



NEVIS

JOHN
MUIR
TRUST

FOR
wild LAND &
wild PLACES

The Ben and the Glen

Celebrating 21 years of the John Muir Trust caring for Nevis

School of rock

Local lad Nathan Berrie on what Nevis means to him

Woodland wonders

Restoring native tree cover in Glen Nevis

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Coming of age!

WELCOME to our celebration of 21 years of caring for the Ben Nevis Estate – a story that began when the John Muir Trust took on the guardianship of this dramatic landscape in July 2000.

The land we are privileged to look after includes the upper part of the southern and western flanks of Ben Nevis, plus the neighbouring summits of Carn Mor Dearg, Aonach Beag and Sgurr Choinneach Beag. This chain of high peaks is linked by mountain ridges that slope down to the Water of Nevis as it plunges in torrents through the densely wooded Steall Gorge.

As a wild places conservation charity, we have many goals at Nevis. One of these is to enable the native woodland in Steall Gorge to expand and fulfil its natural potential – benefitting the many plant, insect and animal communities that it supports.

Equally, we want to ensure that everyone can fully experience the area by maintaining paths and access routes, as well as develop new and innovative ways for people to immerse themselves in the landscape.

Like so many others, this wild mountain and glen has shaped my life – providing both challenge and joy. I first visited as a child and remember climbing the Ben, crossing the wire bridge and scaling the peaks on the south side of Glen Nevis. Later, I returned as a student to enjoy winter routes on the north face.

Today, I feel immensely proud to help protect this special place so that our children can also have the same opportunities.

The importance of access to and time spent in nature has become clearer than ever over the past year – with Nevis one of Scotland’s greatest outdoor treasures of all. I hope you enjoy reading about how our work helps to ensure its riches can be experienced by many generations to come. As you can see from the graphic below, it has been a busy 21 years!

Alison Austin, Nevis Property Manager, John Muir Trust



PHOTOGRAPH: LUKASZ WARZECHA

Nevis in numbers



1 million

people have climbed the Ben in the past decade alone



250

large bags of litter carried off the Ben



100

tonnes of rockfall stabilised in Steall Gorge



200

educational visits and nature events for young people



1,000

volunteer days spent at Nevis

5kms

of path maintained and repaired every year



4,000

poems submitted to the annual Fort William Mountain Festival Wild Poetry Competition



2

bridges replaced (one wire, one wooden, both well-used!)



A magical place

From dramatic mountain scenery to a rich natural and cultural history, here are seven reasons why Nevis is such a special place for all to enjoy

1 THE BEN
While the John Muir Trust also cares for Carn Mor Dearg, Aonach Beag and Sgurr Choinneach Beag, it is a rather more famous name that hogs the limelight. At 1,345m, Ben Nevis, the highest mountain in the UK, is an unmistakable feature of the skyline – and a magnet for more than 160,000 people who test themselves on the arduous climb to its summit every year.



5 WILDLIFE AND ECOLOGY
From the high summits to lower-level woodland and meadow, Nevis is home to a variety of life, including golden and white-tailed eagles, red deer, pine marten, red squirrel, water vole, snow bunting and rare species of butterfly. There are also 75 different species of lichen, more than 30 of which are UK rarities.



PHOTOGRAPHY: ALEX GILLESPIE

2 STEALL GORGE WOODLAND
From the grass flats of Steall, the Water of Nevis gathers pace and plunges through the Steall Gorge – its rocky slopes cloaked in rich native woodland and remnant Caledonian pine forest. It's an atmospheric place and a hint at what the wider glen will look like as the woodland gradually expands.

6 PEOPLE AND PLACE
Glen Nevis was not always this devoid of human life. In upper Glen Nevis, the crumbling Steall ruins are all that remain of a cluster of structures that date back to the 1700s and which remained home to shepherding families until the 1940s. Children living there would walk, often barefoot, through the Nevis gorge to attend the old school at Achriabhach by the lower falls.

3 STEALL FALLS
Tumbling more than 100m, Steall Falls (An Steall Bàn) is Scotland's second highest waterfall. Although just beyond the land in Trust care, the falls are best viewed from the path that leads through the Steall Gorge to Steall meadow. For an even closer look, walkers can cross the (in)famous wire bridge over the Water of Nevis and head towards the falls.



7 WILDNESS FOR ALL
Perhaps more than anything else, Nevis is an outdoor playground for everyone – a wild place that offers recreation, education, excitement, challenge, peace and beauty for people of all interests and fitness levels. Little wonder that it draws visitors to the area from far and wide.

4 SUMMIT LIVING
Imagine living and working on the summit of the Ben! That's exactly what meteorologists did when they took hourly measurements of weather conditions from a summit observatory between 1883 and 1904. The observatory was later expanded to include a hotel which remained open until the end of the First World War. The ruins of both can still be seen on the summit.



Paving the way

Alex Gillespie recalls a walk that might just have sown the seeds of the John Muir Trust's involvement at Nevis ...

FROM 1980 to 1996, I had the pleasure of accompanying an elderly gentlemen called Bert Bissel on ascents of Ben Nevis. A lay preacher in the local Methodist Church, Bert had inaugurated the peace cairn on the summit in 1945.

He was well known in Fort William and especially in the local high school. Even when well into his eighties, he would challenge members of his church and local youth groups to climb the Ben with him to lay a wreath at the cairn.

On one occasion, Bert challenged Duncan and Janet Fairfax-Lucy - the couple who, at the time, owned the summit of the mountain but had never actually been there - to join him.

I remember the group making it to the top on a fine, but very windy day. The couple were not used to mountain walking and my wife, Mary, and I spoke with them at length as we climbed. They revealed how they were not especially happy about owning a mountain as famous as the Ben and were considering options to transfer ownership to a conservation organisation. As members, we were quick to make



PHOTOGRAPH: ALEX GILLESPIE

Challenge accepted: Duncan Fairfax-Lucy shaking hands with Bert (right)

them aware of the John Muir Trust. It turned out they had not heard of it and were interested to learn more ... a conversation that might have helped pave the way for the eventual transfer of ownership of the Ben Nevis Estate to the John Muir Trust in 2000.

Mr and Mrs Fairfax-Lucy were also

extremely interested in the work of the Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team. A few weeks following our walk together we received a substantial donation that allowed us to supply the team with new waterproofs. It had been quite a good day in all.

Alex and Mary Gillespie, John Muir Trust members

Climbing to new heights together with the John Muir Trust



PHOTOGRAPH: MIKE PESCOD

SINCE 2002, the Nevis Landscape Partnership (NLP) has brought together visitors and the local community, landowners and managers to seek cooperation and consensus around how to support access to Glen Nevis and care for this special place.

We have always understood that managing the complex tensions between recreation and conservation, alongside the impacts on residents and businesses within Glen Nevis, are critical considerations. We also share the view that all activity that takes place in fragile environments must be strategic and holistic so that problems are not simply displaced elsewhere.

Our relationship with all landowners in the Nevis area is crucial, and we are delighted to work closely with the John Muir Trust as part of that. It is a relationship that works both ways. While NLP benefits from the experience of John Muir Trust staff on the Ben Nevis Estate, we offer a mechanism for the John Muir Trust to work with other landowners in the area, local agencies and, most importantly, the local community.

Glen Nevis has internationally acclaimed cultural and natural heritage assets. However, in balancing social and economic drivers, we must be careful not to detract from the very qualities that make Ben Nevis and Glen Nevis such a unique place to live and visit. We do that through working together.

Mike Pescod (pictured), Chair, Nevis Landscape Partnership



Lending a hand

PHOTOGRAPH: NATHAN BERRIE

Volunteers are at the heart of everything the John Muir Trust does on the land in its care

THE draw of Ben Nevis is such that a huge part of our work involves dealing with some of the negative pressures that come from such popularity, including litter and footpath erosion. But crucially, we have not done this alone. Over the last 21 years, staff and teams of volunteers have worked tirelessly to remove rubbish and maintain the Ben Nevis path (pictured) to ensure that it can withstand the many thousands of boots that pass along its length each year.

Our committed volunteers come from near and far – and include plenty of Lochaber locals. During the early stages of the pandemic, with volunteers unable to travel from outside the local area, much of our work was put in doubt. We were so grateful that many local volunteers rallied to the cause, giving up their free time to help us complete key conservation tasks.

As we once again welcome visitors to the area, we hope that many more Lochaber locals will join us for volunteer events and also to get to know the glen a little bit better.

johnmuirtrust.org/support-us/volunteer



Rachel Bradley: why I volunteer

FOR ME, volunteering is one of the most rewarding things a person can do: it widens your circle of friends, you learn a lot and have a tonne of fun in the process!

Having done some form of volunteering most of my life, I leapt at the chance to volunteer with the John Muir Trust and Nevis Landscape Partnership during the first lockdown. Being unemployed meant I had a lot of time to spare, and it was great to see the two charities working together.

We took on a variety of tasks over several weeks, predominantly litter picking, drainage ditch clearing and bracken thinning to help young trees get established. All staff members were incredibly knowledgeable about everything from land use and local wildlife to geology and, of course, the very best hill snacks.

At the end of each day, I felt as though I had gained as much as I had given. I can't wait to get stuck into another work party soon!

Rachel Bradley (pictured), Volunteer

PHOTOGRAPH: RACHEL BRADLEY



PHOTOGRAPH: NATHAN BERRIE

Partners in life and pathwork

AS LONG-TIME pathwork contractors on Ben Nevis, we have worked from the base of the mountain right to the very top. In 2015, we repaired the summit cairn, stabilised the old observatory walls and repaired most of the navigation cairns.

Being partners in life and business has been good for us; we make a strong team and know each other's ways of working. That can get you through a lot. But you do need a certain mentality to do this kind of job, as the conditions can be awful and the work exhausting.

For us, the beauty of working outdoors is the ever-changing landscape. No matter how many times we walk into Steall Gorge to work on the path, the light, colour and vegetation are always different. Our aim when working on paths is for them to blend with the landscape; they must be resilient enough to withstand the increased footfall, but not be overbuilt.

Over the years, we have heard almost every kind of comment from walkers, but some still take us by surprise. When returning from the summit one time, loaded with tools, a walker asked if we had been collecting body parts. When we meet up with other path workers, we all have stomach aches from laughing about our experiences on the hill!

Martine and Allan Cooper (pictured)



School of rock

Rich Rowe chats with Nathan Berrie about his journey from local lad who barely noticed Ben Nevis to his role today caring for one of Scotland's most treasured landscapes

USUALLY, teachers take a dim view of pupils staring out of the window during lessons, but Neil Adams, a geography teacher at Lochaber High School, Fort William, actively encouraged it. Rather than relying just on textbooks when teaching the complexities of erosion, he would point outside at the brooding shape of the Ben to help explain how landforms were shaped by the elements.

Having the UK's highest mountain as a teaching prop is a luxury available to few. And it was this direct line from school desk to mountain that had a profound impact on Nathan Berrie (pictured) – a pupil at the school in the mid-2000s and now the John Muir Trust's Nevis Conservation Officer.

"Many locals will know Mr Adams," explains Nathan. "He really inspired me to understand the outdoors. The way the classroom was situated, we could look out the window and see a corrie for ourselves. That was pretty special."

But in truth, Ben Nevis has not always dominated Nathan's view. "Growing up here, I didn't really think about the Ben – it was just something that was there," he admits. "Visitors today can't comprehend how that could be possible!"

HOME AND AWAY

Nathan left Fort William at 18, first to study environmental geography at Stirling University and then to Edinburgh to find work following graduation. But with the available jobs inside and desk-bound rather than outside and hands-on as he had enjoyed during his studies, Nathan decided to travel instead.

While exploring the world, one specific experience – working as a lava cave guide at Vidgelmir in Iceland – proved to be a lightbulb moment. "I learnt how to interact with people from around the world," he remembers. "It really sparked an interest in working with people in conservation."

Returning from his travels richer in experience than bank balance, Nathan moved back home to live with his parents. He soon discovered that much had happened in the seven years since leaving, including the development of the School of Adventure Studies at the University of the Highlands and Islands.

Nathan signed up for a masters in ecotourism and began to plan for a career in land management. While studying, he started to volunteer with the Nevis Landscape Partnership, which brought him into contact with the John Muir Trust for the first time – and the chance to revisit places where he used to play as a child.

In spring 2017, just as Nathan's studies came to an end, he secured a post as a part-time seasonal ranger with the John Muir Trust. And it got better still. Just six months later, with funding from the ALA Green Charitable Trust, he had an opportunity to do a difficult thing in the conservation sector: turn a part-time, temporary job into a full-time, permanent position.

The funded post came with a training budget so offered a real career development opportunity. "I feel like I've grown as an individual and the knowledge gained has really set up me up for my wider career," says Nathan.

But what does a typical working week look like if there is even such a thing? "There isn't really," smiles Nathan, who admits that his job description would probably cover several sheets of paper.

In many ways, the role is split by season. In spring and summer, the focus is on visitor management, plus the monitoring of various habitats throughout the glen. "In May, we look at the condition of shrubs and trees, which then steers our approach to managing deer numbers," he explains.

There is also another important part of the job: being chatty. From hosting visits by university and school groups to speaking with as many people as possible while out on the hill, every opportunity is taken to spread the word about the work done at Nevis.

In winter, there are fewer visitors and attention turns to hands-on deer management, assisting stalkers to achieve cull targets determined the previous summer by the habitat surveys.

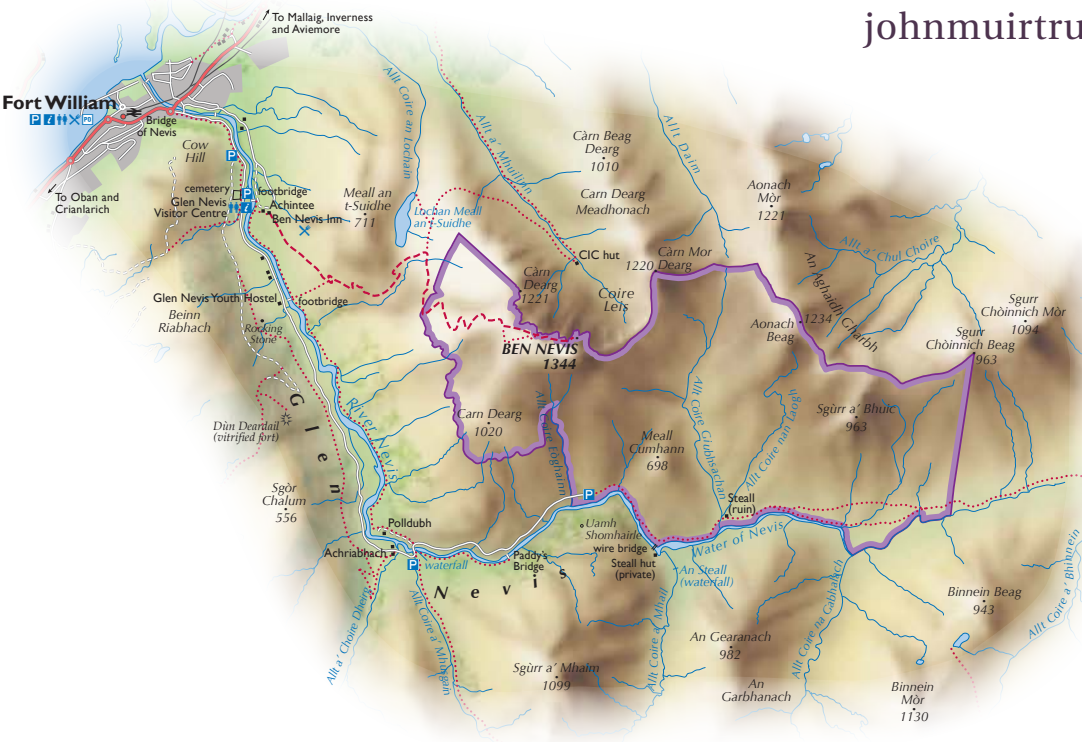
MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The management techniques used by the John Muir Trust at Nevis are not hugely tangible, so the work can be hard to grasp – and explain. Rather than extensive tree planting or erecting of deer fences, the work involves a more philosophical approach to land management – one that relieves the pressure and lets the land express itself.

"I find it very satisfying to think that, if we are getting this right, I can come back in 30 years' time and really see a difference in the landscape," comments Nathan.

And, as ever, it is people who will make that difference; when people care about a place, they are more likely to then care for a place. "It is a pleasure looking after somewhere that I grew up," says Nathan. "Ben Nevis is connected to everyone's lives here – it is the golden thread that holds the community together and enables it to flourish. It is so important that we all care for it."

"If we are getting this right, I can come back in 30 years' time and really see a difference in the landscape"



PHOTOGRAPH: NATHAN BERRIE



Nevis scenes [c/wise from main]: Trust land (boundary marked in purple); habitat monitoring; pathwork; secret cave; young Nathan in the glen



PHOTOGRAPH: NATHAN BERRIE



PHOTOGRAPH: ALEX GILLESPIE

Fancy becoming a ranger?

MANY more young people could soon follow in Nathan's footsteps thanks to further funding from ALA Green that has enabled the start of a two-year pilot to develop a Junior Ranger programme at Nevis and other John Muir Trust locations.

Starting in August, up to a dozen S3 pupils from Lochaber High School will meet fortnightly on Wednesday mornings as part of the school's Developing the Young Workforce programme. Led by John Muir Trust staff, and with support from partners such as the Nevis Landscape Partnership and Woodland Trust, pupils will step into Nathan's shoes for half a day each week – learning all the skills needed for such a job. Sounds like a pretty good school day to us!

Did you know?

- The record for running to the summit of the Ben and back stands at 1hr 25 min 34 sec, (held by Kenny Stuart, set in 1984)
- Glen Nevis has featured in many films, including Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire
- In May 1911, a Model T Ford was driven to the summit of the Ben
- In 2006, the remains of a piano were discovered inside a summit cairn
- In August 1818, the Romantic poet John Keats climbed the Ben and wrote a sonnet while at the summit

Why woodland?

Restoring and expanding areas of native woodland forms a major part of the John Muir Trust's work in Glen Nevis – and for very good reason

MAPS from as far back as the fifteenth century highlight just how extensive the native woodland in Glen Nevis once was. But over subsequent centuries, this woodland cover was greatly reduced by human activities such as charcoal production and extensive livestock grazing.

As elsewhere in Scotland, without such past and present pressures the natural tree line in Glen Nevis would extend eastwards and uphill to higher altitude, where it would gradually thin and give way to specialist species such as juniper and willow.

What remains today is a remnant of this once great woodland, with ash, birch, rowan, scots pine, oak and alder dominating the glen floor and a few isolated pockets of montane woodland on the high tops.

We believe this remnant woodland is special and should be restored through natural regeneration. Doing so serves two key purposes that are more important now than ever: expanded areas of native woodland boost biodiversity by creating habitat for a range of native species, while they also help tackle the climate crisis by soaking up carbon and storing it away for centuries.



Scots pine seedling

PHOTOGRAPH: NATHAN BERRIE

Trees and deer

DEER play an important role in woodland health, with their browsing helping to create a mosaic of habitats that encourage biodiversity. However, when deer populations are too high, the increased levels of browsing can severely damage woodland habitats and make natural regeneration impossible.

For the past 15 years, the John Muir Trust has worked to balance deer numbers specifically to encourage woodland regeneration. Long term, this is also better for the deer as it helps create sufficient food and shelter for the animals, especially during harsh winters. This work will increase as we look to reduce further the impact of browsing on the ancient Steall Gorge woodland and wider area.

We have also recently created more opportunities for local people to get involved, with several members of the Lochaber community now assisting our contractors and staff in return for venison and experience.

And it's an emotive environment to work in. "For me, it's the wildness and grandeur that make stalking in the glen so special," commented Darrell Robertson, a stalker who has worked with the Trust at Nevis for many years. "When I bring people here for the first time, their eyes pop out of their heads."



The John Muir Award is a learning tool for all ages

PHOTOGRAPH: TOBY CLARK

Using the John Muir Award at Nevis

ONE key aspect of the Nevis Landscape Partnership's (NLP) work with the John Muir Trust is our use of the John Muir Award – an environmental award scheme with three different levels of commitment (Discovery, Explorer, Conserver).

The flexibility of the Award means that we can use it with local and visiting groups for one-day conservation activities such as tree planting and path maintenance. Groups vary from outdoor centres that use the Award as part of their residential experience to visiting schools that have built conservation activities into their trip away from home.

Meanwhile, the Award is also an integral part of our 18-week Countryside Skills and Ranger Training course (see page 10), run in partnership with UHI/West Highland College, Jahama Highland Estate and the Woodland Trust Scotland.

On this much longer course, students have time to explore the area in depth, finding out in detail about the conservation projects they are involved in, and then sharing that learning in a variety of ways.

Rory Stewart, Volunteer Coordinator, Nevis Landscape Partnership & Friends of Nevis



Scouting the plant line
in Number Five Gully

A stronghold for nature

Understanding the health of different habitats and species is crucial to our efforts to boost biodiversity

THROUGHOUT the year, we undertake a biodiversity monitoring programme that helps us better understand how different habitats and species are doing at Nevis. Our monitoring of woodland habitat is particularly important as it informs how we manage deer in the months ahead.

From the base of the Glen to the high summits, Nevis is home to a variety of rare species and this habitat monitoring really helps us to keep track of population trends over time.

Nationally declining species such as water vole, mountain ringlet butterfly and pipistrelle bats are monitored each year in Glen Nevis – with all thriving here due to careful stewardship of the land.

We also maintain annual bird monitoring records and, in recent years, have been lucky enough to see species such as white-tailed sea eagle visit the glen.

Throughout Scotland, the biodiversity and climate crises are pushing native species to the edge. Our work seeks to create a stronghold for nature at Nevis – with biodiversity monitoring playing a key role in helping us to stay on track.

PHOTOGRAPH: NATHAN BERRIE

PHOTOGRAPH: JIM MCINTOSH



Plant rarities

Moschatel (or Townhall Clock, pictured) is a tiny flower that is extremely rare in the Highlands. It usually occurs in woodland beside rivers together with other spring flowers such as wood anemone. But in Glen Nevis, it is found in its other habitat – amongst shady mountain rocks. Here, it grows in a jumble of boulders beside the Allt Garbh, high above the path to Steall Falls. Its flowerhead comprises four, five-petaled clock-faces and, very unusually, a four-petaled upward facing flower.

Jim McIntosh, Scottish Officer, Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland



How plants and animals are connected

WHEN climate change affects mountain environments, the plant and animal species that are adapted to this zone gradually move northwards, or uphill. But here, the summit of the Ben marks the very limit of that movement.

The Ben is home to a few breeding pairs of snow bunting (pictured) – a small bird that relies on insects hatching at just the right time to feed their young. And those insects require healthy upland plants, which in turn need long lying snowbeds to insulate them from low temperatures and to help them retain essential moisture that would otherwise be stripped away by the wind.

When these semi-permanent snow beds disappear, or even their timing and extent change, the knock-on effect is felt from plant to insect to snow bunting – and could spell the end for this charismatic wee bird on the Ben.

Delicate balance

This summer, collective efforts to improve the visitor experience and ease pressure on hotspot locations will be more important than ever

AS THE UK's highest mountain and a special wild place, Ben Nevis is an understandably popular draw. Up to 1,000 walkers will summit on a weekend day in August - with 160,000 ascending the Ben every year.

When working on the mountain, it's great to share that almost palpable sense of anticipation as walkers make their way to the summit, returning many hours later exhausted but elated.

Visitors are always impressed that volunteers, staff and contractors walk up the mountain just to start pathwork or collect litter and we always feel valued and appreciated for the work we do.

Most are unaware that there is no national funding to keep the paths and access to these wild places in good shape, or that we work alongside Nevis Landscape Partnership (NLP) to identify where the main pressure points are

throughout the glen and find ways to fund work to make improvements.

But by working closely together with NLP, we have been able to repair and maintain much of the Ben Nevis path, including the summit navigation cairns. It is a privilege to do so.

As the first lockdown eased in summer 2020, we saw how important access to the outdoors was for everyone. Sadly, however, this also brought an increase in a range of negative impacts, from 'dirty' camping and littering to problems around congestion and car parking.

This summer and beyond, we will continue to support NLP as it implements a number of projects, including improved parking and toilet facilities, extended low-level path networks, the hiring of four seasonal rangers and a trial bus service to reduce some of the vehicle pressures that we see in the glen during the busiest times.

Rural skills training

IN KEEPING with a long track record of working closely with land managing organisations, West Highland College UHI (WHC UHI) ensured that partnership delivery was designed in as a key element of our popular Countryside Skills with Ranger Training course.

Launched in 2020, and based in Glen Nevis, the course sees practical skills training take place alongside land managing organisations under the umbrella of the Nevis Landscape Partnership. The John Muir Trust leads sessions on footpath work and habitat monitoring, involves students in projects and volunteer days, hosts work experience days and provides valuable insight into understanding habitat and recreation management.

As part of the course, students also complete their John Muir Award as well as study Scottish Qualifications Authority units including Countryside Interpretation and Countryside Recreation and Access, all led by college lecturers. This further prepares students for employment, with the partner organisations assisting them to explore real life issues and management strategies in the Nevis area.

Students hugely appreciate this opportunity to learn from working alongside such local experts and really feel this enhances their employability and future plans.

Heather McNeill, Course Leader Rural Skills,
West Highland College UHI

Young and wild

Helping young people to experience the area has long been a core element of the John Muir Trust's work at Nevis.

We recently celebrated 14 years of running a Wild Poetry Competition for local schools at the Fort William Mountain Festival. Generating more than 600 entries each year, it's a project that has included school visits, commissioning lesson plans and visits from poets in English, Scots and Gaelic, as well as sharing the children's work on the big screen.

The quality of work always astonishes us, as this year's winner of the English P1-3 category demonstrates:

*'My favourite place is the Glen
It's found at the foot of the Ben
With the wishing stone and soldiers
seat
This place you cannot beat
Buzzard flies above the cloud
Football pitch is very loud
Braveheart and little bear
Where I go I do not care
Deer are rutting on the hill
The noise can give you a chill
Tourists come and tourists go
But my favourite place they will not
know
Little flowers tallest tree
They are all special to me'*

**Glen Nevis, by Cooper Spence
P2/3, Inverloch Primary School**



Footpath training
with West Highland
College UHI



21

NEVIS

Help raise £100,000 for the UK's highest mountain

It is a great privilege and responsibility to have managed Ben Nevis over the past 21 years, but now we need your help.

Your gift will help to repair ecosystems, protect fragile habitats and face the growing challenge of the climate emergency – for the benefit of the Nevis community and everyone who visits this beautiful wild place.

Please donate today.

What your gift could do

£20

could help buy essential tools for a conservation work party

£50

could buy and transport half a tonne of path repair materials

£100

can help pay for Nevis staff to deal with increased visitor pressure

Donate at johnmuirtrust.org/helpnevis

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Clockwise from main: Chris Boothman and Gillian Hughes; Jane Ascroft; Patricia Jordan; Finlay Wild; Penny Clay; the Riddle family

My Nevis

We think Nevis is incredibly special, but what does it mean to local people? Rather a lot – as these thoughts from runners, climbers, mountaineers, guest house owners and local families all reveal!

“The Ben and Glen are such important places to me; I’ve returned to them year after year, in all different seasons and states of mind. Peeling back the layers, I can journey through my memories and experiences – skiing, running, climbing, exploring. Seeing the changing seasons connects the passing years, similar perhaps but never repeated. Ben Nevis has become a metronome of sorts for my life.”

Finlay Wild, Trail runner and ski mountaineer

“Ben Nevis is so much more to us than just the highest UK peak. It dominates where we live. The magnificent terrain and surrounding features add to its appeal, as do the seasonal variations of weather and light. It is truly a mountain area to be marvelled at and inspired by.”

Chris Boothman and Gillian Hughes, Walkers, photographers and guest house owners

“We live in Caol and look up at the Ben every day. Just before lockdown ended, we felt the kids were old enough to climb it before the crowds returned. They were so excited to reach the summit – the clouds even parted long enough for a stunning view over Lochaber. We had a great day and were so proud of them.”

The Riddle family – Sarah, Greg, Lucy (11) and Angus (9)

“A winter and summer playground with some of the best alpine-type climbing in the UK. Tower Ridge, Observatory Ridge, Green Gully, Ledge Route. Snow and ice, solid rock, long routes and cornices. Topping out into the wind and snow and navigating back down. Nights at the CIC hut, sociable and warm. A lifetime of mountain memories.”

Jane Ascroft, Climber and member of Pinnacle Club

“The Glen is cherished locally. I have fond childhood memories of swimming and cycling there. Going from the town park to the Sugar Loaf along the hillside exploring – no proper paths then. The Glen is like the wild back garden of Fort William. I feel just as connected with it today – it’s a place to look after so that generations to come can enjoy the same experiences.”

Patricia Jordan, Nevis Landscape Partnership

“After 30 years of mountaineering, I am still inspired every time I set foot on the Ben. To climb on the north face or break the ice on the half-way lochan is to remind myself of my place in the world. It’s a space of challenge and grandeur, where friendships are forged and rich memories laid down with each adventure.”

Penny Clay, John Muir Trust member

Love Ben Nevis?
Join us today
 Become a Member of the John Muir Trust and help us care for this wonderful wild landscape.
johnmuirtrust.org/join

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 COVER IMAGE: A BUSY BEN NEVIS SUMMIT

Thank you!

We would like to say a huge thank you to all who have helped us in our work at Nevis over the past 21 years – and invite you to join us in doing even more in the years to come.

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