

MEMBERS' NEWS

JULY 2013



Chairman's welcome

Usually, when asked whether I want the good news or the bad news first, I ask for the latter. We've certainly had both in the first half of this year.

Decisions by the Highland Council about Stronelaairg, Sallachy and Glencassley have been significant lows and you can read more about these inside. We have also begun to witness the unrelenting march southwards of the new Beauty-Denny pylons. In a few months, they will pass scornfully close to our new Wild Space in Pitlochry – a visitor centre that epitomises what is best about this organisation of ours. The look of pleasure on the faces of those at its recent opening was unforgettable (see page two for a full account).

In February, I attended a staff gathering where I learned more of the extremely diverse backgrounds of those who now work to implement our vision throughout the organisation. We are fortunate indeed.

Pitlochry also hosted our recent Members' Gathering and AGM, which proved very enjoyable. I was thrilled to welcome Allison Chin, President of the Sierra

Club, and Richard Cellarius, Past President – manifesting a relinking with the Sierra Club and the development of our name in the US that I have tried to achieve in recent years.

We welcomed our new Trustees at the AGM (and I thank those who supported my re-election) but must now report the resignation of Denis Mollison, who has to concentrate on two other major projects this year. I thank Denis for his continual enthusiasm and dedication but, like most folk, sense that he is taking a break rather than saying farewell!

Helen McDade, Stuart Brooks and I met the Scottish Environment Minister at the end of April and were left with the clear impression that he both understands and appreciates the job that we do. The Trust is respected in most quarters and we should be proud of our achievements. One of these is the incorporation of 'wild land' into the revised draft Scottish Planning Policy and associated maps produced by Scottish Natural Heritage. It is both encouraging and complimentary when those whom we have been lobbying begin to adopt our own language.

In important associated news, a review of the National Planning Framework 3 and Scottish Planning Policy has now been launched by the Scottish Government, but owing to our print schedule the consultation deadline is close – namely 23 July. There is much in the new approach that we like, but others will aim to counter these policy advances during the consultation; we must retain or improve the position.

In years gone by, Highland Clans were rallied to defend the land by sending round the Fiery Cross and I now do the same. **We need as many people as possible to respond to this consultation in support of wild land.** Guidance to help you in preparing a response is available on our website. The consultation period only runs until **Tuesday, 23 July**.

So, there has been good news too; much forward progress and, on your behalf, I congratulate those who have helped advance our vision. I do hope you enjoy this Members' News.

John Hutchison
Chairman

Feedback please!

Complete our Members' Survey and help shape the future of the Trust – see centre pages for details



John Hutchison in discussion with the Sierra Club's Allison Chin at the Trust's recent AGM and Members' Gathering

The Wild Space opens its doors

Around 50 special guests attended the official opening of the Trust's new visitor centre – Wild Space – in Pitlochry on Monday 22 April

At the launch, Trust chief executive, Stuart Brooks, reflected on the role of a key funder of the project. "The Wild Space is a product of the ambitions of one man – Alan Reece – who loved the mountains and wild places and wanted to instil that love in others," he commented. "My only regret is that Alan wasn't able to see it, but we're happy that his daughter Anne is here today to represent the Reece Foundation."

The aim of Wild Space to engage a broad cross-section of society was recognised by another speaker, Mike Cantlay, chairman of VisitScotland. "In the Year of Natural Scotland, our focus is on trying to interest Scots in getting out and about to get to know Scotland," he said. "The Wild Space is perfect for helping [people] on that journey."

Top landscape photographer, Colin Prior, whose work is featured in the visitor centre, said it was a privilege to be asked to launch the Wild Space. He explained how he discovered photography at the age of 23, following a childhood spent roaming the countryside: "I developed skills that came from direct observation – not TV. My whole thrust is to pass that information on to another generation."

Before helping Colin untie the red ribbon, Anne Reece explained why her father was so enthused by the Wild Space: "My father loved all of Scotland, but particularly the Highlands. He thought it very important that the John Muir Trust reach out to people who had never been there."

"The Wild Space means that people who come to Pitlochry and don't go any further north will still be enthused about wild places. And it will help ensure that the John Muir Trust is here for future generations. I hope that lots of people will come here and love it as much as we do."

The Wild Space has been funded by generous donations from the Reece Foundation, the players of the People's Postcode Lottery, the Gannochy Trust and Craignish Trust.

▮ GREAT REACTION TO WILD SPACE

The Wild Space has already enabled us to connect with a broader cross-section of society – even introducing us to distant Muir relative Thomas Muir from Lamar, Pennsylvania, who popped in while touring in the area.

Wild Space manager Jane Grimley is delighted that the spontaneous reaction of most people who visit is 'wow!', with many positive comments left in the visitor's book. Here is a flavour of what's been said already:

"Very impressed. Giving landscape a voice is a huge responsibility – good luck!"

Jim Crumley, nature writer

"Beautiful exhibits, good to walk around."

Carol and Alan, Edinburgh

"An important vision."

M Rankin, Felixstowe

"A much needed resource here in Scotland, let's have more."

Mo, Stirling

"I am fascinated and consider joining – thank you."

Harold, Dornoch

"Beautiful! Protect Scotland!"

Ann and John, Concord, Massachusetts

Meanwhile, our specially-commissioned Wild Space film is helping us reach people who haven't yet had a chance to visit Pitlochry. The comment of one viewer left on our Facebook page – "Beautifully filmed. It should be compulsory viewing for our politicians. I hope that the Scottish Government has a copy" – is typical of the reaction to date. The film can be viewed at www.jmt.org/film.asp (tip: expand the window to full-screen to get the full impact).



PHOTOGRAPH: CRAIG MACLEAN



PHOTOGRAPH: STV



PHOTOGRAPH: NICKY MACCLURE

Proud day (clockwise from left): Trust chief executive Stuart Brooks discusses the opening on STV; Colin Prior and Anne Reece officially open Wild Space; students from Pitlochry High School explore our new visitor centre

Milestone AGM and Members' Gathering

This year's AGM and Members' Gathering – held in the Trust's 30th year – saw more than 180 members join us at Pitlochry's Festival Theatre on the banks of the picturesque River Tummel

The weekend began with a talk by Allison Chin, President of the Sierra Club, who spoke about how her childhood family camping experiences in the US had generated a passion for wild places and eventually led her to the Sierra Club in the 1980s. It was the ideal opening to a special weekend.

Staff updates

On Saturday morning, chief executive, Stuart Brooks, introduced staff presentations on managing wild land, influencing policy and broader engagement.

Property manager, Fran Lockhart, highlighted the pressures on woodland in Assynt and what it has meant for tree development in the area. As she explained, while trees are normally expected to grow between 15 and 20cm a year, the grazing pressure at Quinag is such that the trees are not growing at all, and will likely die out.

Other presentations saw Chris Goodman, footpath officer, discuss recent path work at Steall Gorge and Quinag, as well as the results of his detailed path survey. In all, he has identified 11 priority paths that need repairs, costing around £400,000. Meanwhile, Wild Land Campaign coordinator Mel Nicoll outlined how the past 12 months have seen an increased political slant to the campaign, concluding: "Wild land is now being talked about."

Finally, Rob Bushby, John Muir Award manager, covered the Year of Natural Scotland. He made special mention of a free ebook – *Mission: Explore John Muir* – available on our website (see page six). Rob said the Award now reaches out to more than 23,000 people, encouraging each and every one of them to connect with, enjoy and care for the planet's wild places.

Official business

At the AGM itself, John Hutchison's chairman's report was followed by the financial report from honorary treasurer Walter Semple and director of resources Fiona Kindness. Walter was presented with a special bottle of whisky as he stepped down from his role. He thanked the Trust and reminded us that when we talk about saving the planet, it's for our children and grandchildren. "It's not the planet, it's the people who live here who are at risk," he said.

Following an acceptance of the special resolution and reappointment of our auditors, returning officer Donald Thomas reported an 11% turnout for the election of Trustees. He welcomed Gill Bond, Rob McMorran, Jo Moulin, Will Williams and Bill Wright who will all serve three-year terms, plus Jim Gibson and John Hutchison who will serve for one and two years respectively.

Inspiring work

The AGM was closed by Allison Chin who congratulated the Trust on its 30 years of work, and commented on how it had been "inspiring to see so many people that are so passionate about saving our wild places".

On behalf of the Sierra Club, Allison presented the Trust with a picture of Cathedral Peak in Yosemite, together with some kind words. "Thank you for having the vision and taking the responsibility to protect our wild places; managing our resources carefully; having the courage to stand up for what's right; and the patience to lead," she said. "I've been learning so much from you."

Walking and talking

Following a healthy lunch, members took part in a number of excursions, ranging from a visit to the Tummel Shingle Islands reserve with the Scottish Wildlife Trust, to a policy discussion held in the Pitlochry Explorers Garden.

After a busy afternoon in the fresh air, members gathered for a buffet supper and then got into the swing of things at the evening's ceilidh.

Our thanks to everyone who joined us this year. We look forward to welcoming you all to Dunbar in 2014.



PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID LINTERN

INSPIRING, WELL RUN AND FUN ...

Here is some of the member feedback from this year's AGM:

"It was positively mind boggling to hear of all the activities [during the staff reports] ... such dedication and enthusiasm. It is wonderful to be part of such a vibrant organisation."

"Meeting old and new friends to share our love of wild places. The event is always so well run."

"Reports from the staff reminded me (if I needed reminding) why I am a member. Very inspiring – I promptly decided to sign up for a work party."

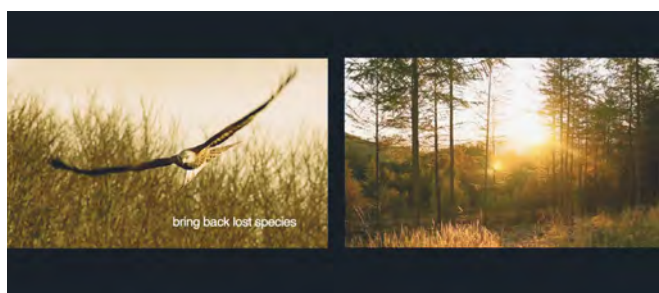
"The promotional film* shown at the AGM and in the new shop was inspirational. The ceilidh was also fun!"

* Watch the Trust's new film at www.jmt.org/film.asp



PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID LINTERN

Highland fling (clockwise from above): a lively evening ceilidh; John Hutchison introduces the AGM; a screen grab from the Trust's new film



PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID LINTERN

Fight for strong wild land protection continues

Those who attended our recent AGM heard of encouraging progress with the Trust's Wild Land Campaign

One thing is clear: there has been a significant increase in the level of debate about – and increasing support for – the protection of wild land. Since its submission in January 2011, the Trust's petition to the Scottish Parliament calling for a new statutory designation has played a huge role in raising the profile of wild land in Scotland. This has led politicians across the spectrum to acknowledge that Scotland's wild land is of national importance, and requires more robust protection.

However, at the end of May, the Scottish Parliament's Public Petitions Committee took the decision to close the Trust's petition after hearing evidence from two Scottish Government Ministers. Paul Wheelhouse, Environment Minister, and Derek Mackay, Planning Minister, said that, because the new Scottish Planning Policy consultation document proposes strengthened protection for wild land, the government is not currently minded to introduce a new wild land designation. In closing the petition, committee members stressed that they did not think this was the end of the road for the wild land debate, but that it would now move into a different forum.

Thank you to everyone who wrote to their MSPs and Scottish Government Ministers during the time the petition has been running. Having brought wild land issues into the public arena, we will continue to argue that a wild designation is the most effective means of protecting wild land for generations to come.

Our immediate focus, however, is on securing a stronger planning system to ensure that the special qualities of wild land, as mapped by Scottish Natural Heritage, are not undermined by development.

As per our chairman's call on page one, the Scottish Government has recently launched a review of the National Planning Framework 3 and Scottish Planning Policy and **we need as many people as possible to respond to this consultation in support of wild land**. Please see the Trust website for help in preparing your response. The consultation period extends to Tuesday 23 July.



PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID LINDBEN

Wild Land Campaign coordinator Mel Nicoll reports on progress with the campaign at the AGM

WIDER UK ADVOCACY

Recent activity at UK Parliamentary level by Sheila Wren, the Trust's advocacy officer, has included preparing Parliamentary Questions on the impacts of building on peatlands; submissions to MPs and Lords on the impacts on the landscape – and consumers – of energy transmission through remote wild land; supporting a bid for a new National Park covering areas in Dorset and East Devon; and securing several mentions for the work of the Trust (and John Muir himself) in a recent House of Lords debate on outdoor activities, led by Lord Greaves.

Wild land is likely to feature more in the news as the public inquiry into Natural England's proposals to expand the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks gets under way, during which time representations will be heard from a range of parties, including objections from six local authorities.

Given the impact of electricity power lines on wild land, especially in the context of future upgrades, Sheila has also been working with other landscape organisations on a proposal to the companies operating the high voltage transmission system that would identify projects that could qualify for a 'visual amenity allowance' to minimise their impact.

CASEWORK UPDATE

We continue to receive a high volume of requests to comment on or help in the fight against specific development proposals. Currently, these are almost always for wind developments and our focus is on those applications which threaten core wild land.

One such proposal is Stronelairg, in the Monadhliaths, and we were very concerned that Highland Council's South Planning Applications Committee voted in April not to object to this wind development (subject to conditions). The final decision will be taken by the Scottish Government.

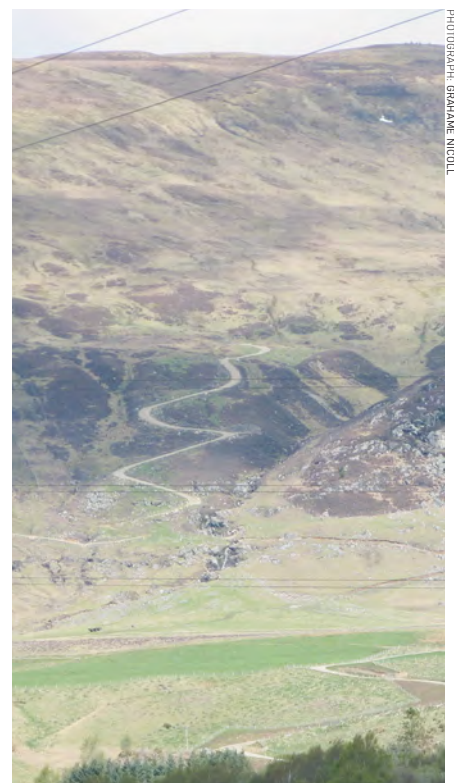
More recently, the Highland Council North Planning Applications Committee decided to raise no objection to two major wind developments on core wild land areas at Glencassley and Sallachy in Sutherland. The Trust has called for full Public Local Inquiries to be called for each to ensure rigorous scrutiny of both proposals.

HILL TRACKS – ACT NOW FOR TIGHTER CONTROLS

Members may recall our news in December that, following a public consultation, and in spite of a long campaign and significant evidence of the damage caused by hill tracks, the Scottish Government decided not to introduce tighter controls, but to keep the matter under review in the light of further evidence.

A concerted effort to gather evidence to support the case for removing permitted development rights for hill tracks has now been launched by a group comprising nine of Scotland's environmental organisations, including the Trust.

Campaigners are appealing for those concerned about this issue to take photographs of poor examples of hill tracks and submit them, along with a grid reference and any other relevant information, to a special website created for the project. (Please note that some tracks do have planning permission: www.scotlink.org/hilltracks gives further detail of what they're looking for). We have a short window of opportunity to persuade the Scottish Government to change its mind, and your help is essential if we are to make a strong case.



PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM NICOLL

Some hill tracks can leave a terrible scar on the landscape

Wildness in modified landscapes



PHOTOGRAPH: MIKE DANIELS

A flavour of the landscape included within the Wild Nephin project

CAPE WRATH COMMUNITY CELEBRATES MOD WITHDRAWAL

When the Ministry of Defence (MoD) dropped its plans to buy 58 acres of land on the most northwesterly tip of mainland Britain recently, it served as a victory for the people who had rallied behind the local community of Durness. More than 2,500 people signed an online petition to keep access open to Cape Wrath and prevent the MoD adding to the extensive bombing range it already owns on the peninsula.

The Trust's communications editor, Alan McCombes, told BBC *Out of Doors* listeners how we got involved in the campaign to keep Cape Wrath open: "The local community approached the Trust early on and asked us to support the campaign, give them advice and back it in any way we could – so we mobilised our support base and publicised it.

"Outdoor organisations got involved and the MoD has now backed down. I think that's a huge victory for those who have campaigned to maintain public access. It will allow a community buy-out to go ahead.

"The Durness community aims to buy and develop the land, without compromising the wild, rugged character of the area. They would like to make it more accessible for tourists, perhaps add to the facilities and make it an even more attractive part of Scotland to visit."



PHOTOGRAPH: DON O'BRIEN/COLL

Looking north towards Cape Wrath lighthouse

Senior Trust staff recently attended a two-day conference in County Mayo, Ireland on the subject of 'Wilderness in a modified European landscape'

Held during Ireland's presidency of the European Union, the conference explored European Commission proposals to include wilderness and wild land under the Habitats Directive.

The conference was held to coincide with the launch of the Wild Nephin project – Ireland's first declared wilderness area. The project sees 11,000 hectares of forest, mountain, bog and lakes in the Nephin Beg mountain range of northwest Mayo being set aside to be managed as wilderness – to enhance the ecology of the area and to develop zoned recreational access based on hiking trails and camping. For more, visit <http://bit.ly/15DxB4d>

HARD-HITTING ESSAY RAISES WILD LAND AWARENESS

Susan Wright, the Trust's communication manager, was recently invited to write a 2,000-word essay to mark John Muir's 175th birthday. 'The wild and the wind' was published in the *Sunday Herald* on 21 April – Scotland's first John Muir Day. Here is an extract:

'Muir dedicated his adult life to protecting vast swathes of the American wilderness. These weren't places devoid of human presence. Native Americans had inhabited and explored every inch of California, but they had a profound respect for the land that provided the food, water and beauty that sustained them. This connection to the natural world was alien to many of the Europeans who were exploiting California's natural riches with vigour in the late 19th century.

Following his first visit to Yosemite, Muir observed that "in a few feverish years", the "pick-and-shovel storms" of the Californian gold rush had severely damaged great swathes of the state, in sharp contrast to the centuries of minimal impact by Native Americans who, he wrote, "walk softly and hurt the landscape hardly more than the birds and squirrels".

By the time Muir wrote these words in 1869, much of Scotland's natural heritage had been destroyed. Most of her native tree cover had gone – felled over the centuries for houses, agriculture, and ships, and to fuel the Industrial Revolution. As a result, nutrient-rich soils were blown away by the wind that now had free rein over the bare hillsides. Plants and insects disappeared.

Bear, beaver, wolf, lynx, boar, auroch, sea eagle, red kite and other species were lost to merciless hunting and shrinking habitats, reaching a climax when the Victorians waged a programme of extermination across the Highlands to clear the land of any living thing that might compete for their prized game birds and other sporting targets.

Today, most of our bare hills and moors have been over-grazed by sheep and deer, and over-managed to favour the growth of heather for game birds to the detriment of the flora and fauna that would otherwise live there. Blocks of dense commercial forestry pockmark the land, lacking the rich biodiversity that thrives in native woodlands. Most of us are so disconnected from nature, we can't read the landscape around us.'

The piece is available to read in full at www.jmt.org/wildessay.asp

Outstanding support enables Award inclusion work

Funding from the Robertson Trust has underpinned our John Muir Award inclusion work in Scotland since 2007

The Robertson Trust initially committed £10,000 a year for three years enabling the Award to work in partnership with eight youth work organisations. The funds stimulated year-on-year growth with the result that more than 150 Scottish organisations that predominantly work with inclusion groups were involved with the John Muir Award in 2012.

The same year saw the organisations support more than 3,000 people from socially excluded backgrounds to achieve an Award – equating to more than 30% of the 9,400 Awards achieved in Scotland in 2012.

Encouraged by this success, the Robertson Trust pledged a further two years of support totalling £20,000. This, along with cash from other funders, enabled us to recruit a full-time inclusion manager – Kim McIntosh – in 2010.

The Award team has been working with organisations like West Dunbartonshire youth charity Tulloch – one of the eight initial partners the Robertson Trust enabled us to support. Tulloch has used the Award as a structure to encourage young people to connect with, enjoy and care for wild places ever since.

Recently, as part of Tulloch's Go4ward project, 15 youngsters achieved their John Muir Discovery Award after spending a week of their spring holiday out and about in Auchnacraig Woods. The Award enabled them to enjoy exploring their local woodlands through art and outdoor games and building positive relationships with peers – giving them the confidence to transition into high school this summer.



Art, games and fun in Auchnacraig Woods

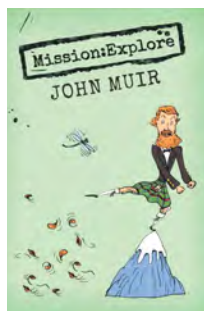
PHOTOGRAPH: TULLOCHAN

MISSION: EXPLORE – JOHN MUIR

It's now possible to follow in the footsteps of the father of modern conservation with our special ebook as your guide. Whether exploring the top of a mountain, or a crack in the pavement, the ebook has plenty of tips and fun illustrations to provide inspiration.

Mission: Explore John Muir is packed with 20 missions and some of Muir's most memorable quotes. Best of all, it's free and will soon be available in both Welsh and Gaelic translations. Download a copy from our website at:

www.jmt.org/missionexplore.asp



CONSERVATION FUND BOOST FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS

The Trust's Conservation Fund received a wide range of applications from communities on Trust land and land partnerships this year. In total, we offered £30,000 of funding to a variety of projects, including festivals celebrating the natural heritage and culture associated with beaches and mountains on West and North Harris, and bilingual interpretation material for a new wildlife hide at Galson.

Projects to protect machair at Sandwood, create native woodland at Sconser and Harris, and control knotweed at Torrin have also been offered funding.

In addition, successful applications were received to support a tree nursery officer as part of the Coigach and Assynt Living Landscape project; for staff of the Knoydart Foundation and Assynt Foundation to study a sustainable deer management module; and for Elgol primary school to build a polytunnel as part of an Eco Schools project.

IN STEP WITH MUIR

John Muir felt that the entire planet was his home and he constantly travelled to see it. In 1897, on one of his more wide ranging excursions, he walked from Indiana to Florida – a journey now known as his '1,000-mile walk'.

In celebration of this journey, a group of staff, volunteers, Trustees and friends of the Trust have resolved to journey 1,000 miles on foot between them. Participants include the Trust's biodiversity officer, Liz Auty, who is training herself to record the birds she sees on her walks for a British Trust for Ornithology breeding bird survey.

Liz's most recent blog entry includes this lovely account of waiting for a family of beavers to appear on a visit to Argyll's Knapdale Forest: 'It was a fantastic evening – warm and sunny, but with a slight breeze and no midges. We waited, listening to the daytime wildlife getting ready for bed. A cuckoo's call echoing around the forest, chaffinches, willow warblers, goldcrests and fish jumping out of the still water kept us entertained. At about 8.30pm the yearling emerged and swam off along the edge of the water. She was followed about half an hour later by the adults. They seemed huge in comparison and swam together almost nose to tail until they disappeared from view. It was so great to see them.'

Read more about what Liz and other participants have been doing to commemorate Muir's journey at <http://johnmuir1000milejourney.wordpress.com>



Liz takes a breather while exploring Knapdale Forest in Argyll

PHOTOGRAPH: LIZ AUTY



PHOTOGRAPH: JEN ROSS

Sign up for a Wild Day

Join us to learn all about how we conserve wild land at first hand

Our latest selection of Wild Days provides a unique opportunity to explore Trust land accompanied by one of our land team. Group sizes are fairly small and there is plenty of time for questions and discussion.

This year's first Wild Day saw Nevis Conservation Officer Alison Austin take an intrepid group along Steall Gorge in a downpour – a perfect chance to see the river in full spate.

"Five of us braved the rain to meet up with Alison at the Glen Nevis visitor centre," explained Jen Ross, one of the participants and a Trust member since 2003. "We drove to the furthest car park to start the walk up through the gorge. The path was wet and crossing the streams plunging down to the gorge was done with care.

"Hearing the torrent of water and seeing the marks of ancient scouring of boulders on the side of the gorge and the gorgeous fresh green of the trees – despite being fairly apprehensive about the drop beside me – was truly impressive.

"We all appreciated the range of information from Alison and walking in twos and threes – constantly changing groupings – made for a sociable excursion. It really was a wild day!"

If you would like to explore the Trust's properties with an expert guide, there's still room on the following Wild Days:

1 August Quinag

Explore the ecology of this dramatic part of Sutherland.

2 August Sandwood Bay

Spend a day exploring the coastal wildlife, pools and shoreline of the magical far northwest.

30 September Schiehallion

Take a fascinating tour of this historic upland site combining archaeology, geology and ecology.

21 October Glenlude

Pay an autumn visit to our Borders estate, discovering more about the 'Phoenix Forest' and our other conservation projects in action.



PHOTOGRAPH: JEN ROSS

Wet and wild: the intrepid Wild Day participants at Steall Gorge (above); walking beside the raging River Steall (top)

MARATHON RUNNERS RAISE £5K FOR THE TRUST

Thanks and congratulations to our five supporters who ran the Virgin London Marathon in April to raise funds for the Trust.

Bill Stickney, who travelled all the way from Pennsylvania to take part, was the fastest of our five, with Tammy Harrison and Eddie O'Beirne not far behind. Father and daughter team Stephen Mead and Lisa Bettington completed the group. All five successfully finished the race, but special mention must go to Stephen who struggled valiantly to the finish despite an injury flaring up with eight miles still to run.

With 34,000 runners in total and a 700,000-strong crowd lining the route, it was certainly a memorable event. "It was an absolutely fantastic day, the atmosphere and support from the crowd were amazing," said Stephen. "Knowing that you're running for such a good cause really drives you on as your legs start to tire towards the end."

Our runners came up with some creative fundraising ideas, including a charity disco and aerobics class, along with more traditional methods such as raffles, cake sales and coffee mornings. Money raised is still being counted but the final total will top £5,000.

Of course, you don't have to run a marathon to support the Trust. Other recent and current fundraisers include: Ali Leith and Niall Hepburn, who asked for donations to their favourite charities in lieu of wedding gifts; artist Bern Ross, who kindly donates when she sells a painting; Eva Kupska, who is running, cycling and hiking her way around Scotland, including the recent Edinburgh Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathon; Tim Raffle, who collected money for the Trust to celebrate his 50th birthday; and a walking group known only as 'The Fellowship' who are tackling the West Highland Way.

If you have any plans to fundraise for the Trust, or are interested in a place in next year's London Marathon, please email adam.pinder@jmt.org



PHOTOGRAPH: STEPHEN MEAD/LISA BETTINGTON

Congratulations – and thank you – to Stephen Mead, Lisa Bettington (both pictured above) and all those who raised funds for the Trust by running in this year's London Marathon

Forthcoming events

LOCAL MEMBERS' GROUPS

SCOTTISH BORDERS

31 July

Bushcraft day for young people

A one-day workshop at Glenlude near Innerleithen teaching 6–13-year-olds how to build shelters, cook over a fire, track animals and games, too. Price: £20. Booking essential as places are limited.

Contact KLAWEED Project Officer, Rachel MacAleese, on 07792 033 331, or kailzieofficer@gmail.com

9 August

National Moth Night

Moth event with Butterfly Conservation. Meet at the Glenlude volunteer shelter at 9.30pm. Bring a torch. Light-trapping will take place for two to three hours from about 10pm. For details, contact Karen Purvis on 07811 354957, karen@jmt.org or Malcolm Lindsay (Butterfly Conservation) on 07563 515854, malcandles46@talktalk.net [NB the event may take place on 10 August depending on the weather. Please contact Karen or Malcolm before travelling].

10 August

Local work party

This is the rescheduled date for the work party that was cancelled on 6 July. If the weather is kind, participants are welcome to camp at the campsite created at Glenlude. For more, contact John Thomas, j.p.r.t@btinternet.com

21 October

Guided walk

Guided walk around Glenlude with Trust staff as part of the Tweed Valley Forest Festival. The Local Members' Group is also arranging a work party on 27 October. <http://bit.ly/13neBqu>

Winter talk schedule

Local organiser John Thomas would like suggestions for next winter's talks in the Borders (November 2013 – April 2014). Last season, the group enjoyed presentations from SEPA, the Trust's Helen McDade on our energy policy and a lively debate on Land Reform. Please email suggestions to John at j.p.r.t@btinternet.com

NORTH WEST

7 July

Oldshoremore wild flowers

Members of the Trust and Lochbroom Field Club are invited to meet at the Oldshoremore beach car park (NC203584) at 11am (bring lunch). Contact Ian Evans on 01571 833241, or ian.evans.nedd@gmail.com

9 November

Forum and 2020VISION

Both events at the Macphail Centre in Ullapool are free. For more on the Members' Forum, contact Denis Mollison on 07866 352748, or denismollison@gmail.com

SOUTHERN

7 July

Malvern Hills walk

A four- to five-hour guided walk in the Malvern Hills led by Shelia Wren, the Trust's advocacy officer. Meet in the car park of the Malvern Hills Hotel, Wynds Point, at 9.30am (for 10am start). Boots and waterproof clothing essential. Please bring lunch. For more, contact sheila.wren@jmt.org

8 September

Welsh waterfalls walk

Join Rex Eckley and the Southern Members Group for a 9.5-mile walk. Meet at the Cwm Porth Car Park (sometimes referred to as PorthyrOgof, SN928123) at 10am. Parking is £4. Boots and waterproof clothing essential. Bring lunch. To book, contact southernmembersgroup@jmt.org and reference 'Welsh waterfalls walk' in the subject heading.

16 November

Southern Members' Gathering 2013

From 10.00am to 5.00pm, with an optional excursion on Sunday 17 November. Joining speakers from the Trust is eminent Polar photographer, Martin Hartley. If in the southwest area, you will find a booking form enclosed with your summer mailing, or you can download a copy from our website. For more, contact Elizabeth Radford on 01722 332251, or elizabeth_radford@yahoo.com

A HELPING HAND AT MAR LODGE

The North East Group's conservation volunteers recently helped the National Trust for Scotland's ecologist Shaila Rao with tree planting at Mar Lodge on Deeside.

The work is part of a five-year experiment to establish unfenced riparian (riverbank) woodland in targeted areas of a moorland regeneration zone. In May 2012, Shaila and her team planted 3,000 birch trees across five sites so they could investigate the effect of plot size, steep slopes and nurse species on the successful establishment of broadleaved species.

This year, volunteers from the John Muir Trust helped plant a mix of rowan, alder, juniper and birch. The trees will be monitored to see how successfully they establish without any form of artificial protection from nibbling by deer.

The first planting weekend in April was threatened by lying snow, but a final burst of sunshine allowed a couple of the selected sites to be planted out by the eight volunteers. By the second day, winter had returned with heavy rain and snow showers, but planting was completed and hot showers at Mar Lodge were most welcome.

A further two-day planting event in May enabled another nine volunteers to head up to about 580m elevation on the slopes of Beinn a' Bhuid. Winter was still present with hail and sleet, but a very social evening, ending with some tasty cheese and wine, was spent in the bunkhouse at Mar Lodge.

Despite the chill and some aching muscles, all the volunteers thoroughly enjoyed the days out and the wealth of knowledge gained from Shaila and her ranger colleagues. Further events are being planned.



Volunteers get stuck in at Mar Lodge together with ranger Shaila Rao (foreground)

PHOTOGRAPH: JAMES BROWNHILL

TELL US YOUR NEWS

What have Trust members been up to? We'd love to find out. Share your news and stories with us and we'll publish a selection in the next *Members' News*. We'd particularly like to hear from any group members and their projects. Let us know on 01796 470080 or email promotions@jmt.org Thank you.

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Haretail cotton-grass growing on bog moorland
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