andrea's 'Real Energy Food'; Ardlair Stone Circle



Energy and Us

Sun 16 April, 11am - 2pm

11 Gordon Street

Discussion on our own relationships to energy and energy structures in the landscape

What does the *Energised Landscape* mean locally?

With Jelte Harnmeijer—founding partner at Scene Connect—and Jamie Wilkinson of Huntly and District Development Trust

Booking Advised / Lunch Included

Shop

Little Sun, solar-powered portable sun light
Order online from us or pick one up here for special Slow Marathon Weekend price: **£15**

Find out more about Little Sun project at:

www.littlesun.com

The Path Travelled



/ Slow Marathon

Connecting art and walking, the Slow Marathon is both a poetic act and an endurance event. A conceptually led walk, the marathon is an annual event, each year developed around a different artist's project.

The Slow Marathon comprises a weekend of walks, talks, food and discussion. Celebrating slowness, the non-competitive 26 mile walk allows people to observe the landscape, explore the artist's route and interventions, and get chatting to whoever happens to fall into a similar pace.

In **2012**, the Slow Marathon was devised by Mihret Kebede who initially wanted to walk the 5,850 miles from her hometown of Addis, Ethiopia, to Huntly. Mihret was interested in the discrepancy between the mandate to reduce carbon footprint, and the expense of long distance travel alternatives. As expected, walking to Huntly would not be possible, due to multiple barriers, from visa restrictions to large expanses of desert. Instead, Mihret invited the people of Huntly, and the people of Addis to help her clock up the mileage metaphorically. 225 people walking 26 miles would do the job.

The **2013** and **2014** Marathons shared an interest in retracing the old drover roads of the Hielan' Ways, with interventions from artists such as Gill Russell, Simone Kenyon, Sanaa Gateja and Claire Qualmann.

In **2015**, Stuart McAdam created a route from his project *Lines Lost*. This took 100

people along the former railway route from Portsoy to Huntly, abolished as a result of the Beeching Cuts of 1963. Having walked up and down the line collecting stories and making new ones, Stuart's route retraced the old line, including points of interest from an old abandoned 'Ghost Train' to Knock Distillery, which originally became situated in Knock for the advantages of rail transport.

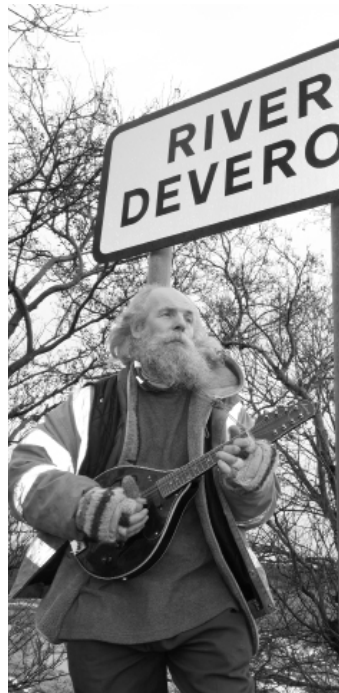
2016 was based on the collaborative project of Jake Williams and Anne Murray, *With and Against the Flow*. This was a mapping project

that interpreted walking along the River Deveron against and with the flow from the Cabrach, in the foothills of the Cairngorms, to the Moray Coast between Banff and Macduff.

Rivers have always proved to be magnets for people, particularly walkers using banks as a resting point or place of reflection. 2016's Marathon led to much discussion around the uses and attractions of rivers, from conservation to canoeing.

Andrea Geile has been working since summer 2016 on the project *Energised Landscape*, a contemporary examination of energy sources, sites and consequences, one of the outcomes of which is our route for **2017** Slow Marathon.

2018 will see a collaborative project between Rachel Ashton in Huntly and May Murad in Gaza, *Walking Without Walls*.



Slow Marathon's Slowest

2012 Exploring Huntly	Luke Hammer
2013 Cabrach - Huntly	Sophie Hope
2014 Glenkindie - Huntly	Fraser MacDonald
2015 Portsoy - Huntly	Sally Giles
2016 River Deveron	Ryan Johnston

2017 Correen Hills - Huntly **Good Luck!**

Pictured: Gordon Primary, 2012; Jake Williams' on the Deveron; comic by Stuart McAdam

"Originally home meant the centre of the world—not in a geographical but an ontological sense... Emigration does not only involve leaving behind, crossing water, living amongst strangers but, also, undoing the very meaning of the world and—at its most extreme—abandoning oneself to the unreal which is absurd... to emigrate is always to dismantle the centre of the world, and so to move into a lost disoriented one of fragments." - John Berger

The Path Ahead



/ The Town is the Garden

We are interested in the transformative act of gardening and its potential to reduce our town's carbon emissions, through adapting the idea of a 'garden city' in Huntly, making it a much more sustainable place to live. This year, Deveron Projects will take on a 'Gardener in Residence' who, through the *Town is the Garden* project, will help us to begin a process of transforming our town into a vibrant low carbon community and a source of inspiration for other rural communities. We believe passionately that this kind of horticultural activity can have wide reaching, positive repercussions for a community like ours. The aims of this project are to:

- promote and encourage the composting of food waste locally and reduce carbon emissions in Huntly in relation to food and food waste
- promote community-led food trade and develop a more sustainable food economy that celebrates locally grown seasonal produce
- advance the skills of the local community in food growing, composting and horticulture
- improve our community's carbon literacy and advance education on the impact of climate change
- develop a legacy for Huntly as a low carbon economy 'garden town'

As well as working specifically with the participants of the project, the Gardener in Residence will serve the community as a whole through providing open-access workshops and talks on food growing/composting, as well as advancing the community's carbon

literacy. To help in contributing towards a more sustainable Huntly, get in touch with us and find out what you can do to get involved in the *Town is the Garden*.

/ What If?

What If? deals with an alternative history timeline of colonialism in the Middle East. Most of the countries in that area today were formed by British and French agreements. The Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1916 divided the Middle East into the countries we know now. Manaf Halbouni is turning this around, fictionalising a world where the Ottoman Empire and United States of Arabia split Europe instead (see map above).

What if this whole colonial history happened in Europe instead? Can you imagine yourself being forced to be part of a colony? Can you imagine people from a totally different place starting to tell you what is culture and what is freedom, and letting you fight against your neighbour, just to take your resources?

What if the industrial revolution happened in The Ottoman Empire and Arabia? To keep the industries running they start to sell weapons to Europe and take control over the markets. They start colonising everything under the pretense of bringing liberation to the Europeans.

Manaf will be working with lots of people in Huntly between March and June, including Syrian refugees recently resettled in Aberdeenshire.

The project will result in a theatrical play of a meeting between two representatives who

are splitting Europe between the Turkish and the Arabs. We are asking people to come and help us film this with their smart phones and digital devices, and contribute their perspective to the project. Join us in the Huntly Hotel on 6 May to get involved.

Screenings of the final films will be shown in Huntly in June and during the Edinburgh Art Festival in July.

What If?

Theatrical Play

WE NEED YOU to make a movie

Sat 6 May, 12 - 1pm

Huntly Hotel

Help us film the play

Any filming device (cameras, smart-phones, ipads) acceptable

Screening and Discussion Events

Sat 3 June, 12 - 3pm

Huntly Hotel

With stories shared from Syrian new Scots' Amal Committee

Thu 27 July

Goethe Institute, Glasgow

Sat 29 July

Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh

More information on our website!

Food Chain

Workshops Connecting Folk and Food

Middle Eastern Meals, 24 April

Syrian cookery advice, with traditional sweets and coffee

Pasta Mia, 19 June

History and practice of pasta making, plus homemade sauces

Gastro Garden, 17 July

Seasonal cooking with Glenview Fresh Local Produce

6 - 8pm

Brander Kitchen

**Limited Places/Booking Essential
£5**

Notices

Our Guests

Donald Boyd, HDDT / Ann Davidson, REAP /
Dave Simpson, Doric Diversions / Philip Deverell,
Creative Scotland / Beverley Hood, Edinburgh
College of Art / Alan Macpherson, Uni of Aberdeen
/ Glenview Fresh Local Produce / Tim Branston,
Huntly Hotel / Mike Whittal, Ochre & Wood / Steven
Gray, Aberdeenshire Council / Bahaa Mahmoud,
Syrian Resettlement / Alison Bolger, Florist / Mark
Stephen, BBC

Artists: Hanna Tuulikki, May Murad, Linda Bol-
sakova, Adalet R. Germiany, Vera Tamari, Frances
Law, Mara Marxt Lewis, Tyler Lewis

Welcome

Manaf Halbouni, **Artist**
Alice Bottoni, **Intern**
Katerina Talianni,
Thinker in Residence

Talks at CC

12pm, Christ Church, Huntly
26 April

Public Health - Challenges Old and New
with Jim McEwen, former
Professor of Public Health at
Kings College London

17 May

*Discovering the Natural History of NE
Scotland*
with Cliff Jones, Naturalist and Broadcaster



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CAFE

Deveron
Projects

Huntly Farmers Market
First Saturday of every month
9am - 1pm

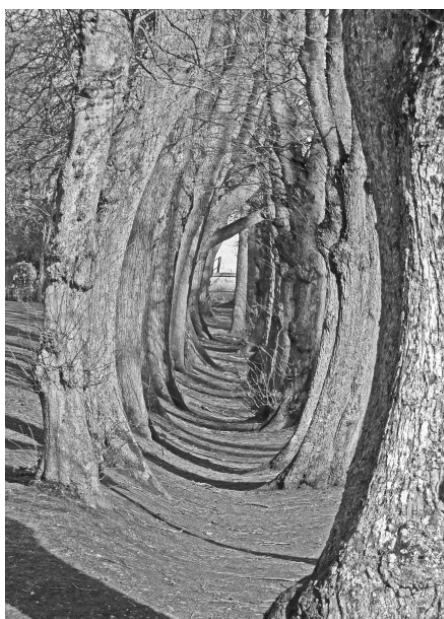
**Join us for a pop-up coffee morning
on Sat 1 July at the Huntly Hotel!**

I Saw Huntly

Pupils from The Gordon Schools
have been working on a photography
project over the last 18 months. /
saw Huntly will be exhibited in The
Gordon Arms Hotel, The Linden
Community Centre, The Stewart's
Hall and Orb's Bookshop

Pop-up opening on The Square
Thursday 18 May
10.30am - 12.30pm

Photo by Emma Duncan



Friday Lunch Talks

1pm, Brander Building, Donation: £2

7 April, Andrea Geile, Energised Landscape
21 April, Manaf Halbouni, What If?
28 April, Hasan Youssef, Writing Syria
5 May, Annabel Pinker, Tinkering with Turbines
12 May, Nadine Baldow, Artist Talk
19 May, Katerina Talianni, Thinker in Residence
26 May, Ghaith Adib, Interior Design in Beirut
9 June, Petra Vergunst, Embrace
23 June, Mary Bourne, Articulate Carribean
30 June, Pat Scott, Farming in Aberdeenshire

Bring Your Own Greens!

20 June, 6 - 8pm, Brander Building
Wild Weed Floristry
Workshop with Alison Bolger
Booking Essential / £5

Save the Date!

**Making Connections with
Networks of Wellbeing, 9 - 11th May**
Walking, Talking and
get-back-into-Cycling events!
Contact: 01466 793732
or fiona@networksofwellbeing.org



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Follow us:
on facebook, twitter and instagram

Deveron Projects is based in the rural market town of Huntly, Scotland. We connect artists, communities and places through creative research and engagement. The *town is the venue* describes the framework in which we work and contribute to the social wellbeing of our town. We inhabit, explore, map and activate the place through artist-driven projects. Huntly's small town context, 18th-century streets and surrounding Aberdeenshire countryside offers an abundance of possibilities to work with. We have engaged with local people, and their clubs, choirs, shops, schools, churches, bars and discos since 1995.