

# Using and sharing social research in school

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The James  
**Hutton**  
**Institute**

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Centre for Research on Families and Relationships  
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# Introduction

- Social researcher
- People's behaviour and attitude to natural resources, environment, land management
- How can a social researcher ensure the research is relevant to society, involve people?
  - ▶ Involve people in research by feeding back to study participants
  - ▶ Do the research *with* people (not just *on* them)

# Science weeks in Primary Schools

- Dominated by natural sciences – chemistry, physics, perhaps biology
- Rarely social sciences but methods are used (e.g. survey for packed/school lunches; organising healthy tuck shop)

## **Aim and purpose** of my visit

- Teach about and raise interest in social science
- By doing a social science experiment with pupils

# Science week in Primary Schools

- Preparation
  - ▶ Get 'go ahead' from Institute
  - ▶ Agree time slot, class level
  - ▶ Find relevant topic in consultation with teacher
- Schedule for the day
- Wrap up
  - ▶ Check data entry
  - ▶ Run analyses
  - ▶ Write up results in report

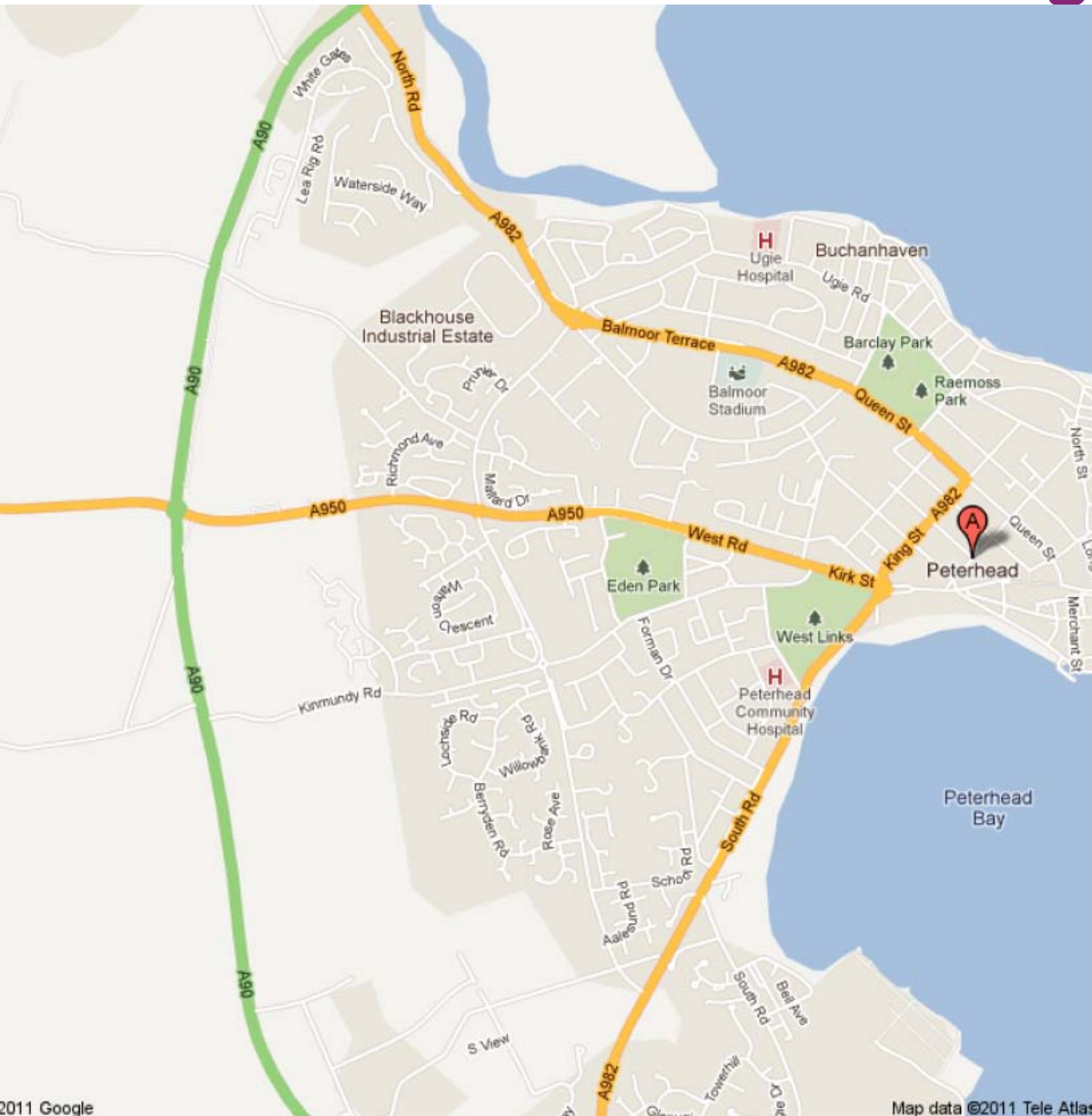


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# Peterhead



# Peterhead – what about greenspace?



- What is greenspace?
- Public or private use?
- Formal parks or ‘wild’ areas?
- Trees or lawn?



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# Peterhead – what about greenspace?



# Schedule for the school visit

09:05-09:45 **Introduction** to the James Hutton Institute, different sciences and Pipe Dreams game - online game

## **Social Research Experiment**

09:45-10:15 Discuss research questions; develop a **questionnaire**, print the questionnaire

10:15-10:45 **Collect data**, i.e. respondents (students) fill in the questionnaire

10:45- 11:00 Break

11:00- 11:15 **Enter** data into Excel

11:15- 11:45 **Analyse data**, create graphs/ bar charts

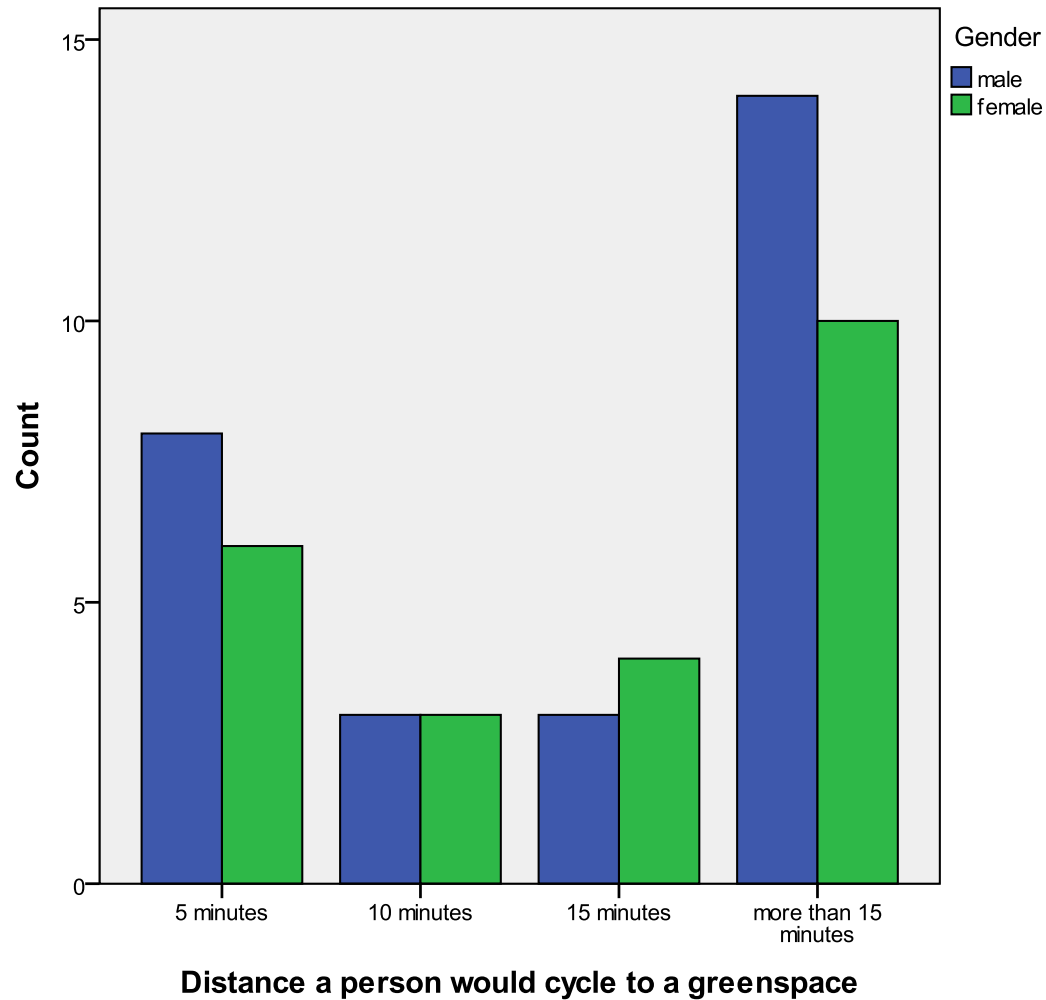
11:45- 12:00 **Discuss findings**, explain how scientific results are documented, limitations and possible extension of survey. Prepare to present results (e.g. to other class)



# Questionnaires

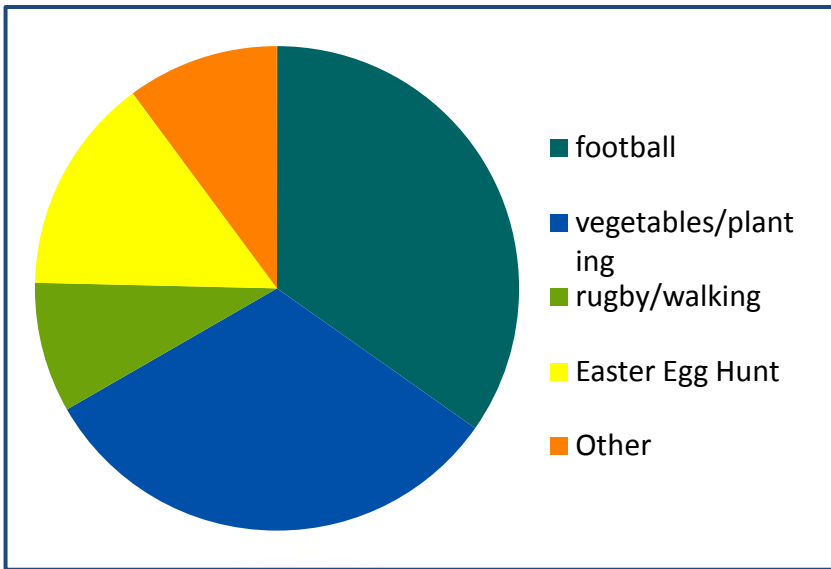
March 2011	September 2011
<b>Use of Greenspace in Peterhead</b>	<b>Survey about the use of greenspace in Peterhead</b>
<b>1. Is there enough greenspace in Peterhead?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> don't know	<b>Do you use greenspace in the town of Peterhead?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> don't know
<b>2. What do you use greenspace for?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Football <input type="checkbox"/> Planting/growing veg <input type="checkbox"/> Rugby/ walking <input type="checkbox"/> Easter egg hunt <input type="checkbox"/> Other.....	<b>If you use greenspace how often do you use it?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Every Day <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month <input type="checkbox"/> Hardly ever
<b>3. How far would you cycle to a greenspace?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 5 minutes <input type="checkbox"/> 10 minutes <input type="checkbox"/> 15 minutes <input type="checkbox"/> More than 15 minutes	<b>What do you use green space for?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Playing <input type="checkbox"/> Camping <input type="checkbox"/> Bike racing <input type="checkbox"/> Horse riding <input type="checkbox"/> Sports day <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening / growing plants <input type="checkbox"/> Walking the dog <input type="checkbox"/> BBQs <input type="checkbox"/> Other.....
<b>4. How far would you walk to a greenspace?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 5 minutes <input type="checkbox"/> 10 minutes <input type="checkbox"/> 15 minutes <input type="checkbox"/> More than 15 minutes	<b>Why do you think we need to have greenspace in town?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> To keep healthy <input type="checkbox"/> To graze sheep / cattle <input type="checkbox"/> To get exercise <input type="checkbox"/> Space to relax <input type="checkbox"/> Other.....
<b>5. Are you</b> male <input type="checkbox"/> or female <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Are you?</b> Male Female

# Visualising data in charts



# Preparing Tables & Charts

**Figure: Use of greenspace**



**Table: Distance a person would cycle or walk to a greenspace**

Distance in minutes	CYCLE		WALK	
	Frequency	Percent (%)	Frequency	Percent (%)
5 mins	14	27.5	10	19.6
10 mins	6	11.8	17	33.3
15 mins	7	13.7	9	17.6
> 15 mins	24	47.1	15	29.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

# Conclusions I

- Skills required
  - ▶ Be comfortable interacting with primary school pupils
  - ▶ Identify subject that overlaps with your expertise, children's interest (and curriculum)
  - ▶ Make mistakes and point out what can be learned from them (errors in scientific studies)
- Attention to
  - ▶ Ethical considerations
  - ▶ Health and safety

# Conclusions II

Benefits of sharing social research in schools for...

<b>Students/ teachers</b>	<b>Science community</b>	<b>Society</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Better understanding of social science methods, use, limitations</li><li>• have fun + learn across subject areas</li><li>• critical thinking</li><li>• opportunity to take ownership of results</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• insights in under-researched group (children)</li><li>• confidence to produce relevant science</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• relevant science</li><li>• ‘grounded’ scientists</li><li>• students that enjoy learning, questioning</li><li>• engaged students/ citizens</li></ul>

# Acknowledgements



LandscapePartners project

***The contribution of multi-stakeholder partnerships to sustainable landscape management***

[www.macaulay.ac.uk/LandscapePartners](http://www.macaulay.ac.uk/LandscapePartners)

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