



From Ferry to Train

Once Boat of Garten was just a place to cross the river Spey, on a ferry pulled across on a chain. But when the railways came it became an important junction. In 1866 the Great North of Scotland Railway opened another line from here, heading east to Aberdeen. Soon there was a small inn, then a hotel where passengers could eat and sleep, and houses for railway workers. Now it's the half-way point on our journey. If you get off the train you can look out for the water column, a huge tap with a hose like an elephant's trunk, and see the engine being topped up ready for the next stage. *



BOAT OF GARTEN STATION

The walls of this wee house are made from railway sleepers—the thick wooden beams that support the track. It was probably built about the same time as the railway, although its name, WOODCUTTER'S COTTAGE, suggests that a local forester knew a good source of building material when he saw it! *

Walls From the Railway

Boat of Garten Golf Course

Boat of Garten golf course, glowing green between the trees, was started by local railwaymen in 1898, then extended and re-designed in 1930 by the famous course designer James Braid. He made full use of the wonderful setting as well as creating some exciting golf! *



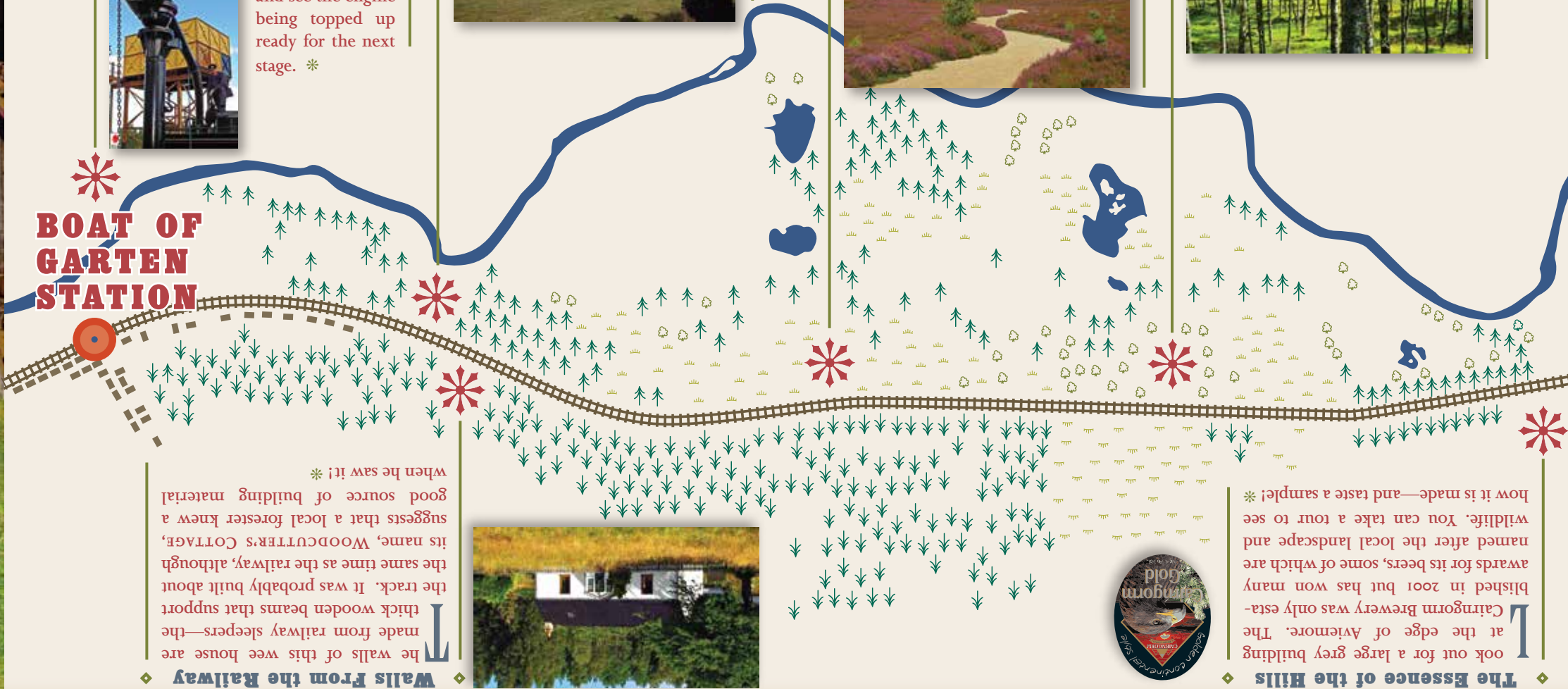
Moorland

The small trees on Granish Moor are a sign that it would become a forest if it was left to itself. Grazing by deer and occasional fires keep the trees down. Moorland is an important place for wildlife, with tiny, jewel-like wildflowers, a huge range of insects and many birds that depend on the open landscape. You may see folk waving at the train as we cross the moor: they're on the Speyside Way, an easy to follow path that explores this beautiful place. *



Birch Woodland

These open woodlands of birch and pine are part of a great swathe of forest that surrounds the Cairngorm mountains. The Cairngorms National Park contains the largest area of native woodland in Britain, and it's a wonderful place for wildlife. Red squirrels scamper through the trees while deer feed on the forest plants. *



The Essence of the Hills

Look out for a large grey building at the edge of Aviemore. The Cairngorm Brewery was only established in 2001 but has won many awards for its beers, some of which are named after the local landscape and wildlife. You can take a tour to see how it is made—and taste a sample! *



STRATHSPEY STEAM RAILWAY

AVIEMORE * BOAT OF GARTEN * BROOMHILL



Welcome on board! We hope you enjoy your journey on the Strathspey Railway. You will be riding a line that brought major changes to what had been a quiet Highland glen when it opened in 1863. THE HIGHLAND RAILWAY COMPANY ran the line, and Aviemore station was one of the largest they ever built. The wonderful buildings look much the same as they did when Queen Victoria helped make the Cairngorms the fashionable place to come for a holiday. *



AVIEMORE STATION



The Engine Shed Ghost

A railway this old is bound to have a few ghosts. This fine Highland Railway shed has housed steam locomotives since 1898. When we come to light our locomotive's fire early in the morning we sometimes hear strange noises. There might be footsteps, or the sound of sawing and filing. If we call out the noise stops—only to start again after a few moments! *

Self-Powered Turn-Around

Watch for the grey-painted turntable just outside the station, and see if you can spot a short pole with a hose at the top. When we need to turn an engine round, we connect the hose to the vacuum system that normally works the train's brakes. The vacuum drives a small motor that spins the turntable—and the engine turns itself. *

If you'd like to find out more about the railway, the Strathspey Railway Guide Book tells the whole history of the line –and of our work to restore it.

Cold Giants

The Cairngorm Mountains are particularly impressive from here as they loom in the background, their colour shifting with the changing light. The rounded shapes look gentle, but the high, cold plateau is the largest area of land above 600 metres in Britain and has a climate rather like the Arctic. Deep valleys form passes through to Deeside, where life is just as shaped by the mountains as here in Strathspey. *



New Life for an Old Line

The Great North of Scotland Railway from Boat of Garten to the east closed in 1968, but you can still see the embankment of the old line branching away towards the river. Today the Speyside Way uses much of the route, making a great long distance trail between Aviemore and Buckie on the Aberdeenshire coast. *



Photograph by A.E. Glen

Marks of the Past

See if you can spot a pair of standing stones between the railway and the river. They may have been put here as long ago as 2000 BC, perhaps to mark territory or as signposts. On the other side of the track the remains of a tomb lie hidden in the grass. There are hundreds of prehistoric sites scattered along the valley, evidence that people have been living and farming here for thousands of years. *



The Sparkling River Spey

Listen for the train's whistle as we approach 'fisherman's crossing' close to the 107-mile long river Spey. It is one of the best salmon rivers in Europe and another rich wildlife habitat because the water is so clean. A lot of the work to keep it clean happens under the surface: freshwater pearl mussels live on the river bed, filtering thousands of litres of water a day. *



The Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development
Europe investing in rural areas



This project is being part-financed by the Scottish Government and the European Community
[Cairngorms Local Action Group] LEADER 2007-2013 Programme.

The Strathspey Railway steams beside the sparkling River Spey beneath the high Cairngorm Mountains.
Find out more and become a volunteer at www.strathspeyrailway.co.uk
Help us get the line through to Grantown on Spey: check out www.railstograntown.org

BROOMHILL



Broomhill Station
We have built the station at Broomhill as a replica of the typical of the little stations that once dotted the Highlands—complete with a double-armed signal. The arm on the trackside was controlled by the railway, but the other one could be raised or lowered by passengers to ask trains to stop. As we leave here for the journey back to Boat of Garten the line is quite steep: listen for the engine's 'chuff-chuff' as it works hard to climb the slope. *

A Strange Place to Nest

The farmland along this part of the line is just as important for wildlife as the moorland and woods—in fact this is the best place in Britain to see farmland waders like oystercatchers. One family often nests right in between the tracks! Luckily we have never injured one, but they make a loud protest every time the train comes through. You can often see birds of prey gliding over the fields here, scouting for their next meal. *



Timber!

You often see lorries loaded with logs around the Cairngorms. They might be bringing their cargo to this sawmill, where trees cut from the forests around the mountains are turned into timber. Forestry has been an important industry here for centuries, and the railway gave it a big boost. It made it much easier to get the wood to where it was needed: before it had to be floated down the river in great rafts. *



Nests & Cool Storage

Milton Loch is a great place to see birds like herons and grebes: see if you can spot the herons' untidy nests in the trees. The loch was once a mill pond, storing water to power the nearby mill. The low building with a curved roof next to the cottages was a store house, built half buried in the ground and shaded by trees so that food could be kept cool using ice from the loch. *

