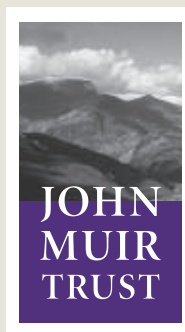


JOHN MUIR TRUST JOURNAL

No 42 April 2007



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Cover photo View to the summit of Ladhar
Bheinn over the head of Coire Dhorrcail from
Stob a'Chearcaill. ©JOHN CLEARE/
Mountain Camera Picture Library.
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Published every spring and autumn.

Opinions expressed in this journal do not necessarily represent the policies of the Trust.

JOURNAL

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Hundreds tried wild writing in the mountain festival



JMT MEMBER JOHN WORSNOP won the first ever writing competition at the Fort William Mountain Festival with 'Walking North' (on page 13) about a journey to Cape Wrath and the weather and wildlife encountered. Runners-up in the 'Wild Journeys Wild Places' open competition were Alison Napier, Colin Demet and Linda Cracknell. The judges were Cameron McNeish and Jim Perrin.

The winner was announced at a writing evening in the Lime Tree, Fort William, chaired by Cameron McNeish and with readings from their work by Margaret Elphinstone and Jim Perrin. Earlier, Margaret ran a successful wilderness writing workshop.

Events and competition were organised by the Trust's Nevis conservation officer Alison Devey: 'I noticed other festivals had embraced mountain literature and thought it would be a great way of encouraging local people to share their experiences of wild places with us', she said. 'The festival committee were really pleased to have a writing competition as part of the Highland Year of Culture 2007.'

Alongside the open competition a 'Wild Poetry' event for schoolchildren in Lochaber received an astounding 314 entries! Writer and storyteller Lilian Ross visited schools with Alison to hold workshops and introduce children to writing about their experience of nature, wildlife and wild places. Entries in English and in Gaelic poured in, covering themes from deer, wildcats and whales to mountain biking and skiing – as well as the Ben. The poems were judged by Alistair Grant.

The schools competition followed up the Glen Nevis summer programme in 2006 which encouraged children to explore and discover the glen, and the Big Draw event in October 2006. This year's summer programme is in conjunction with Highland Council's Glen Nevis rangers and the children will be encouraged to attend enough events to complete all the challenges in the John Muir Award over the summer.

For adults, summer guided walks looking at the special qualities of Glen Nevis such as mountain wild flowers, geology and the rare mountain ringlet butterfly will continue.



Some of the hundreds of entries to the schools competition.

SEARRAICH

le Isabella Moore

Searraich a' ruith mun cuairt, cho beag 's cho òg,
Eagal orra gum bi rud gam marbhadh.

A' coimhead air duine a' marbhadh na h-èich eile.

Ruith mun cuairt le bràithrean 's peathraichean.

Ruda a' tighinn a-staigh airson companaidh

Agus nuair a tha iad trì bliadhna a dh'aois, bidh iad a' faighinn air bristeadh a-staigh

Gearradh am fear leis am

FOALS

by Isabella Moore

Foals running around, so small and so young
Scared that they will be killed.

Looking at people killing other horses.

Running around with brothers and sisters.

Ram coming for company

And when they are three years old they are broken in

Cutting the grass with their teeth

Isabella Moore, 11, of Mallaig Primary School won first prize in the section for older children.

First Bill Wallace Grants are made

THE FIRST BILL WALLACE GRANTS were made in February. From 35 applicants seeking funding for adventures all over the world, three were selected for the £500 awards:

- Laura Balfour – a student who has set up an independent expedition to Kenya to carry out a study into reef destruction and the sustainability of local reef fishing.
- Kirsty Macguire – member of an all-woman independent Scottish expedition to climb unscaled peaks in East Greenland.
- Suzie McGuiggan – participant in a UK Girl Guide project for young leaders to trek in Nepal. The trip includes work with a local community.

Laura Balfour said: 'I cannot express just how grateful and honoured I am that you thought my project was worthy of this very personal award... I just can't believe how lucky I am that you have made it possible for me to conduct this project which I've wanted to do for so long but never thought achievable.'

Each of the recipients has offered to speak at next year's AGM about their adventures, although news of their exploits will be available earlier on the web.

Bill Wallace was a stalwart of the John Muir Trust for many years and played a vital role in its development. In 2006 as a lasting memorial the Bill Wallace Grant, 'Go – And Do It!' was launched to help people follow in Bill's footsteps and to seek out life changing experiences in wild places of the world in ways that would benefit both the person and the wild places themselves.

● It is anticipated the grant will be awarded annually. We are therefore aiming to build the value of the fund during 2007. If you wish to contribute to this fund please send a cheque made payable to the John Muir Trust.

Beaulieu-Denny inquiry's first four weeks

As we went to press the JMT, through its membership of the Beaulieu-Denny Landscape Group (BDLG), had been present throughout the first four weeks of developers' evidence to the Beaulieu-Denny transmission line public inquiry. Through legal representation in cross-examination, the group had managed to extract several significant admissions.

The Trust believes little of the evidence offered by the developers justifies the adverse effects the 220-km power line would have on the landscape.

Information presented to date has aimed to support the developers' view that the scheme is necessary for the transportation of Scotland's energy as outlined in government proposals. However, under cross-examination from BDLG's solicitor, the developers admitted that they had not assessed an alternative route around the east coast of Scotland which would require much less new infrastructure and admitted that they had not compared like-for-like costs when talking about the cost of subsea cable alternatives.



Bill Wallace Grant winner Laura Balfour — with sea urchins!

The BDLG and the JMT do not believe that the necessity of the project, to extract electricity produced in the Highlands by renewable sources, has been proven. They believe that though the scheme may appear at first sight to be 'least-cost' under the narrow remit of the electricity industry regulations, it is likely to cost Scotland dearly through damage to its landscape.

We think that realistic justification for the transmission line has not been heard by the inquiry and that alternative action and environmental costs have been given marginal analysis thus far.

The BDLG will have the opportunity to address this in April when we will have expert witnesses from the electricity industry speaking on the deficiencies of the technical case; from a professor of economics on the poor economic case and from landscape experts about the need to protect the highlands from destruction by attrition.

Helen McDade, JMT policy officer, said: 'After hearing the evidence brought forward by the applicants, I am confident that BDLG and others who are representing some of the 18,000 objectors will win the reasoned arguments in the inquiry. We have to hope that politicians will listen carefully to those arguments.'

North Harris turbines

The North Harris Trust (NHT) has submitted a planning application for three wind turbines, and as we went to press was waiting for a response from Western Isles Council. The scheme, which has over 90% support locally, and is supported by the John Muir Trust, would secure the future of the NHT, and help to reverse the economic and population decline the area has suffered for many years.

News



Carn Mor Dearg arete of Ben Nevis by John Allen.

Ben Nevis abseil posts are in question

The Trust has had an enquiry about the future of the abseil posts near Ben Nevis summit, at the top of the Carn Mor Dearg arete (top post GR 171710).

It is thought that the posts and a sign were put up in the 60s. Nowadays with changes in hillgoers' skills and equipment the posts have most likely become obsolete and if they were not in place already the Trust would not be considering putting them there.

Members of the Nevis Partnership are agreed that they should be removed and this has been backed by the Mountaineering Council of Scotland who made the following statement:

The original purpose of the poles has become outdated and some of the poles are in a poor state of repair. The sign at the top acts as both the top abseil anchor and as a navigation marker. The MCofS supports the removal of the poles and reducing the size of the top sign to one which is appropriate for use as a navigation marker.

The MCofS will invite further opinions, mainly via the *May Scottish Mountaineer*.

The Trust expects that there will be strongly held views on either side about what action should be taken.

If you, as a JMT member, would like to comment on this issue please contact Fran Lockhart, JMT partnerships manager, on fran@jmt.org.uk, or 0789 5014673.

● 2007 will also see work being carried out on Ben Nevis summit path as part of a project aided by the Heritage Lottery Fund. This work will protect parts of the historic pony track and also the fragile lichen and moss communities – adjacent to popular routes and short cuts – for which the Ben is designated.

Wildwood wisdom for Islay primaries with John Muir Award



Lossit Bay on Islay's west coast.

A YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROJECT for Islay primary schools will draw on the expertise of a local 'bushman' and John Muir Award provider.

Starting this spring, the year-long 'Wildwood Wisdom' project, initiated and sponsored by the Mactaggart Third Fund, will be co-managed by the John Muir Trust and delivered by Islay Birding & Bushcraft of Port Charlotte.

Bushman Jeremy Hastings said: 'We are delighted to deliver this to Islay, giving the young people here a real chance to develop skills, appreciate this wonderful wilderness and participate in the Award fully. We are extremely thankful to Sir John Mactaggart for enabling and funding this project.'

Youngsters will be challenged through a series of after-school activities, and day and residential camps, to discover first-hand Islay's special biodiversity and its unique landscape. They will share bushcraft skills focused on care, respect and responsibility, and have a chance to get up close to nature.

John Muir Award regional manager Toby Clark added that the benefits of the project were clear: 'By using the simple framework of the Award to encourage enjoyment and care for Islay's wild places, the programme can be planned, delivered and then celebrated by people who live and work on one of Scotland's most beautiful wild islands.'

Glencanisp lodge



Glencanisp Lodge, owned and managed by the Assynt Foundation, still has availability for 2007 holiday lets, for parties of up to 20. Call 01571 844100, or check the Foundation's relaunched website at www.assyntfoundation.org.

The foundation is raising funds for a general upgrade of the building, to improve the heating system and also to allow an official change of use to include events open to the general public.

Adam Pellant, the foundation's project officer, said the improvements would be 'a fundamental step in making Glencanisp Lodge a central hub for the community and for groups visiting this wonderful land'.

The lodge is the setting this autumn for an 'Art in Assynt' week as part of the JMT's Activities Programme.

Those interested in contributing to the upgrade should contact Adam at the Assynt Foundation, Glencanisp, Lochinver, IV27 4LW, 01571 844100.

Hustings for the environment

The John Muir Trust is organising 'environmental hustings' for the upcoming Scottish elections in May. We think voters should have a chance to scrutinise the main parties' environmental credentials and decide who, if anybody, deserves their vote in May.

As we went to press, Glasgow local group were

AUCTION STATIONS



THE JOHN MUIR AWARD IS 10 this year and as part of the birthday there'll be an e-auction of items related to the John Muir Trust and John Muir Award. The auction will include a unique creation by Steven Appleby, cartoonist of international repute; a special commission from ceramic artist Craig Mitchell; paintings by landscape artist David Bellamy (above) created as part of the Journey for the Wild; and a signed copy of Yvon Chouinard's book *Let My People Go Surfing*.

Can you suggest other items that will raise our profile or our funds? — then please get in touch with us at info@johnmuiraward.org, or 0845 458 2910.

News

finalising the first of the events, for 29 March, under the chairmanship of Ian McWhirter and with several MSPs attending.

A second was arranged for Kingussie on 17 April, at Talla nan Ròs centre. MSPs Fergus Ewing and Eleanor Scott are expected.

The Pitlochry event is on Monday 23 April at Fishers Hotel, and will be chaired by Mark Stevens. Confirmed attenders are John Swinney MSP and Murdo Fraser MSP. More information on all hustings will be available on www.jmt.org, or from either Helen McDade on 01796 470080 or Fiona Allan on 0131 554 0114.

● Scotland's environmental charities including the JMT are campaigning together for the May elections as the Everyone Campaign.

Iceland nature exchange for Douglas

Douglas Halliday, the Trust's Skye properties land manager, is off to Iceland this summer thanks to an award from the European Union's Leonardo da Vinci Nature Exchange Programme for 2007. Douglas will be travelling to Skalanes in eastern Iceland as part of a group organised through archnetwork. In what he expects to be a memorable experience, the exchange will focus on gaining an understanding of Icelandic conservation issues through field visits and sharing information.

● Douglas is now one of the directors of the Orbst Trust. Four new directors were recently appointed to this trust, which is seeking to formalise a long-term management lease for the coastal estate of Orbst with Highland & Islands Enterprise.

Social inclusion review available

A recent review of 'John Muir Award Social Inclusion Activity in Scotland' shows that in 2005 57 Scottish organisations were using the Award to help address social exclusion issues, delivering a total of 1310 Awards, 28% of all those achieved in Scotland that year.

The review summarises activity across the country, identifying common themes amongst organisations that fall within the Award's broad social inclusion category. They include alternative curriculum, pupil support services, 'youth at risk' groups, young people and adults with physical or learning disabilities, adult mental health and addiction groups, disadvantaged women's groups and homeless support groups.

It also shows how the John Muir Award is being used to address the issues faced by the people these organisations work with.

Get the review from www.johnmuiraward.org, or by phoning 0845 458 2910.

Another milestone for Flat Holm



Hugo Iffla writes— If you like gulls, then Flat Holm Island is the place for you, as this nature reserve and SSSI is home to one of the largest colonies in Wales. It is also known for being the place where the first radio message was received after transmission across water by Marconi in 1897 – and it occupies the most southerly point in Wales. On top of all this history, Flat Holm is the first place in Wales where John Muir Awards at Conserver level have been achieved, by a group of volunteers and wardens.

Julie Furber, Elaine Heckley and Julie Newcombe all finished their awards in the autumn after a good 6 months of effort. Biology field study groups and others will benefit from the knowledge and resources developed in their project. The participants also produced identification keys and information boards and will be able to keep visiting groups more interested through informed guided walks. It epitomises the 'sharing' challenge of the John Muir Award.

L-R: Julie Newcombe, Matthew Smith (A-level student), Julie Furber and Elaine Heckley.



Award to be part of YHA's summer programme

Recent discussions with the Youth Hostels Association (England and Wales) have generated agreement for the John Muir Award to be integrated into the YHA summer programme 'Do It For Real'.

Do It For Real will involve up to 11,000 young people and more than 300 staff over 23 sites.

The initiative will be fully funded, with a new temporary staff member appointed to deliver its objectives,

and YHA branded resources being produced within a project budget. JMT management costs will also be covered.

The YHA's Do It For Real manager Rick Smith said: 'It's brilliant news! Our persistence seems to have paid off and agreement has been reached with Big Lottery Fund that the educational element of Di4R will be the John Muir Award in 2007. I cannot tell you how pleased I am!'

- Above, there's a birch-leaf motif on this year's new certificate designs for the John Muir Award.

Sandwood No to artillery

A request by the Ministry of Defence to site up to six guns on Sandwood Estate over a 2-week period in order to fire onto Cape Wrath was rejected by the Trust. Although this request has been refused it is possible that permission from neighbouring states for bombing or firing onto Cape Wrath may be sought in the future.

Very wet winter weather in the north-west led to some sizeable landslips on Sandwood (one near the bay is pictured below) and some damage to the track. However, Sandwood conservation manager Cathel Morrison said the estate had 'not come off too badly, as locally there was a lot of damage including bridges washed away'.



Multiplication puzzle

A deer count on our Skye estates towards the end of February produced some interesting results. In 2003 the Deer Commission for Scotland undertook a count and recorded a total of 219 deer on the three estates. Our annual culls (40–60 per year) have been based on reducing this population and 251 deer have been shot since that count. However the February 2007 survey revealed that we now have 301 deer between the estates. Food for thought!



Interpreting North Harris

The JMT has been helping the North Harris Trust to produce high quality interpretation that does justice to its environmental and cultural heritage. Having commissioned an interpretation plan for North Harris in 2006, we are now implementing it.

A beautiful hand drawn relief map of the estate has been commissioned – the part from Tarbert to Taransay is shown above – and in the coming months this will be turned into a souvenir poster, artwork for an information leaflet promoting the area, and a feature on the North Harris Trust website.

JMT staff have also completed the North Harris management plan, and are monitoring the area's internationally important golden eagle population. JMT will be working closely with the North Harris Trust and Scottish Natural Heritage to ensure that a suitable system of monitoring is implemented.

AGM & Members' Weekend
12–13 May
Moorings Hotel, Banavie
Fort William

Two windfarm proposals for Lochaber



A 91-turbine wind farm has been proposed on the northern shores of Loch Arkaig – about a mile north from where this picture was taken on the road to Strathan. No application has been lodged. The turbines would have a rotor diameter of 62 m and a hub height of 60 m. Developer is North British Windpower; a scheme of this size would be decided by the Scottish Executive. A second Lochaber proposal is for 30 turbines on top of Druim Fada, behind Corpach. This scheme, also not yet submitted, would fall within Highland Council's planning remit.



JMT members could be worshipping Apu, the Inca mountain god, at 6,372m on the largest mountain in Peru's Cusco region thanks to a new venture between two of our corporate members.

Tiso and Wilderness Journeys have partnered to launch a range of adventures and inspirational trips in Scotland and throughout the world. Other challenges which may appeal

to JMT members include a traverse of the Picos and an expedition to Alaska while more moderate trips include a trek in Bhutan. 'Tiso Adventures' brochures are available in-store and trip participants will receive benefits such as a 10% discount on clothing and equipment for their trip, a free Tiso Adventures microfleece and an invitation to a pre-trip evening and presentation at selected stores where Tiso staff can answer any questions and give advice. Importantly, both Tiso and Wilderness Journeys are committed to responsible tourism with respect to local environments and communities. For more information about Tiso Adventures call 0131 625 6636.

sconser lodge

FOOTPRINTS OF AN EPIC JOURNEY

Statistics of the 2006 Journey for the Wild

The estimated carbon footprint of last year's Journey for the Wild is 10,000 Kg CO₂, the Journey team has worked out. This is roughly equivalent to one person commuting from Edinburgh to Glasgow on the train for over a year, or a return flight for two to New Zealand from the UK.



The project took on the challenge of minimising its environmental impact, and in the entirely non-motorised journey, 16 different forms of transport were used, ranging from bikes to prams to the Shetland yoal (above).

Participants were encouraged to use public transport for travelling to and from the journey and to monitor their travel, accommodation and conservation activities along the way. This monitoring was used for our carbon footprint estimate.

Details of what was included in our calculation can be found at www.jmt.org/journey, with details of how you can help the Trust offset this footprint.



Participants also made a positive difference to the areas they travelled through, undertaking 11

conservation projects across the country, from tree planting on the edge of Dartmoor, to beach clearance on the Isle of Egg and bird surveys on the Isle of Hoy (Arctic skua, below, Derek Robertson).

The 1577 people who carried the batons raised almost £13,000 in sponsorship for the Trust, and attracted 88 media articles in local and national news. 61% of them were young people under 18 years, and 10% were facing social exclusion. The total of 'people-days' that went into the journey is 3284, or about 9 years. The Trust gained 63 new members through the Journey.

Other statistics include:

- 14 local and two main events
- 44 MSPs signatory to a parliamentary motion
- 145 public, private and community organisations involved
- 50 John Muir Award groups involved
- 168 conservation work days

The Journey's legacy includes the website archiving the story, a mobile exhibition of artefacts, images, maps and stories; and a DVD capturing the magical qualities of the people and places involved. This legacy will be used to gain support for the Trust and to inspire more people about the importance of wild places.

- More information at 0845 456 1783, or journey@jmt.org.

Everyclick Counts

Use internet search engines a lot? You can benefit JMT at no cost to yourself.

www.everyclick.com is a search engine, free at point of use, that gives half its gross revenue to a charity nominated by the user.

Why not use everyclick and register JMT as your chosen charity? (we're under T for The John Muir Trust!). One JMT couple raised about £350 in 18 months for no extra effort or cost.

- For JMT to receive full benefit you should sign in each time you use the service.



Please tell Marianne about your ticks

We have been contacted by Marianne James who is doing a PhD at Aberdeen University on the transmission cycle of Lyme disease in Scotland.

She'd like to hear from members of the John Muir Trust who remember particular areas they visited last year in Scotland as being particularly 'ticky' – to try and identify hot spots for fieldwork this coming summer.

Please email her with details of where you picked up ticks or received bites, with a grid reference, habitat description (e.g. forest/grassland/garden) and how many.

Finally, if anyone has been unlucky enough to have acquired Lyme disease in Scotland and is willing to give information via a small questionnaire, please contact Marianne with details of where you were bitten.

Either post to Marianne James, Room 216, Zoology Building, Tillydrone Avenue, Old Aberdeen, AB11 6FG, or email to marianne.james@abdn.ac.uk.



Cumbria Award funding

Northern Rock Foundation has agreed to fund the John Muir Award in Cumbria to the tune of £150,000 over three years. With money from Friends of the Lake District, Lake District National Park Authority and LEADER+, this will pay for staff and admin support to continue the presence of the Award in the county. As previously, staff will be employed by Cumbria Youth Alliance. There is a specific remit to engage with groups from socially excluded areas.

Chairman joins Sir Hugh This year is the fifth birthday of the Munro Society. They celebrated the 150th 'birthday' of Sir Hugh Munro in October 2006 with a weekend when more than 400 people across Scotland climbed a Munro and paid their tribute to the cult. The society's dinner in Fort William the following week was graced by Sir Hugh in effigy, and by Dick Balharry, JMT chairman, in person as principal speaker.

Allison Lock, JMT's fundraiser for more than two years, left in February to take up a post with the Chartered Institute of Forestry in Edinburgh. One of Allison's early assignments was not actually fundraising, but the organisation of the Trust's 'Sustaining Wild Land' conference in Pitlochry in October 2004.

We are in the process of recruiting Allison's replacement.

Bidding for the Wild The popular walking magazine Trail has nominated the Trust as their eBay Charity of the Year for 2007. Each month, Trail puts a number of items up for auction. Each item is featured in the magazine on their eBay page, which gives a reference number to be used on the eBay website. Recent items auctioned included a tent, trainers, a rucksack and a limited edition print.

So far the scheme has raised more than £1100. Huge thanks to the staff at Trail!

CAR PARK, CATCH POINT!

Are you passionate about the John Muir Trust? Do you have some free time between April and September? If the answer is yes, would you consider helping us recruit new members at our properties?

This year the Trust should achieve a milestone 10,000 members. We are aiming to double our membership by 2010, which is a mountainous challenge for us all.

We are looking for volunteers to speak to walkers and encourage them to sign-up at the lands we own and manage. Recruitment activity will mainly take place in car-parks although there will be some opportunity to explore the surrounds and to see the difference that JMT has made. It will also be a chance to work with our new Wild Land Rangers and other volunteers.

Training and information will be provided by John Muir Trust. Please help us with this new challenge.

For further information please contact:

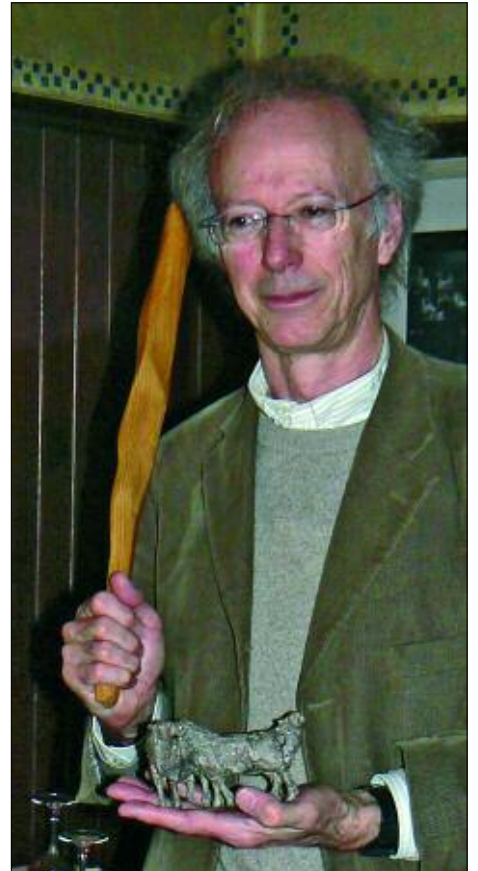
Fiona Allan
0131 554 0114,
fiona@jmt.org

HF Holidays



Philip Ashmole of Carrifran Wildwood reports: We have just had a landmark volunteer high planting event (with some people camping overnight) at about 650 m in Firth Hope, just below the summit of White Coomb. Similar events are planned for April and May, and obviously JMT volunteers will be most welcome. The photo (by Mike Baker, Scottish Borders ranger) shows volunteers working up there on Saturday 17 February. • **Contact details on p 28.**

tiso ad



Top: Denis with the sculpture by Jill Watson and the baton he received for being a route trustee in the Journey for the Wild.

Below: Jill (L) with Jenny Mollison.

Opposite: Denis on a Trustees' visit to mid-Wales; a boat party visits Knoydart to view the Trust's first purchase of Li and Coire Dhorrcail (1987). L-R Graham Tiso, Denis, Terry Isles, Nigel Hawkins.



DIRECTOR'S NOTES *with* Nigel Hawkins



THREE TRUSTEES who have given distinguished service to the Trust are standing down at this year's AGM.

Professor Denis Mollison, one of the founders of the Trust, has two unique distinctions – being member number 1, and having served for 21 continuous years as a Trustee.

The reason Denis is member number 1 is because he was the first to put his hand in his pocket and pay his membership subscription – and it is great that nearly 10,000 people who also care passionately about wild land have followed him and are today members of the John Muir Trust.

Denis played a key part in the early years of the Trust when it required a great deal of hard work, ingenuity and persistence to get the organisation going and to launch our first land purchases and projects. Denis wasn't short of any of those qualities – and he continued to make a very thoughtful and important contribution to the Trust during his many years firstly as Treasurer and then as Trustee.

Friends, including past and present Trustees and staff paid tribute to Denis at a dinner following his last Trustees meeting in March. He was presented with an exquisite bronze statue of three sheep beautifully crafted by the sculptress Jill Watson, wife of architect Ben Tindall, JMT member number 4. Both were present along with Sir Charles Fraser the lawyer and his wife Lady Ann. Sir Charles acted as midwife in the birth of the John Muir Trust in 1983.

Tribute was also paid to Denis's wife Jenny who has given unstinting support to her husband and his work and commitment to the Trust.

Also retiring from the board this year was Professor

Paul Jarvis, formerly of Edinburgh University. Paul was involved with the Trust almost as long as Denis having given tremendous advice, encouragement and practical support over our first conservation project – native woodlands at Li and Coire Dhorrcail (Knoydart) in 1988. It is a joy today to walk in those woodlands and to see nature flourishing.

Paul's expertise in ecology contributed greatly to the development of Trust policy and programmes and he was greatly involved at Schiehallion (not far from where he and his wife Margaret now live) both with JMT's purchase of the mountain, and in the community trust's purchase of the adjoining hill Dun Coillich and the establishment of a major native woodland project there.

The third kenspeckle Trustee to retire was John Mackenzie, president of the Mountaineering Council for Scotland, who had completed two consecutive terms as a JMT Trustee. John who is also the Earl of Cromartie, is a well known figure in mountaineering and brought great knowledge of this key area of recreational interest to the benefit of the Trust.

The three Trustees are all standing down under the new rule limiting Trustees to two consecutive terms of three years each. The rule change, which allows former Trustees to stand again for election after a year, was introduced in 2002 to encourage fresh blood. This has certainly been achieved this year with no less than five new candidates joining the two Trustees seeking re-election in the ballot for five places on the board. This is excellent news for the Trust as it shows the interest in our work and gives choice to the members. A big thank you is due to all the candidates for ensuring that democracy is working well in the Trust.

Continued over

Schiehallion

Two tricky issues have been facing the Trust at Schiehallion where the realignment of the old path was completed in 2005 and where there has been great success in the regeneration and revegetation of the old line.

The first issue involved the incursion from neighbouring land of sheep whose grazing was preventing natural regeneration and who were also causing damage to the new path. After a great deal of thought and consideration of all the options, it was agreed to erect a stock boundary fence on the north side of the mountain along the roadside and up our western boundary to keep the sheep out. This was not an easy decision but was seen as the only way to significantly reduce the incursions. The fence is now up and doing its job – but the Trust hopes it will be possible to remove it completely in the future.

The other issue involves the car park at Braes of Foss, owned and run by Forest Enterprise. It was provided many years ago for walkers going to Schiehallion and our new path starts as one leaves it. Forest Enterprise do not consider the car park meets their recreational objectives but are faced with maintenance and repair costs of car park and toilets. In consultation with the Trust, the community based owners of neighbouring Dun Coillich, and Perth and Kinross Council, they are putting a payment machine there this summer to meet some of the costs. There is also an ongoing discussion about the long term future of the car park and other funding sources are being considered.

Both issues have been fully discussed by the local Schiehallion Group who have been giving great support to the mountain and its management. We are very grateful to Lynnette Borradaile, chairman of the group and all its members for their enthusiasm, expertise and commitment.

John Muir Award

The very productive partnership with the Cumbria Youth Alliance for the John Muir Award is set to continue with important new funding for the next three years. The Northern Rock Foundation has pledged £150,000 and with significant financial support from Friends of the Lake District and the Lake Dis-

trict National Park, the award will continue to reach out to all sectors of society and encourage interest and concern for wild places.

Great credit is due to Rob Bushby, the John Muir Award manager, and his colleagues in the award and in the alliance.

Biodiversity project

The Trust's major biodiversity project is now underway with the appointment of three wild land ranger/conservers and a biodiversity officer.

The ranger/conservers are Donal O'Driscoll, who will cover Sandwood and Quinag; Lester Standen (Sconser, Torrin and Strathaird on Skye and Li and Coire Dhorcail on Knoydart) and Alasdair Mackaskill (Ben Nevis and Schiehallion). Completing the team is Dr Elizabeth Auty, biodiversity officer.

The project aims to increase biodiversity – the range of animals, birds, plants, insects, fungi etc – on our properties through managing habitats and controlling grazing pressures. Monitoring and recording change will be very important along with explaining the project to visitors and local people.

The Trust is very grateful to the Tubney Charitable Trust, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the Peter De Haan Charitable Trust, and Scottish Natural Heritage, without whose assistance this very important project would not have been possible.

Giant powerlines

The inquiry into proposals for a giant power line right down the middle of Scotland from the highlands to the lowlands is now well under way, as reported in *News* (page 3) and *Last Word* (page 32). If approved these huge pylons up to over 200 ft high will march through some of our finest landscapes and make a bold statement about how little the nation values one of its greatest assets, its internationally renowned and spectacular

mountains and wild landscapes.

JMT has joined five other organisations to present a united front in opposing these proposals through the Beaully Denny Landscape Group. The group is chaired by our policy officer Helen McDade who has been doing an excellent job with her colleagues.

It is an example of organisations working together – the National Trust for Scotland, Ramblers Association Scotland, the Mountaineering Council for Scotland, the Scottish Wild Land Group, the Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland and JMT – in an issue of concern to us all.

A very robust case, including options for sub-sea cabling, is being put forward to stop the powerline blighting the Scottish Highlands for decades to come.

Over 17,000 objections to the powerline were received – and we believe that more and more people are becoming concerned about this proposal as they learn what is proposed and its colossal impact on our wild land.

Journey's End – but maybe a new beginning?

An illustrated and attractive report on last year's Journey for the Wild has been produced by the journey's co-ordinator Sam Baumber and manager Dave Picken. It shows how successful the journey was in engaging with people from all backgrounds, ages and abilities and in increasing awareness generally of the importance of wild places.

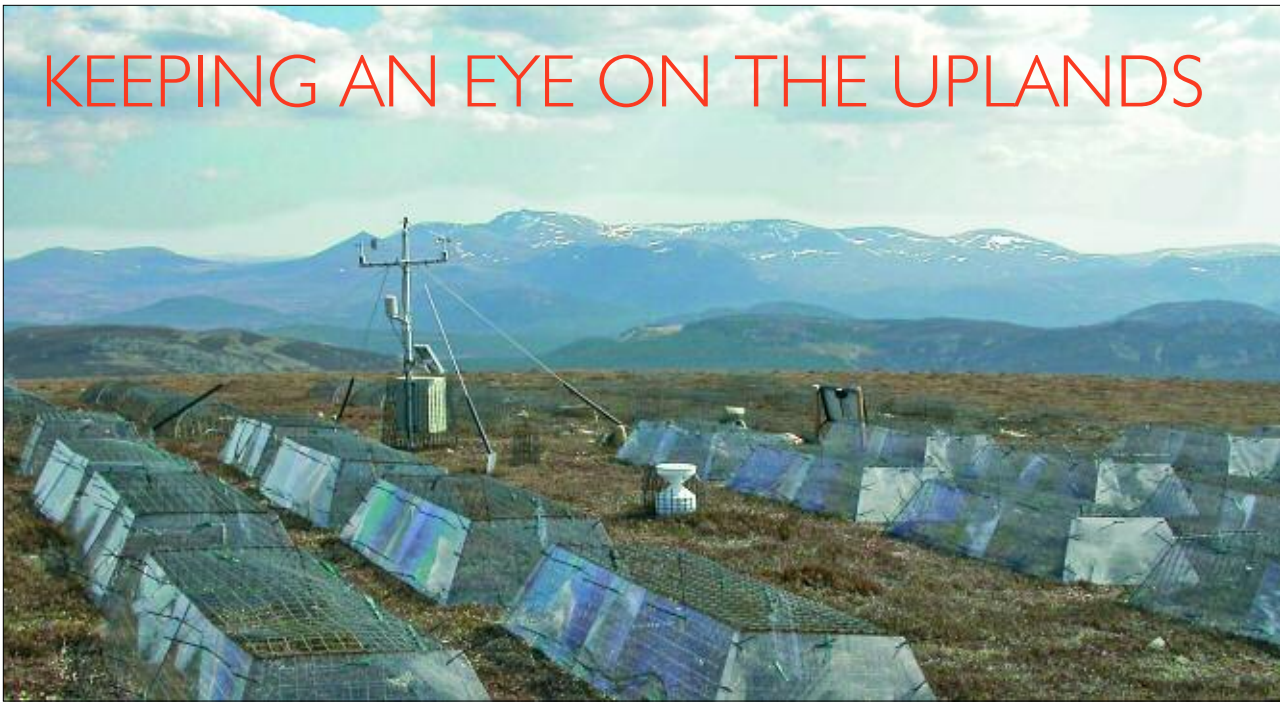
The report evaluates the journey and considers all aspects including the carbon footprint. It can be seen on www.jmt.org.

From the journey have come an excellent website, exhibition and DVD. What is less easy to evaluate is the impact on hearts and minds. But one only needed to meet some of the hundreds of people who took part to realise what it meant to them.

It was a unique experience – and for them and many others the journey goes on...



KEEPING AN EYE ON THE UPLANDS



The internationally important uplands of Scotland are home to some unique, yet fragile habitats, but today they are coming under increasing threat from a combination of both climate change and pollution. Macaulay Institute scientist Andrea Britton explains the impacts these will likely bring to one of our last remaining wildernesses.

MONTANE HABITATS lie above the natural tree line. They are natural habitats where the distribution and type of plant cover is controlled by exposure to wind, winter snow cover, soil types and water availability rather than the actions of man. They are the closest thing that the UK has to pristine wilderness.

While sulphur pollution (acid rain) was a problem in the past, nitrogen pollution is currently a major issue and climate change will be a big challenge for the future. Since 1999 scientists at the Macaulay Institute have been conducting long term experiments in the Cairngorms to investigate the response of heather-dominated montane heathland to these far reaching human impacts.

Scientists have done very little work in the montane zone. This is partly due to the difficulties of setting up and running experiments in areas without access to power and where often the only means of access is by a long walk in, carrying all the necessary equipment (as well as your own gear) in a backpack! Despite this, the rewards of working in a beautiful environment and contributing to its conservation have lured the hardy few to start unravelling the mysteries of montane habitats and species.

On an exposed plateau at 750 m above sea level, overlooked by Ben Avon and Lochnagar, we spray a weak nitrogen-fertilizer solution, similar to that found in the natural rainfall, onto the vegetation to mimic the effects of pollution. Since the natural pollution in this part of the Cairngorms is quite low, our treatments bring levels up to those found in the mountains of England, Wales and southern Scotland. This nitrogen treatment is combined with burning and grazing in some areas so that we can study how these different impacts interact.



From top: Open-top chambers ('mini-greenhouses') and the weather station at the main experimental site; if there's enough snow cover, heavy computer equipment and water samples go in by sledge. All photos by the author.

We monitor a whole range of different indicators. This includes the variety of plant, moss and lichen species to be found in the vegetation and their growth each year. We also measure effects on the chemical composition of the plants and the soil and the quality of the water which drains from it. Solar powered data loggers record weather information and soil temperatures – which affect how fast plants grow. Rain and cloud samplers collect the water which falls naturally at the site and enable us to measure pollution levels.

So how does pollution affect montane habitats? Over the past seven years, this study has given us some insights into how this type of heath, which covers much of the upper slopes of the Cairngorms, responds to pollution.

■ One of the first changes to be seen is a reduction in the number and diversity of lichens found in the vegetation. These fascinating organisms, half plant,

half fungus, are what give the short montane heathlands their characteristic 'crunch' underfoot on a dry day. Their vulnerability arises from the way they obtain water. Plants with roots take up water from the soil and have a waxy coating on their leaves to keep moisture in. This waxy coating also helps to protect them from pollution in rainfall. Lichens and mosses don't have a waxy coating as they take up the water that they need by absorbing rainfall. This makes them very vulnerable to pollutants in rain water which slow their growth and may eventually kill them altogether.

■ Those lichens and mosses which can tolerate the pollution face another problem. The nitrogen pollution acts as a fertilizer on the shrubs and grasses and the extra nutrients cause these bigger plants to grow faster and taller, smothering the lichens and mosses which need light to survive.

■ Downstream water pollution is another consequence of nitrogen pollution. Even with the extra fertilizing effect of the pollutant nitrogen, plants in montane habitats grow quite slowly because of the cold, wet climate. This means that they don't use all of the nitrogen in the rain for growth, and much of it is washed into the soil. The billions of fungi and bacteria living in the soil use more of the nitrogen until eventually they cannot use any more and the ecosystem becomes 'saturated'. When this happens the excess nitrogen is carried through in the water draining out of the soil and starts to appear in rivers and streams, reducing water quality for wildlife and people. Because montane soils are shallow and cold, saturation occurs very quickly and the pollution is passed into rivers.

Continued over



And what about climate change? Global warming is changing the climate of our mountain areas, but to predict what the effects will be we need to understand how changes in climate might interact with the effects of pollution.

Early in our study we discovered that heather exposed to high levels of nitrogen pollution was blackened by snowfall early in the winter. This damage has also been seen in other parts of the Cairngorms recently. Exposure to nitrogen changes the way plants take up water and makes them more vulnerable to drought and frost. For plants growing in the extreme climate of montane areas this could affect their ability to survive harsh winters or summer droughts and may increase their sensitivity to climate change.

To investigate this further we established a new study in 2004 using mini greenhouses to increase air temperature by 1–2 °C, mimicking the predicted change to our climate.

It's still early days, but we have already seen that

warmer temperatures result in earlier flowering and increased flower and fruit production by heather, bilberry and crowberry. Changes in flowering are important because seed production controls the spread of many species at lower altitudes into montane areas. If more seed is available, lower-altitude species such as heather and wavy hair grass may be able to spread upward, out-competing specialists like mountain azalea.

Seed production, however, is only the first step and there are many more questions to be answered before we can say how much and how fast our montane areas will alter in the face of climate change.

While warmer temperatures and fertilising nitrogen pollution are likely to combine to increase plant growth, the UK's famously windy climate may help to keep vegetation pruned short. In exposed areas such as ridges and summits this might limit the effects of temperature changes, much as we see short turf and 'mountain' species almost down to

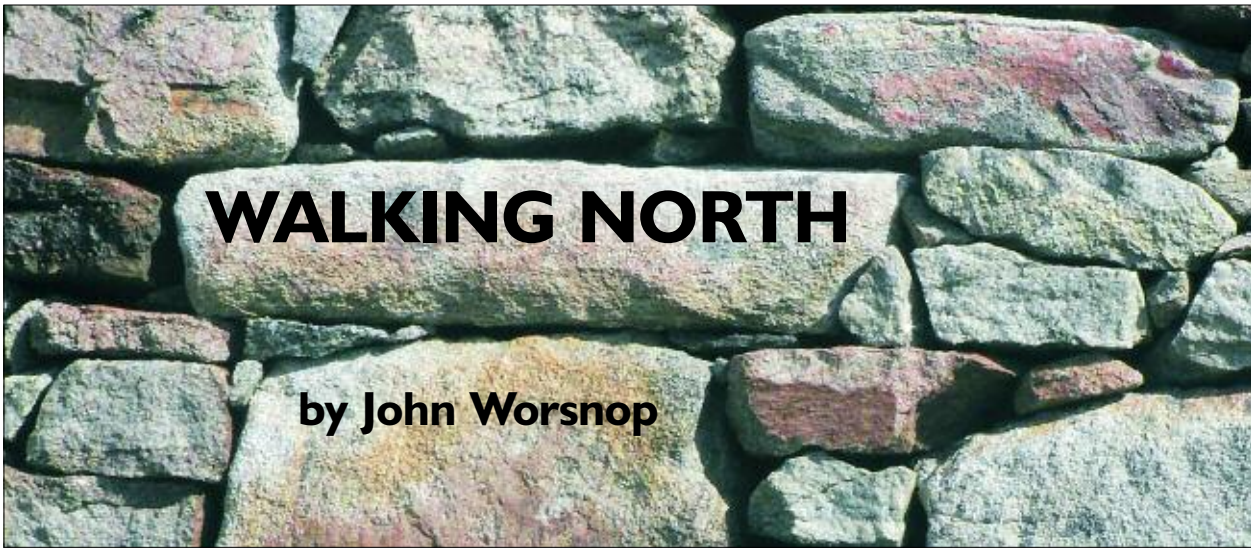
L–R: Downloading data from a weather station in winter; a diverse array of lichens on a Cairngorm montane heath; Mountain azalea, a mountain specialist found on exposed ridges and summits.

sea level on exposed areas of the north-west coast.

More vulnerable are the species restricted to sheltered montane environments, particularly those dependent on snow cover in hollows and gullies. You may have noticed snowbeds melting earlier in recent years; this makes it easier for common plants to invade these areas and out-compete the specialist mosses and liverworts currently found there.

The challenge now is for scientists to supply the information which conservationists, land managers and decision-makers need to inform the management of our mountain areas and to make sure we get the best possible outcome in an uncertain future.

BERGHAUS



Photos John Worsnop



'Walking North' won the 'Wild Journeys Wild Places' writing competition held by the Trust as part of the Fort William Mountain Festival. Judges were Cameron McNeish and Jim Perrin.

John Worsnop is a JMT member.

I THOUGHT I HAD THE PLACE to myself, one at least, but perhaps two hundred square miles, bounded by two thin ribbons of metalled track. There would be no ferry from Durness and, unless somebody was stravaiging the wastes by Fashven, Cape Wrath would be mine alone.

A big wind out of the northwest concentrated itself into the shallow dip between a low eastern bluff and the big shoulder of Druim na Buainn above Sandwood Bay. In the blackness all was roar and boom and clatter. Pitched in the square of a sheep fank the tent rattled and contorted. Time disappeared into the night. The cries of seabirds, gulls perhaps, too broken to define, were somewhere and brief. There was another sound, too, deep, distant, and threatening – the detonation and expanding boom of the ocean hurling itself against rock with the ferocity of a thousand miles of uninterrupted momentum. Water-mass was breaking along the coast towards Rubh' a Bhuachaille, the shepherd herding the waters to landfall. It was a long night of storm. The sea thundered and crashed with a power that filled me with a wakeful fascination, listening to the raw crush of the torment wasting little by little the sea stacks, the arches, the caves and ledges, shifting dunes of sand under sea and out of it. The noise, the tearing wind, the squalls, the night seemed to remove the past in a long, slow deliverance: all was a loud present.



And then, in the flush of dawn, the wind dropped just enough for me to distinguish a new sound, a long surf growling into the bay. And a little later a small bird's call, close to the tent, bright, sharp, flying from left to right, and then gone. At eight o'clock on a clear morning I set out.

The day was exhilarating, a walk into reality. Contours imagined lack hard slope. Walking towards the place you

Walking north

peeling back the layers

towards the edge of the world

towards a turning point, Wrath,

perhaps;

*or maybe just collecting another tangle of memories
to haul across storm-washed shifting sands:*

*shards of plastic – fish crates, industrial drums,
a car wheel out of the sea,*

day-glo floats, torn-tangled nets, yards

*and yards, all colours – blue green orange yellow red –
and ropes – hawser, lashing, sheet –*

*to snag and hang up the shivers of memory
upon the fierce tang of the sea.*

have dreamed of, with the singular experience of earth, sky and weather, you engage with the sensuous as reality unfolds. Fierce wind, sun and intense blue sky; brief squalls of hail early on, then snow, which I watched blasting in off the sea from the Arctic. I took to guessing whether the squalls would hit me, or miss, dark moving smudges curtaining swiftly across the bright sea, and guessing, too, how long they would take to arrive. When they hit they were bitter, but they blew out in little more than a minute leaving my face stinging like a salted cut.

Even in this remote corner of Britain there was human artefact – the lighthouse, of course, and its walled fields, a bizarre MOD sign in the middle of nowhere warning

Continued over



Continued from page 13

off poachers, iron stanchions of a broken fence line, and tracks which kept disappearing, and then re-appearing just at the point where your eye lead you to follow the lie of the land to drop down to a river crossing, round a knoll, or follow up a spur: others had known this way, too, as the best line to move on. Such tracks were re-assuring, eliciting a fellowship with those who had trodden this way before; but also disappointing – even in our wildest place here were signs of our intrusion, and I now a part of it with my own treading feet.

Stunted vegetation, rock slab, boulder field, four river crossings there and four back, and steep coastal gorges. At Geodha Ruadh na Fola, where the wind had been throttled up the cleft, it had blasted the ground level from the cliff top. There was no vegetation, just a wind-scoured waste, the red-brown compacted gravel and bedrock of sandstone. Great slabs of turf had been lifted and rolled back, roots and soil no more than a foot thick and, further back from the drop into the geo, where the wind had spent some of its violence, pocked with shallow pools of confused water, little island hummocks of vegetation, rough grasses and wind-bitten heather clung on.

And then, rising out of Allt na Clais Leobairnich something unexpected: straight ahead a prospect of another sea appeared between a scoop in the hills, the northern ocean, the end of the land! It was obvious, but something I hadn't pictured! 'Cape Wrath' was a location, dimly dreamt of, with a lighthouse, but I hadn't got beyond that. Here was reality, the dream opening out of its frame to let in a big sky and the sea.

For four hours I walked into the buffet and slap of the wind; and when the top left corner of Britain dropped away sheer beneath me, I was knocked by a violent updraught as polar air met the land. On all fours I looked to see where Britain turned from going north, to going east. To my right cliff after cliff, undulations of the edge of the land stretching away and off to Duncansby Head. This was the end of our island!

I sheltered behind a big wall enclosing the old lighthouse field. Back against the stone, facing the midday sun, apple in hand, I nestled down. I revelled in the openness, the emptiness, the cold, the wind, the blueness of a big sea: this was mine, the sun shone on me. And then movement caught my eye.

I was not alone! Face to face stoat made me share that

*Stoat advanced, seeking lunch along the wall,
peering into the recesses between
big base stones, methodically: lollop,
pause, turn, head in a gap, moment, back out,
turn, and on. Forty yards of careful search
until at a backing out turn stoat stopped. And looked.
For there, two cracks ahead, blocked path: a shape
athwart, the flattened wall-run occupied
by something big, unfamiliar, breathing,
with looking eyes, unmoving but alive,
perplexing stoat. Look met look, curious.
The unsleek oddly coloured, the brown whip
with flashing white bib, stalled in each other's space
a moment, just an arm's length too near to
dare to reach. Stoat then turned in dignity
to return and, o rippling in light leaps
regained distance in one pure flex of motion.*

tip of land. Walking into it, I had been taken into it. Emptiness was only in the mind.

The sea dazzled, returning. Going north had been a walk into promise, going south was a walk into a haze, as if what was secure and familiar - tent, car, and the road home – were somehow unreal. The wind lifted a fine spray of sea and sand across the bay. Sun dazzle and haze. Down on the sands I walked the full length, touched rock at the far end – it was real – and was washed over by the white roar of long waves. I paused and listened and watched, and then scratched words in the sand, and saw them rinsed out. Rewritten, washed out. But bird and stoat, and stoat's prey, would remain when I was gone. I left the white noise, left something of myself, but took away a fleck of understanding.

OWN THE 1895 PANORAMA FROM BEN NEVIS



This limited edition reprint still has some prints available:

- 3-page centre section, as above, 90cm x 15cm (including white border) £20 including P&P
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Please send a cheque made out to JMT Trading Co Ltd, or phone and pay with a credit / debit card:

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Tel 0131 554 0114.

We asked a lot of people if they'd like to contribute to this number's cover story, the Knoydart and Loch Hourn area. Among those who came back, it was the contributor's personal story that grabbed the attention. So in these pages we are glad to present the stories of a farmer, a ranger, a chronicler, a photographer, a walker and a JMT volunteer – voices of over 50 years' experience of Knoydart and Loch Hourn.



The farmer – Iain Wilson

MY FIRST MEMORIES OF KNOYDART were when in 1965 my father told me we were going to the head of Loch Nevis to shoe some highland ponies for Tony Montgomery who ran an outdoor centre for under privileged children there. We were met in Mallaig by David Smith (who was later to become a respected friend and neighbour at Airor) and taken by boat up the loch past Inverie, and through the narrows at Kyles Knoydart to Camusrorry. Little did I know then as an excited schoolboy that 40 years later I would be carrying hill walkers on my own charter boat through these same waters!

I was fortunate enough to join Tony on one of his treks two years later when I took my own small pony from Glen Nevis up by Achnacarry and Loch Arkaig to Glendessary and on through the hills to Loch Nevis to meet up with a group of boys from Dr Banardo's. After a day or two's rest we set off up by Carnoch over Mam Meadail and down to swim the ponies over the Inverie river and then head up over Mam Barrisdale and on to Kinloch Hourn. Over the next five days we continued north through the most magnificent wild land the west coast has to offer, right up to Shieldaig on Loch Torridon. There we met David and his group who had sailed up and we swapped ponies for yacht and spent the next week sailing home round Raasay, the Crowlin Islands, and Kyle Rhea including calling in to see Gavin Maxwell's otters at Sandaig. We arrived back at Camusrorry exhausted but elated and I was left with a feeling that this was where I belonged somehow.

My next connection with Knoydart was when I helped my father bending some railway rails in his blacksmith smiddy at Torlundy for making anchors for fish farm cages in Inverie when Major Chamberlayne-MacDonald was trying to find ways to make Knoydart pay! The old net drying poles left up by the Dubhlochan are all that remain of that ill fated enterprise.

I finally made my way on to the peninsula to work as a seasonal stalker/fishing ghillie in August 1985 for new owners KPL (Knoydart Peninsula Limited). The estate was in a state of flux, being broken up and sold off piecemeal and remained that way till the Knoydart Foundation buyout 14 years later.

On one of my first mornings working in Inverie, we were giving some new stalking guests some practice at the target on the beach in front of Inverie house when a 'towrist' in shorts and oversized trainers wandered out of the bushes beside the target



Iain with Ben and Roy. Below: Calanna leaving Inverie; Roy with Ladhar Bheinn in background.

and into the line of fire. The head stalker berated him as a silly old 'B' and chased him off. It turned out he was a B after all, in fact, none other than 'Brasher' himself! He was to become a friend and inspiration in the years to come (I am now honoured to be a director representing the Chris Brasher Trust on the Knoydart Foundation).

All through my life I have been blessed with a lot of 'chance' meetings and the next was bumping into Geoff Hayward fishing on the Guserain river. Geoff represented the owners of the river and the farm of the same name and a year later I was offered a limited partnership tenancy of Inverguserain farm. Soon I was to meet Jo (my wife to be) who was working as a cook in Inverie House. We married in 1988 and settled down to life on the farm. We built up a flock of 1000 Scottish Blackface ewes and also planted over 100,000 native trees in four newly created woodland plantations. But 'diversify' is the name of the game if you want to survive on a highland sheep farm! So we invested in a 33ft boat and after a thorough refit at Doune Marine, Calanna (named after our children Calum and Anna) was launched. We now specialise in drop-offs for walkers and climbers around Knoydart and the Small Isles, as well as whale and shark watching in the summer months. We also took over the management of Creag Eiridh, a lovely self catering house just outside the village on Inverie bay (www.creageiridh.co.uk).

In 1996 we were lucky enough to be offered the chance to buy the farm outright and jumped at the chance, although with BSE and then FMD just around the corner it was to become a struggle. Market prices for sheep were very low and a change was needed. We converted to farming organically and decided to try to sell our product direct to our customers. We now do a 'lamb in a box' scheme and send them all over the UK.

We have been well supported by JMT members and give a donation to the Trust for every lamb sold. Our job satisfaction has now trebled and we feel very lucky and privileged to be able to live and work in such a beautiful place.



The volunteer – John Worsnop

MY FIRST JMT WORKPARTY was in April 1996 when my son and I walked in from Kinloch Hourn to camp at Poll a' Mhuineil, to be greeted by Dot Levison with tea and cake! Although the initial planting in the enclosure at Inbhir Dhorrcail had already been done, the trees must have been so small that walking past we 'missed' them. We went for each subsequent planting, except '98.

The April plantings were always great fun and hard work. To start with you had to make a real physical effort to get to the place, and be utterly self-sufficient. Then there was the clambering up steep slopes with a sack full of 'treelets', a spade, and your day rucksack. It often rained, heavily. Trees and spades on one occasion were on one side of the burn, we were camped on the other, and it rained for nearly 24 hours. Characters arrived by canoe, with dog and child, or by inflatable rubber dinghy. A young lad of 11 walked in from Kinloch Hourn with his own 28 lb rucksack to plant trees with his dad. Some walked over from Inverie, or got Len Morrison's boat from Arnisdale. There were campfires. One year a recently fallen deer was found at the bottom of the gorge; venison was roasted on split bamboo planting canes, after a dish of freshly gathered mussels 'smoked' in the hot ashes.

There have been disappointments, notably the very poor take up of (mainly) Scots pine on the hillside between Inbhir Dhorrcail and Poll a' Mhuineil, a combination, I believe, of very wet ground when we planted, wind, voles, and caterpillar infestation.

But how many gratifying surprises. There had been a gap of four years when I saw this area in May 2006, and the height and density attained was impressive. Walking in, before you drop down to Barrisdale, you can see the different colouration on the hillside. There is widespread spontaneous regeneration from the SE fence line (as you approach from Barrisdale). In a wonderful mixture of species and growth size, new seedlings are still finding a niche. What I remember as terrible scrubby birch nibbled to six inches is now becoming impenetrable thicket through which you have to fight your way in places.

Similarly the self sown thickets, mainly birch, up Inbhir Dhorrcail gorge are now getting difficult to pick a path through, at 2 m and taller. Within the enclosure there's a lot of self sown trees too and in some places the fence dividing gorge from enclosure reveals little difference between in and out.

When I walked the fence of the big Li-side enclosure in 2002 I noticed little but rough grasses, sedges, mosses – early in the year of course, but last May (2006) lower parts of watercourses were thick with alder; birch and rowan in singles and



Looking up to the heights of Ladhar Bheinn. Below: at Inbhir Dhorrcail.

concentrations; lots of flowers, especially bluebells and primroses. Left to itself, even after only five or six years this is very gratifying. I was really taken by great swathes of bluebell on the bracken slopes. Whenever I stopped I could see tiny tree seedlings, of rowan especially, often no more than 5–8 cm high.

As a mountaineer/backpacker/walker/goer to wild areas I don't like fences. As journeyers into the wilder/remote places we have to accept that a long term plan is in operation, and if a fence intrudes now, then renewed landscape later will be there for others to enjoy.

Li – Inbhir Dhorrcail is a special place: from the diverse character of the shoreline, the rise and fall of tides, the long reach of the hillside from Li, through the plantings of oaks and pines, the ancient trees in the gorge, the birch, alder and willow, heather and bog vegetation, celandine, primroses, milkwort, bluebells, foxgloves, a host of other flowers, rock slabs and crags, running water and little falls, winding up the old stalker's path, over big open ground of the corrie, striking south-westerly to the dark ridge rising steeply out of the green amphitheatre – Ladhar Bheinn, the crown in the estate.

In 25 years time the ID plantings will contain trees producing seed for food and dispersal by birds and small mammals. A natural thinning will have taken place through growth competition and the attrition of the weather. The fence will have been down for several years. ID will be fairly closed woodland, but the Li hillside more open, where the self-regeneration will have been slower as it is more exposed. There will be well developed fringe vegetation of thorns, roses, honeysuckle, bramble. Alder and willow will be fairly thick around watercourses, with birch and rowan being the

principal growth of the open hillside; a few oak may have established themselves in the thorny growth. Pines will have begun to appear.

In one hundred years ID will have some big pines with a well developed underwood – principally of heather, but I hope some juniper on the lighter fringes. There will be old birches and rowan gradually producing deadwood. Lichens will be well established. Between the shoreline and the 'old' line of the lower fence there will be some fine oaks, with rowan, birch and pine in a more open setting. Li hillside will be open woodland. There will be a very mixed age of trees by now, from seedlings to mature and the old and decaying.

The walk in from Kinloch Hourn or Inverie will remain a challenge though by now a trodden way through the vegetation, without the need for any cutting, will have been established by human feet. You would hear the warning chatter of red squirrels, perhaps catch sight of a pine marten, and hear a multitude of birdsong in the woodland. Knoydart at large will have assimilated itself to the JMT's principles so that the deer are now glimpsed within their natural woodland setting.

I don't mind the way in being difficult. The thickets will act as a kind of 'gate' to the magic of the inner wood. In any case there's plenty of bare hillside left, and will be in the future.



Alan Scott

THE VISION

The JMT's vision for Li and Coire Dhorrcail is of a truly wild area of land where natural processes can prevail from the shoreline of Loch Hourn to the summit of Ladhar Bheinn. With this year's change in the deer stalking regime (see below) the natural processes at last have a chance of succeeding, and the fences we have relied on in the early years should one day no longer be needed.

Most of our work since 1987 has been within what we call management zone I, the lower ground of the estate, below Coire Dhorrcail and taking in most of the long slopes above Li. Here, the focus has been on woodland restoration, using fencing to exclude deer, and a mixture of new planting and regeneration within them. Much of this zone is covered by three fenced enclosures. Within this zone we've carried out a sustained programme of deer control on top of the fencing.

The ranger – Jim Manthorpe

THE KNOYDART FOUNDATION created a ranger post in 2003. It is still going strong thanks to funding from a number of bodies including the John Muir Trust. My colleague Tommy and I took over the job from the original post holder in January 2006.

Our first year was spent getting to know the job and making it our own. Aside from the land management work, repairs, helping the Forest Trust, helping the stalkers and the like, we made a point of offering plenty of guided walks and volunteer opportunities.

Our most popular walks over the summer months were the Knoydart in a Knutshell walks. Holiday makers staying in Fort William and Mallaig could pop over on the Western Isles ferry for a two-hour amble in the woods and along the beach and still be back in time for a pint at the Old Forge Inn before catching the return ferry.

More adventurous types signed up for our Saturday guided walks up some of the mountains, namely Sgurr Coire Coinnichean behind the village and Ladhar Bheinn, the most westerly mainland Munro.

There are, of course, plenty of independent-minded souls who prefer to walk in to Knoydart unaided. I remember, as a kid,



Landrover tour with the Knoydart Foundation rangers. Find the ranger service at: www.knoydart-foundation.com, ranger@knoydart.org, 01687 462242.

poring over the Ordnance Survey map and planning routes into Inverie from the east. I obviously wasn't the only one doing this; in the summer scores of hillwalkers and backpackers walk in to Inverie from Kinlochhourn via Barrisdale, one of the most spectacular hikes in the British Isles. Some also come in from Loch Arkaig and Glenfinnan via Sourlies.

We have exciting plans for the future – tailor-made guided walks, wildlife watching trips and deer stalking with a camera. In time, we hope to offer comprehensive wildlife watching holidays. With eagles, pine martens, otters and red deer aplenty, and a location to die for, we're sure it'll prove popular.

Hopefully, these activities will generate income to support the Foundation's land management activities and secure the ranger post for the future.

We had a number of groups and individuals visiting us last summer to help with the rhododendron burning, seed collecting and beach cleaning. The John Muir Trust work party was, of course, among the most enthusiastic of those to help. We were blessed with blue skies and not too many midges. The final day, cleaning the beautiful secluded beach at Cable Bay, was probably the highlight for most. We're doing it all again this year so make sure you sign up.

Both Tommy and I have been in the office a lot, pulling together the recreation plan and the Land Management Plan, both of which are on show for anyone to read in the display room in Inverie. They set out the Foundation's proposals for the future.

The key issues in the Land Management Plan are deer management, housing, native woodland regeneration and biodiversity. We have created a species list for the peninsula which covers everything from birds and bees to butterflies and bryophytes. There are some significant gaps in our knowledge of some of the less well-loved creepy-crawlies so we may be calling on willing experts to volunteer their time in collating this missing information.

So, one year behind us and a new one started. The weather has been appalling over the winter and everyone in the village seems eager for spring. Tommy and I are making the most of this quiet period to get reports written, funding bids for projects submitted and plans devised for when the crowds begin to arrive at Easter. I hope we might be able to welcome you to the peninsula at some point whether it's with a JMT work party or just on your own. If we're not out on the hill you'll find us in the Foundation office.

FOR LI AND COIRE DHORRCAIL

But the higher ground (zone 2) of the estate, and indeed the entire Knoydart peninsula is open to freely moving red deer as well as hosting resident populations. Grazing by deer is preventing any significant woodland regeneration outside enclosed areas.

On Li and Coire Dhorrcail, things will change soon. This July, the Trust will resume overall control of all stalking rights which up to now have been let to the Knoydart Foundation under the 1987 purchase agreement.

Newly-appointed conservation rangers will manage a programme of deer reduction, in co-operation with neighbouring estates. It will not be run as a sporting operation and the cull, in accordance with our deer control policy, won't impede public

access at any time. The key to the work is reducing Li and Coire Dhorrcail's 'resident population' of hinds – those which are 'hefted' to the area, return there time and again, and attract stags to the same area in the rut. The whole process will be guided by monitoring, of both the vegetation and the deer – in other words, cull numbers will be determined by the recovery and natural development of habitats.

These reduction techniques are known to work, but they need to be applied consistently year after year. In a few years we expect that monitoring will start to show regeneration. Less certain is the time when the first of the fences will be removed, but eventually, in line with the reduction of deer numbers, all deer fences (excluding the Li tenancy) will be dismantled and removed from site in a final large scale intervention.

The walker – Alistair Brian Atkin



Alistair Brian Atkin

AFTER A LONG BONE-SHAKING RIDE in a rudimentary postbus from Invergarry, Peter and I now enjoyed perfect peace beside Loch Quoich. Wavelet after wavelet landed at our feet, as faraway blue mountains, capped by solitary white clouds, stood out against a wide sky.

During this holiday in 1952, we climbed Ben Nevis in bright sunshine and took a steamer trip around Mull, visiting Iona and Staffa. But this new empty world seemed very distant from our normal lives. However our ultimate goal still lay ahead. The peace was suddenly broken by a noisy old car belching blue exhaust smoke. It was to take us to the end of the track at Kinlochhourn. The driver, our host, proved a man of very few words, but during the last stage of our journey the wild and remote scenery demanded all our attention. Ascent finally became descent down to a steep-sided loch where the sea reached up to a lone farm, our base for the days ahead.

Glimpses of the mistress of the house were fleeting, although she presumably cooked our evening meals of mutton, potatoes and carrots. During one repast, jolly fiddle reels could be heard from the building's rear, but we were not invited to share the pleasure. The gloomy lounge contained a Bible, a large print of the disastrous 1915 British attack at Loos, some well thumbed Waverley novels, but no local information. The otherwise dark empty wardrobe in the bare bedroom contained a surprising colourful highland outfit, complete from bonnet down to shining buckled shoes.

The first afternoon set the pattern for our stay. We wandered down the loch to Skiary, shown as a village on our map, but apart from one semi-ruined cottage all the rest were long abandoned. Increasingly aware that we had reached the utter limit of our everyday world, I paddled across pebbles, sea shells and sand, while Peter slept on a nearby sunny hummock. Only the gentle lap of sea water and the roar of a distant burn high in the hills disturbed the stillness.

One morning, regardless of the weather, we decided to climb over the hills to upper Glen Barrisdale and then follow it down to outer Loch Hourn. Pleasant weather at sea level changed to warm mugginess higher up and then to cool soaking Scotch mist. Using our compasses we eventually



reached the brink of an obscure deep void. Uncertainty prevailed, until the mist cleared briefly show Glen Barrisdale and a way down to it. Later, while we photographed a waterfall, an elderly horseman driving three cows came riding by. Slumped in his saddle and wearing green tweed topped by a Sherlock Holmes hat, he appeared not to notice us. Then when we returned to the path, he turned round to stare at us. We gave him a friendly wave, but there was no response. On topping a rise the outer loch suddenly came into view: the north was now full of dazzling bright light and brilliant blue sky, blue water and distant blue mountains. Its beauty was made more enjoyable because our soaking clothes and wet feet were now dry. No humans were visible near the scattered dwellings in the glen bottom, but a track edged by flowering dandelions and lush trees reminded us of home.

A brilliant white shell beach led past a ruined church to the remains of Runival, a glorious scene in the late afternoon sun, but man had long gone because life cannot be sustained by beauty alone.

Next day's high point was an encounter with a talkative man. This slim middle-aged lowlander, wearing a mixture of everyday clothing, strode up pushing an old upright bicycle. With rapid speech that made response impossible, he told us of taking the ferry from Mallaig to Inverie that morning, walking over the mountains to Barrisdale and then following the coast to us. Glancing down, he then exploded with the statement that the heather had brushed all the oil from his cycle chain. Finally, announcing that Topdown was his next stop, he departed.

Arnisdale, as seen across the loch from Barrisdale, seemed a substantial village, and on our

last full day at Loch Hourn we walked to it. Small bushes growing from chimney stacks at each end of a ruined home made a sad scene slightly less so.

Bracken gave way to pasture and here the soft brush of long grass against our bare legs and the sight of dandelions and clover in flower reminded us of home. Corran hamlet seemed well maintained, but nobody was in sight. So were the homes of Arnisdale, ranged round a shingle bay. Some displayed hydrangea and honeysuckle, which immediately reminded us of far-off Somerset. After lunch beside the loch we returned along a village street, quiet as before. Then a prickly feeling at the back of my neck made me look round. A man stood in a now open doorway looking at us. Then someone else was peering from another part-open door. Finally a curtain suddenly dropped back into place. At the village end three elderly men were standing in the road talking. Two ignored us but the third did respond to our polite good day. With a final rearward look, we found all three of them standing staring at us. It was our last human contact before reaching the farm.

We departed next day, Peter to factory office near Nottingham and I to my national service training for a world war which fortunately never came. Our brief Loch Hourn stay made us recognize that this was one of our island's most beautiful wild regions. I do hope that modern developments have not spoilt this special and wonderful region; I also hope that local people are now well used to the ways of wandering hill-walkers. Perhaps our assessment was wrong, because at that paranoid time they might have thought we were Russian spies!

Alistair Brian Atkin is the author of *A Walking Life* (ISBN 1843861194), published by Pegasus.

Runival: left, in 1952, by the author; right, in recent years by John Cleare.

© John Cleare/Mountain Camera Picture Library





Ladhar Bheinn – an elusive mountain. View southwards across Loch Hourn from Corran in Glenelg. In the centre Stob a'Chearcaill, the eastern peak of Ladhar Bheinn rises over the hidden Coire Dhorrcail.

© John Cleare/Mountain Camera Picture Library

The photographer – John Cleare



TOM PATEY OFTEN ENTHUSED ABOUT LADHAR BHEINN. 'Aye,' he would say 'grand winter potential – there's a fine northern corrie with some impressive lines but it's too close to the sea, it's rarely in condition and it's a long walk into Knoydart.' Nevertheless, despite the eight-mile approach march he'd managed to bag a couple of the best gullies. Bill Murray too had waxed eloquent about Knoydart and its Rough Bounds. No wonder I became intrigued. But Knoydart is as far from Wiltshire as Mont Blanc and it was another 17 years before I found the opportunity for a foray into Knoydart myself.

I'd been ski touring in the 'Gorms and on a whim I drove in my new VW Camper over to Kinloch Hourn. It started to snow as I gingerly descended the steep, tortuous and ice-sheathed lane to the lochside but after a recovering brew and aware that I had an assignment booked for the Beeb on the Ben the following week, I decided to retreat while it was still possible. Thus I spent a frustrating weekend parked on the snowy beach at Corran gazing over Loch Hourn to Ladhar Bheinn, alpine in its snowy splendour – so near and yet so far.

Things were different in October. It was wet, very wet, but the autumn colours were rich and the hike along the lochside into Barrisdale was continuously interesting. We'd spoken to the keeper and Fowler and I enjoyed a couple of comfortable nights in the bothy. Although we did manage to ascend Stob a'Choirè Odhair and compass our way to both tops of Ladhar Bheinn, we saw little beyond our boots and were unsure which was the true summit. Was it the one with the rocky cairn or the one beyond with the peculiar OS survey pillar? Whichever, Fowler, a

Devonian, was happy because he'd bagged another Munro. As a mere photographer, I remained frustrated.

About this time JMT acquired its slice of Knoydart and Chris Brasher started chasing me for pictures of Coire Dhorrcail. Ladhar Bheinn promised a good chapter for a book I was doing so I made a big effort and returned alone to Kinloch Hourn early the following summer.

Once again I used the Barrisdale bothy, sharing it with three American hikers whose one ambition was to conquer the Mam Barrisdale and reach Inverie. It was perfect June weather, the birch was green and foxgloves scattered the lower hillsides, so obviously I had to traverse the entire massif. I shot Chris's pictures in Coire Dhorrcail and then climbed steeply eastwards to gain Creag Bheithe, the north ridge of Stob a'Chearcaill. On principle I tried to follow a direct route up the nose. The scramble up the broken crags proved fairly challenging but once on the crest the views northwards towards Beinn Sgritheall and inland towards the jumbled rock-scabbed peaks of inner Knoydart were as good as they come. Rough Bounds indeed! Thereafter the circuit above Coire Dhorrcail was straightforward and I looked down into the dark jaws of several imposing gullies which split the headwall. Eventually the ridge steepened to the summit cairn of Ladhar Bheinn itself. Up here clumps of pink thrift dotted the ridge which I thought surprising so far above the shore, while beyond the West Summit, apparently just 30 feet lower but still crowned with that peculiar column, rose the blue shapes of the Cuillin. Yes, Tom was right. Ladhar Bheinn is a fine mountain, elusive maybe but one of the very best – anywhere.

John Muir Trust Corporate Members

As a printing company we are aware of our responsibility towards the environment and even more so as we have worked with the Trust on a number of print jobs. It made sense to put something back through our support of the Trust's corporate scheme and I would encourage others to do so too.

Bob Anderson, proprietor, The Jane Street Printing Company

Corporate Membership is vital. It helps us protect wild places, increase fauna and flora, run our educational John Muir Award and our Activities and Conservation Programmes. Huge thanks to the members below for their valued support.

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Call us on 0131 554 0114, email fundraising@jmt.org – or visit www.jmt.org where there are full details of the scheme.



Cameras at work in Knoydart



Clockwise from top left: Old pine in Barrisdale Liz Kay/Panmure Graphics, oaks in Knoydart, January both Fran Lockhart/JMT, view down lower Coire Dhorrcail to Beinn Sgritheall and evening view over Barrisdale Bay both John Cleare/Mountain Camera Picture Library.



In *Arnisdale and Loch Hourn* Professor Peter English, who retired recently as Professor of Animal Science and Husbandry at the University of Aberdeen, recalls vivid childhood memories of the area and its people.

He first visited there as a nine year-old to holiday with relatives just after the end of the Second World War. He had the opportunity to attend the local school in Arnisdale for nine months and this experience helped to create a strong and lasting bond with the area and its people. This book is the outcome of that empathy.

In those days the old crofting system was still intact, while Gaelic was still the working language of the day. The book records the vibrant history of the area including that of now uninhabited places on Loch Hourn, as well as, in the author's words, 'the memories of a fine people who had a simple lifestyle and made the most of nature's bounties in a very well balanced, sustainable way while deriving joy and satisfaction from their way of life together caring for each other and nature.'

Some ten years after his schooldays there, Arnisdale School (and the only community centre in the area) was closed and sold as a private house.

All profits from the book are being directed to benefit the local community and have provided the catalyst to raise funds from public and private sources to build a new community centre to replace the school. As well as serving the local people and tourists for social events and forward planning purposes, the centre will house a heritage exhibit. It 'will record the history, folklore and culture of a fine people, the flora and fauna of the mountain, moorland and marine environments and the magnificent scenic splendour of this relatively inaccessible and very interesting area.'

We picked two of the book's hundreds of stories and pictures, from Mary Ann MacCuaig and Victor Corbett.

Going to the dance

Mary Ann MacCuaig recalled that when she was working as a youngster in Barrisdale Lodge, when the evening's work in the kitchen had been completed on a Friday evening, and the 'gentry' had been fed and fully catered for, she and her pals would set off up the Mam Barrisdale path and down the other side to Inverie for the dance. After a great night and early morning of dancing, the Barrisdale crowd would set off back up the path in the darkness; as dawn was breaking they would be making their way back down Mam Barrisdale and they would arrive at the Lodge in plenty of time to start their day's work by 7 am.

A ceilidh in the kitchen

Victor Corbett of Belfast, with two companions, arrived soaked to the skin in Arnisdale in June 1950. 'We were invited into the cosy lamplit living room told to take our wet boots and socks off while tea was made, and to make ourselves comfortable... Before agreeing to let us sleep in the hay barn for the night [Ruaridh Mor] asked the first of two questions – "Do any of you smoke?" The second question – "Do you know any Gaelic songs?" led to one of the most enjoyable ceilidh evenings I can remember... So to a flaked out sleep in the hay and in due course our thanks and farewell the following morning. "Bithidh mi air ais" I said, trying out my growing Gaelic vocabulary, and I did return, many times.'

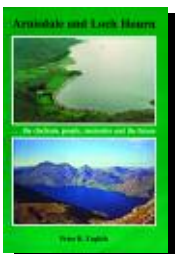
The chronicler— Peter English



Donald Angus Cameron, stalker at Kinloch Hourn, and Stephen Russell, ghillie.

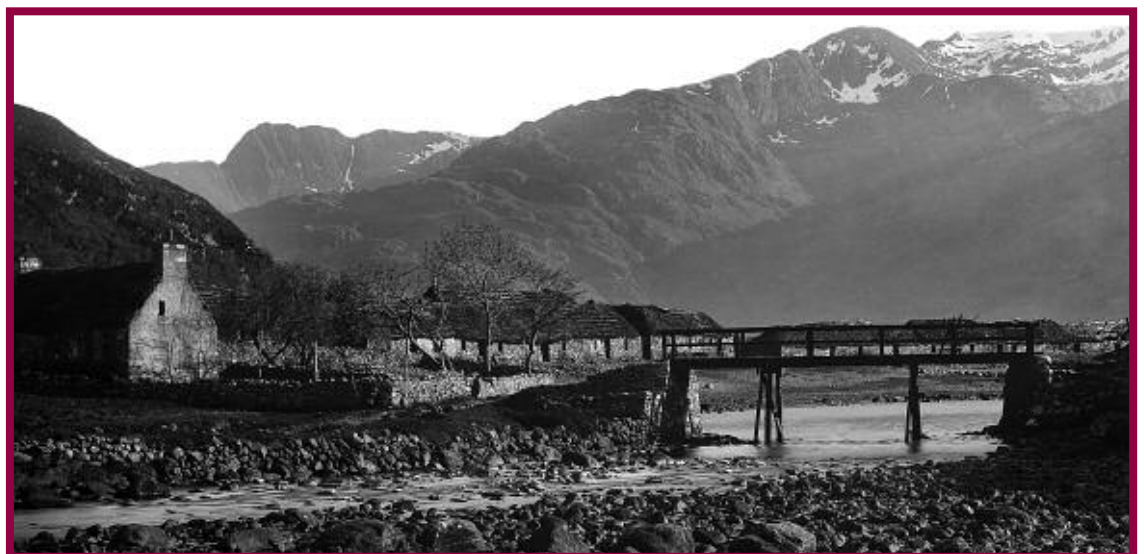


June 1950, ceilidh in MacLeods' farm kitchen. L-R Victor Corbett, hillwalker, Angus Beaton, stalker, Lizzie MacLeod, retired scholteacher, Roddy MacLeod, farmer. Zeiss Ikonta, 4sec at f8, Tilley lamp.



□ Book (A4 484 pp) £20 + £6 p&p from Prof Peter English, Ardachy, Upper Lenie, Drumadrochit, Inverness IV63 6XF.

□ Donations to Arnisdale and L Hourn Community Assoc (for centre): Margaret Fletcher, Flat A, Seaforth Ho, 23 Scotland St, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis HSI 2JR.



Corran and the Arnisdale river around 1890, Ladhar Bheinn in distance. ©Aberdeen University Library, George Washington Wilson Collection.

Bill Scott

Remembered by John Allen

Bill Scott spent his childhood at Kynachan on the lower north western side of Schiehallion and retained a profound feeling for the area for the whole of his life. An early photograph shows him with his father cutting peats at age three in 1931. He attended the one-teacher school at Foss before moving to secondary education at Breadalbane Academy and then agricultural college in Edinburgh. Career opportunities took him to Chester, Norfolk, and Berwickshire, followed by a return to his Perthshire roots, divided between Donafuil, where he took over the well-known soft fruit farm, and Tomphubil below Schiehallion.

When Bill brought his lifetime association with the land back to his native patch, as well as the fruit farm, he found time to stand as an independent councillor in the Perth & Kinross elections. Then he must have heard a cry for help from Schiehallion, where the John Muir Trust in 1999 had acquired the eastern and southern side of the mountain. In 2002 he was elected Chairman of the Schiehallion Group after Irvine Butterfield's stint. His long experience

involved with the land and estate management was evident from the start. But times had moved on, and traditional methods of land use here were being challenged by the wild land 'modernists' (his word). He wanted to hark back to what he remembered, and deplored the 'extreme conservationists', who he considered had driven off the wildlife he knew, the white hares and the grouse, and even the deer, rendering Schiehallion barren of nature. Undoubtedly sincere, in debate he made a forthright adversary, willing to hear out the opposition, but unwilling to compromise. This strong-minded independence of thought in defence of his values stayed with him to the last. I had bumped into him by chance while we were separately out for a walk on Schiehallion about a month before he died. We in turn exercised opposing views in a spirit of open debate, lively but respectful, and I like to think that we each stepped off the soapbox content from the meeting.

His funeral service was held at Kenmore Kirk and he was interred at Foss – home ground. He leaves his wife, May, and their extended family.

Bill Scott, born 5 June 1928, died 4 April 2006

gigha



Coire Dhorrcail of Ladhar Bheinn, seen across Loch Hourn.
Photo Donald Bennett.



KEY FACTS

Acquired by the John Muir Trust in 1987



Summits

Ladhar Bheinn, 1020 m (3343 ft) is the mainland's westernmost Munro (a Scottish mountain over 3000 ft).

Area

1255 ha (3100 acres).

Designations

Part of the Knoydart National Scenic Area (shown green in map above).

Population

One occupied house at Li, whose buildings and surrounding land are not part of the estate.

Partnerships

- The John Muir Trust is a partner in the Knoydart Foundation, which in April 1999 took over the neighbouring Knoydart Estate. We appoint members to the Foundation and to the Knoydart Forest Trust.
- The Trust is an active member of the Knoydart Deer Management Group and the Knoydart Land Management Group.

Maps

- OS Landranger 1:50 000, sheet 33, Loch Alsh & Glen Shiel.
- Inbhir Dhorrcail is at NG 853 056

THE LAND



The estate of Li and Coire Dhorrcail covers the north-eastern slopes of Ladhar Bheinn, from its summit ridge down to the sea at Loch Hourn. Li is on the coast near the northern boundary, and Coire Dhorrcail is the great corrie of Ladhar Bheinn to the South of the estate.

Ladhar Bheinn (pronounced *larven* – *hoof or claw mountain*), though not among Scotland's highest summits, is one of the most majestic. The writer Hamish Brown dubbed it 'A

mountain of mountains, the remote setting and gabled grandeur ensuring even the easiest way of climbing the hill will be memorable'. Ladhar Bheinn exemplifies wild land. Its snaking summit ridge, the 350 m encircling walls of Coire Dhorrcail, and the views it offers of the fjord-like Loch Hourn and the wilds of Knoydart all set it apart – as does its remoteness, for most visitors have to add a long walk in and out to their ascent.

The high, slightly humped ridge of Ladhar Bheinn is well seen from parts of Skye, from Loch Hourn, and from the Mallaig-Armadale ferry.

Why are we here? The possibility of the Ministry of Defence taking over the area led to the formation of the John Muir Trust in 1983. Working with the community, we failed at that time to buy any of the former, and much larger, Knoydart Estate. However, the buyer of Knoydart Estate made Li and Coire Dhorrcail available for sale separately in 1987, and we were then able to raise the money that made it our first purchase. By 1987 there had been almost total clearance of native trees, and most of our work since then has been to restore woodland by new planting and by giving natural regeneration a chance.

Map reproduced from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright, Licence No AL 100034628.

VISITING LI & COIRE DHORRCAIL

Access John Muir Trust land is open to all, and we welcome all visitors. We trust visitors will respect the wishes of the people who live and work on the estates.

Getting to Barrisdale There is no road access to Li & Coire Dhorrcail.

- The shortest way in is a boat crossing of Loch Hourn from Arnisdale to Barrisdale Bay, a few km from the JMT land. The crossing is weather dependent.
- A traditional walk in is the 10 km from the road end at Kinloch Hourn, where a car may be left, along Loch Hourn to Barrisdale. It's a rough track with many ups and downs, and burns may be dangerous in spate.
- From Knoydart's main settlement and ferry port of Inverie, Barrisdale is a 14-km walk along rough roads and paths and over the 450 m pass of Mam Barrisdale.

Once at Barrisdale, cross the river by the bridge and follow the track NW to reach Coire Dhorrcail, or the low ground at

Inbhir Dhorrcail, the mouth of the corrie.

Staying At Barrisdale, a camp ground and a bothy are provided by Barrisdale Estate, which also has accommodation to let. Don't rely on finding space in the bothy, and take all your supplies in. Inverie has food, drink and accommodation, but currently no shop. Doune, 8 km from Inverie, offers holidays, dining and boat charter.

Ladhar Bheinn A track from Barrisdale leads above regenerating woodland into the splendid rock scenery of Coire Dhorrcail, which is also one approach route to the high ridges of Ladhar Bheinn. The Mam Barrisdale and Gleann na Guiserein offer other approaches and it's worth noting that the bigger hill's two companion peaks, Stob a Chearcaill and Stob a Choire Odhar, are fine climbs and viewpoints in their own right.

■ Please keep in mind: this hill is remote, steep and rugged, and has a magnetic anomaly.



From top: the third of the tree enclosures above Loch Hourn *Alan Scott*; some years on, an enclosure shows dramatic regrowth *Paul Jarvis*; enclosures come complete with stiles; volunteers on vegetation survey work with Ben Sgrithead in the background both *Alan Scott*.



More factsheets at www.jmt.org, or phone 0131 554 0114



Natural history

Geology The Knoydart peninsula is composed almost entirely of metamorphic rocks of the Moine series. These underlying rocks contribute to the generally shallow and poor soils. Knoydart's landforms show the effects of glaciation which carved the deep trenches of Lochs Hourn and Nevis. In the later Ice Age smaller basin glaciers continued to erode headwalls, forming corries such as the classic Coire Dhorrcail.

Vegetation Its oceanic climate, geology, and 1000-metre altitudinal range give Li & Coire Dhorrcail a good level of biological diversity. It hosts 68 vegetation communities, 119 species of bryophytes (mosses and liverworts) and 188 vascular plant species. Nationally rare and scarce bryophytes and lichens have been recorded. The vegetation types range from salt-marsh and strand-line to bryophyte-dominated late snow beds and montane moss heaths – a typical West Highland range of heaths, mires and grasslands. The area's Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats include upland oakwood and native pinewood – more about woodland below.

Fauna Red deer is the estate's most prominent land animal. A number of badger setts are in woodland areas, and otter holts have been identified at Inbhir Dhorrcail. There are unconfirmed reports of roe deer. In Loch Hourn, the common seal and

(occasionally) the common dolphin may be seen.

During a June 2003 JMT conservation activity, one participant was lucky enough to watch a pine marten for several minutes as it foraged through low crags SE of Inbhir Dhorrcail. As tree and scrub cover increases and woodland habitats develop, it will be very interesting to see what other species appear.

The home ranges of four pairs of golden eagles cover Knoydart. Birds of the western uplands are well represented – buzzard, golden plover, common sandpiper, meadow pipit, grey wagtail, dipper, wheatear, ring ouzel, raven and twite.



Bogbean growing at the Mam Li *Alan Scott*; pine marten *Dick Balharry*.

Partnerships

Since April 1999, Knoydart Estate has been owned and controlled by its community through the **Knoydart Foundation**. A partnership of local residents, the Highland Council, Chris Brasher Trust, Kilchoan estate and the JMT, the foundation's aim is to preserve, enhance and develop Knoydart for its environment and people. The estate covers 6900 ha of land to the West of Li & Coire Dhorrcail, and forms most of the northern half of the Knoydart peninsula. Of the £750,000 purchase price for the estate, the JMT committed £250,000, including £100,000 from the estate of the late Mrs Elizabeth Gladstone. Reach the foundation at www.knoydart-foundation.com or 01687 462242.

Human history

More than 1000 people lived in the Knoydart peninsula in the mid-18th century. Most lived on the coast, working at fishing, cattle-rearing and a little arable farming of potatoes, oats and barley. The population fell steeply from voluntary emigration and clearance, right up to 1990. Today it's below 100, but the decline is over and numbers of school-age children are increasing.

We asked the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland to report on Li & Coire Dhorrcail in 1991. There were once farms at Li, Muineil and Inbhir Dhorrcail. Li probably had a cluster of seven buildings at the mouth of the main stream, with eight plots of lazy-beds and another field of rig. The 18th-century farms would have had stone buildings, and dykes round arable land; some remains can be seen today. There were houses built of rubble, probably with cruck roofs and some with windows; also kilns and a water mill. The best-preserved shieling site is by the Allt Li, and there are many shieling remains in Coire Dhorrcail, among the left-bank tributaries of the burn. Inbhir Dhorrcail has two *nausts*: unroofed boat-shelters, facing the sea.

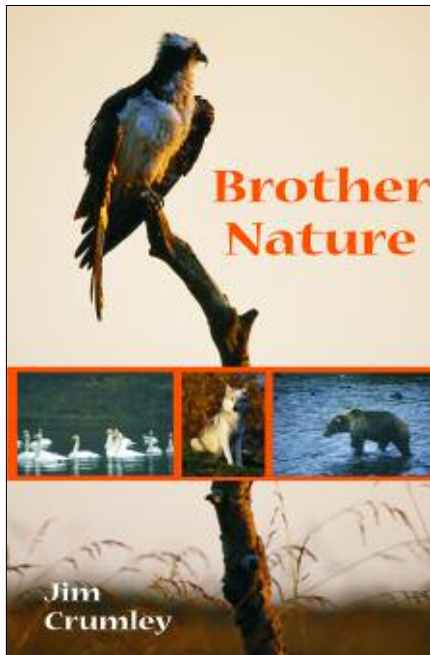
John Muir Trust at work

Our vision for the estate is to enable it to recover its natural vegetation range, from seashore to mountain top. On purchase, its trees had been reduced to about 12 ha of remnant patches in areas that deer couldn't reach. As deer shooting rights were retained by the vendor deer fencing was essential to protect young trees and allow regeneration from latent seeds. Three enclosures (with stiles for walkers) now extend up the hillside. We began replanting with native trees in 1990. By 2006 some 292 ha had been replanted under three Woodland Grant Schemes, some with trees grown from locally sourced seed, much of the work being done by volunteer work parties. Growth and regeneration within them has been dramatic.

From 2007 deer shooting rights will transfer to JMT and deer culling will become the major management tool. A 2003 count noted about 140 red deer on the estate, which is well above the number that will enable vegetation to flourish without fencing. Monitoring of the numbers and growth of tree seedlings will provide information on which deer culls will be based. This will facilitate the control of grazing and browsing pressure while assuring the red deer of their place in the ecosystem. When this is achieved we expect to remove the fences, as growth and regeneration should be possible wherever trees can grow.

In this remote area, pressure from visitors is not a big problem, but we do watch out for damage to the Coire Dhorrcail path and maintain its drainage features, again using JMT volunteers.

Deep ecology



Reviewed by Paul Ramsay

Brother Nature by Jim Crumley. Whittles Publishing, 176pp, £16.99. ISBN 978-1904445-34-0

Let me tell you from the start: this is a wonderful book. The title suggests the background: we are in a deep ecology frame – Saint Francis with First Nation wisdom of the wild. We start with an encounter with a bear in Alaska and the way that Jim Crumley's guide, a seasoned bear watcher, deals with the encounter. The bear is brother bear. Back home, in Balquhiddy, badgers and their return to the Highland edge are discussed, and the extraordinary history of their persecution. The ensuing chapters deal with ospreys, swans, kites, ravens, otters, orchids. The second and shorter part of the book is called 'The Long Way Back'. Chapter Thirteen is entitled 'Towards a Native Forest' and Chapter Fourteen, 'Conservation and Cures', finishes with the statement that 'we need to recruit the three best managers of wildness in any northern landscape – the wolf, the beaver, and space'. The last chapter includes a look to a future in 2015 when the wolf has been restored to Scotland.

The writing may veer occasionally towards the 'plushy fen' school of writing parodied by Evelyn Waugh in *Scoop*, but for the most part is very attractive and each chapter has its delights. It carries the messages that Jim Crumley wishes to convey with skill and passion. The pills are delightfully sugared and there are a good many of them.

Scottish Natural Heritage comes up for

criticism early on. Scientific conservation gets a hit in the chapter on the release of red kites in the Braes of Doune. Scotland's awful post-Second World War forestry policy is smitten in the splendid chapter 13. Jim Crumley's remarks on the forest industry are well worth reading and a warning to those of us who allow ourselves to be bull-shitted by such nonsense as 'best practice'. Whose best practice? And will it still be regarded as such ten years from now?

Better to read Jim Crumley on the subject of reintroductions of old natives and other things than all those innumerable graphically delightful, but unreadable consultation papers, produced by the sad 'ponderous ones' that he describes.

I found myself sympathising with Jim Crumley's views on the tagging of red kites in his chapter on that subject, but could not agree completely. There is a place for the new technologies in the study of nature, as the work on migratory swans (and many other examples) has shown. It had been thought that the birds flew for much longer than turned out to be the case and consequently demonstrated the vital importance of the wetlands that form a chain of stopping places. There is, in much

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The next Journal will be published in October. Please contact the editor by the end of June with ideas. Contact details, page 1.



of the tagging and monitoring, a deep dilemma for the deep ecologist with roots in the Romantic Movement. Yet, without the science, the monitoring and modelling, we cannot understand nature, nor can we have any sort of factual base with which to try and persuade the public and our politicians.

I liked the description of the late Don MacCaskill's dream that beavers might return to the Lochan Buidhe to the north of Loch Lubnaig. The ponderous ones might well not be able to accept this visionary approach to the solution of a problem, but coming from a naturalist of such experience it seems right that his mind, re-sorting and summing up things in dreamtime, would reach a conclusion in this way.

One of the great absurdities of the ponderous ones is their argument that there has to be careful research to see that beavers can live with humans in Britain. They say this, yet continental Europe has recovering populations of beavers. An enormous amount of work has been done and experience gained in co-existing with beavers. Imagine – the Dutch with their highly intensive agriculture and a country much of which is below sea level have restored the beaver ('the necessary beaver'), but we cannot. What nonsense! A suitable memorial to Don MacCaskill would be to restore beavers to the Lochan Buidhe: let us see to it.

And then what? Shall we hear wolves howl in Balquhiddy?

• Paul Ramsay is a Trustee of the John Muir Trust. He writes in a personal capacity.

Cairngorms nature study

The Nature of the Cairngorms: Diversity in a changing environment, Ed. Philip Shaw and Des Thompson. SNH/The Stationery Office, £20. ISBN 0114973261.

This is a book that evades the usual categories. Monumental in size and weight, with a wonderfully atmospheric front cover picture and accessibly priced, it's now in its second printing, so is presumably reaching a wide audience as intended.

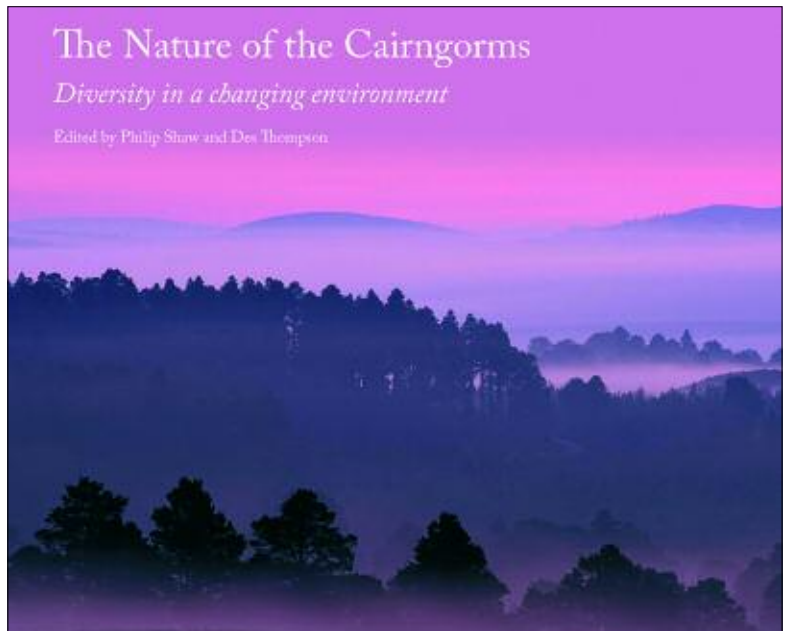
It seems destined for the coffee table. And yet, inside, most of the 23 chapters by 35 authors are about what the editors call 'the "silent majority" of fungi, lichens, bryophytes and invertebrates'. There is not much in the 'deer on the high hills' vein, but a lot of hard (to the layman) science, and dense information, in an attractive package. That mixture is why this review is by a non-scientist.

Thankfully, 'The Cairngorms' includes the country from Edzell to Drumochter, as well as the present national park. Most of the book deals with 18 'elements of the natural heritage' such as soils, farmland, fungi and invertebrates, bringing together research, current trends and conservation issues. While these chapters may not inspire and enthuse the ordinary reader on the spot, for all of us they will broaden and deepen awareness of what is around us, and of the processes going on. It's interesting too to be told about current research and of the gaps in research that scientists perceive.

The many photographs by top names in the trade are as good as you might expect, but the information graphics, the maps, and the wealth of tabular information are beautifully done and an object lesson in how to present facts without sentences.

'Landscape character' is one of the Element chapters, but drily treated; for an account of people's feelings about these hills the finely written introduction, 'a sense of being in the Cairngorms' is the place to go; it acknowledges and draws on the work of writers from Seton Gordon onwards who 'remind us how special the Cairngorms are'.

Deer management, recreation and climate change are covered in three more discursive chapters. The outlook on climate change is on balance negative, with 'marked changes in species composition' likely from 2010–20 onwards on current trends. As with landscape, I found the recreation chapter hard going. Objectivity is very well, but the arguments,



From top: Abernethy Forest
Niall Bervie, Loch Gamhna and
Loch an Eilein Lorne Gull, Dotterel
Laurie Campbell.

politics and passions of the downhill skiing sagas deserve to be told, and they aren't.

The editors' concluding chapter on patterns of species diversity is a look forward as well as an overview – forward, that is, to a filling in of the gaps in survey coverage. 'Almost any fragment of semi-natural forest, fen, crag or shingle bank might offer up species rarely recorded elsewhere, gradually transforming our understanding of species diversity in the area.'

So, a book for the desk rather than the coffee table! An academic reviewer thought it was 'especially for conservation professionals – but also for an educated public' and I wouldn't dissent.

And if scientifically-minded readers would like to follow up with points that this review has missed, just contact the editor.

Mike Merchant

Muir's friends, family, and adventures

John Muir: Family, Friends, and Adventures
Edited by Sally M. Miller and Daryl Morrison
University of New Mexico Press, \$29.95.
ISBN 0-8263-3530-6.

These papers from the 2001 John Muir conference at the University of the Pacific demonstrate just how much fascinating new information and ideas are being generated by recent Muir scholarship. Chapters focus upon Muir's relationships with children, with the Swett family and with William Keith, John Burroughs, Gifford Pinchot and Jeanne Carr.

Ron Limbaugh shows what original research remains to be done from the archives with a brilliant evocation of the sparky relationship between Muir and the Scottish-American painter William Keith. Limbaugh also does detective work on the reasons why Muir's daughters were forced to publish Muir's letters to Jeanne Carr as *Letters to a Friend* in 1915 under a threat to publish them by George Wharton James. The diplomatic role of William Frederic Badè in gathering and obtaining the rights to Muir's far-flung correspondence for his compilation of *The Life and Letters* is also evident from Limbaugh's story.

There are three studies of Muir's environmental politics. Char Miller reveals Muir's debates with Gifford Pinchot to be less black and white than is commonly presented. Dan Philippon has some interesting observations on Muir's revision of his attitudes towards tourism in national parks. Barbara Mossberg notes Muir's use of domestic language such as 'parks' in his strategies for shaping public policy on land management.

Finally, many educationalists will be interested in Corey Lewis's use with students of Muir's methods of journal writing and revision from field to publication.

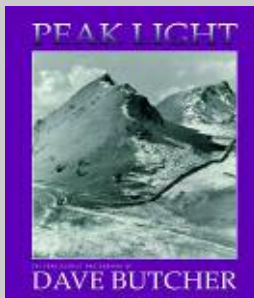
Terry Gifford



Snowy trees in Buxton

PEAK LIGHT

Peak Light, by JMT member Dave Butcher and out next month, is a collection of around 90 black and white landscape photographs of the Peak District National Park.



Dave Butcher works in black and white only, from his home and gallery in the Peak District.

He told us: 'The book is laid out from South to North and also has a map showing the location of each shot so the reader can retrace my steps. There is a section on the Peak District and another on the photography.'

'Peak Light's my second book and follows **High Light**, first published in 2005 by Arem Publishing Ltd. High Light has portfolios of High Mountains (Alps and Colorado), England & Wales, the Scottish Highlands and Skiing. It includes short essays on landscape photography.'

High Light sold out last year but the self-published reprint is now on sale for £13.50 including P&P.

Peak Light will be available from early May at £14.99 including P&P.

Buy both books from:
www.davebutcher.net,
 Tel 01663 733771, fax 01663 733771.

Into the Heart of the Wilderness of Sierra Espuña

Terry Gifford

In our garden the beech is bursting to go from bud to shrill leaf. But already there are paper pink carnations on the cherry tree and chestnut is muscling up with its smaller, greener, umbrellas.

We have returned to Sheffield after climbing in the wilderness where *águila real* have returned, and the *halcón peregrino*. We have returned with new respect for Spain and each other.

In the Sierra Espuña the start, parking with others in remoteness, reminded me of the forest road setting out for Derry Lodge and the long walk in, looking, listening, talking together.

Unusually, we sat and looked at clouds, boiling black behind the mountain before stepping into harness for this climb and what the day would give, not knowing that the nestbox

beyond our bedroom window had been first pecked, personalised around its hole, then occupied. This is what we had been waiting for years – another bedroom opposite.

You had said you'd climb and this was it. Five pitches. Grade five. The echoing choughs were already alarmed in their electric way. We pushed aside the herbs and weeds, scratching our arms.

It might have been on that day the first dandelion surfaced in our lawn, excited to be up and soon to fly, as I found an old clean peg among lethal stones the rope was running over

on ledges where I sweated and inched upwards, carefully. Among the long grass under the chestnut trees the daisy burst open and the plantain levered out its leaves low to the ground.

Move by move I led as you waited in chill shadow, then followed in hard sun. I tried to calm you but became another obstacle of words— wild, guilty. Then I climbed the overhanging crystal-rimmed crack,

leaning back like I swing up our sycamore to hang the nuts. When you'd fought up, I actually said, 'I'm proud of you'. Flushed, you led through to a bolted belay. The rim was an easy pitch away.

Were we wild? Were we in wilderness? We felt both, but Topping out, unroping, we suddenly saw two others unroping too. Well, we shouted 'Hola!' and headed west to hunt a descent.

They shouted us. The descent was east. We walked down, talked together about the flora and the peregrines above as quietly the grass grew wilder around our urban home.

Events



16 April 30th anniversary of Berneray Hostel

This is not a JMT event, but we offer our congratulations to the Gatliff Trust on an important anniversary this month. The Gatliff Hostel on Berneray, now linked to North Uist by causeway, was opened on 16 April 1977. Three days later, Herbert Gatliff, the visionary founder of the hostels that bear his name, died, aged 78.

Gatliff was a top-ranking civil servant with a passion for landscape. His desire for others, especially young people, to visit the Outer Hebrides led to his establishing five hostels. One more subsequently opened and two closed.

Around 7000 visitor-overnights were taken at the hostels in 2006 and the website www.gatliff.org.uk often attracts a thousand visitors a month. It combines information, a gallery, forum and a feed of up-to-date news items.

Events

May–June Work parties, Aberdeen

Next two conservation work parties at Glen Tanar are 12 May and 9 June. Meet 10 am at the visitor centre. Steve Green, 01339 885574.

2007 planting Carrifran Wildwood

20 May, 17 Jun, 16 Sep, 21 Oct, 18 Nov. Meet Carrifran car park, 10 am. A708 12 km from Moffat. There will also be a special high-level planting weekend on 19–20 May. Volunteers for it are welcome (by arrangement) for either Saturday or Sunday, or camping overnight. Contact: Hugh Chalmers, Hugh@bordersforesttrust.org, tel. 01835 830760, or Peter Dreghorn, dreghorn@supanet.com. Requests to join the Carrifran volunteers Google Group should also go to Peter.

Sun 22 Apr Flora London Marathon

Support the Trust's runners!

Mon 23 Apr Hustings, Pitlochry

At Fishers Hotel. See story on page 4.

Wed 25 April Talk, Glasgow

Lochaber to the Cosmos – the Ben Nevis Observatory. Illustrated talk by Alec MacKinnon about C T R Wilson, Nobel Prize winning scientist, whose work began at the Ben Nevis observatory. 7 pm, Hamish Wood Building, Glasgow Caledonian University.

12–13 May AGM, Fort William

The weekend will be based at the Moorings Hotel in Banavie, by Fort William. The AGM is on the 13th. Full details in the programme sent to members with this Journal.

Sun 13 May Open Day, Tynninghame

JMT is helping to run this Scotland's Gardens Scheme event in East Lothian and will benefit from 40 per cent of profits. We'll be laying on the refreshments and providing volunteers to help things run smoothly. If you think you can help please contact Fiona on 0131 554 0114 or fiona@jmt.org.

17–20 May Aviemore Film Festival

Mountain film festival/ Details www.amff.co.uk

30Sep–3 Oct Conference, Aviemore

The Vital Spark 2007 is an international event looking at interpretation at places such as museums, nature reserves, historic buildings and national parks. www.thevitalspark2007.org.uk.

Sun 14 Oct Stonar meeting

!7th annual all-day meeting at Stonar School, nr. Melksham, Wilts. Speakers to include Nigel Hawkins. Members in S of England and S Wales will receive a booking form with the July mailing. Put the date in your diary now. Brian Pollard 0117 942 4951, pollardjmt@talktalk.net.

Contacts

Aberdeen area

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Glasgow & West of Scotland

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Mike Brown, 0141 357 2181

Strathspey

Alan Keegan, 01479 811047

NW Highlands

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Edinburgh & Lothians

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Oxford area

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Cambridge

Richard Hindle, 01223 504264

South Wales

John Taylor, 01568 614831

North Wales

Rob Collister, 01492 582448

inchree ad



Ben Nevis violated

A bit of the wild place that is Ben Nevis has been raped. Not a bit owned by the JMT, I should add, but a bit right on JMT's boundary. A NEW PATH has been constructed, nearly two metres wide and approx 500 m long, from the sharp bend (altitude about 600m) on the normal tourist route, to the outflow of the Half-way Lochan on an otherwise trackless part of the mountain.

There never has been a path here, none is marked on the OS 1:50,000 map, nor on the old one inch. My notion of hill pathwork is to control erosion and restore landscape, not facilitate access. There was no erosion here. This path goes absolutely nowhere that anybody normally goes and ends abruptly at the outflow burn.

I have been going on Ben Nevis since 1959 on a fairly regular basis. A day on the Ben is a 'big' day, especially on the north east side, which this path geologically is. Ben Nevis can provide adventurous climbing and mountaineering, summer and winter, from sea level to summit unparalleled in the UK – challenging, physically demanding, with a sense of remoteness, grandeur, scale, and a sense of achievement afterwards. The violation rapes the idea of the ultimate in British mountaineering.

I am convinced this (unfinished?) path is part of a longer project to extend a path network for the commercial interests in Fort William (broadly speaking, tourism) and should be resisted, even removed, at the insistence of all who value the iconic status of Ben Nevis and what it means to mountaineers nationally and internationally.

John Allen (email johnhillandben@f2s.com)

Generation displacement

Andrew Nelson writes (Letters, Journals 40 & 41) on the need to protect wild land, and the 'unsustainable' nature of wind power. While his passion and commitment to the wilderness are to be admired, his grasp of the technical issues, sadly, is not.

Mr Nelson cites the Sustainable Development

Commission report's scenario of 25 GW of wind power displacing 5 GW of existing capacity as 'unsustainable' because of the 'backup' of 20 GW of conventional generating capacity required. He appears, however, to have misunderstood the nature of nationally integrated electricity distribution and generation networks. Indeed, his thesis is explicitly refuted as 'flawed' in the very same section (3.5) of the report from which he quotes! The crucial point is that a *net* 5 GW of conventional generation is displaced – several power stations' worth – with the associated reduction in carbon dioxide emission.

That wild land must be protected is not disputed. It is equally no longer disputed by experts and serious commentators in the field that

YOUR LETTERS

To the editor by end August, please.

Contact details on page 1.

nationally integrated wind power confers benefits in avoided greenhouse gas emission. There is a debate to be had, but extreme and facile standpoints of the kind typified by Mr Nelson, based on technically erroneous arguments, serve neither the interests of the Trust nor those of wider society. Good conservation must not be undermined by bad science.

Mr Nelson expects 'JMT Journal writers to be better informed'; I suggest that he would do well to apply the same high standards to his own contributions in future.

Dr Richard Brownsword

Didcot

Voting for windmills

I am a professional electrical engineer. I would like to point out that fossil fuel powered back up plants only use fossil fuel when back up is needed. So if wind power is being produced, then NO back up fossil fuel is being used and we are all better off. It is true that wind power is itself a poor back up for other power plants due to its uncertainty. This is one reason for the widely accepted view that we can only tolerate approximately 20% wind power on the grid without running into stability or back up problems.

I should say that I was aghast the first time I saw the Cornish wind farms adjacent to the A30. Now, I look forward to seeing them and checking on how many are actually churning out power!

I prefer windfarms to be sited in wild, lonely and (to me) uninteresting places – like quite a lot of the highlands in fact...the eastern slope of the North West Highlands running down to Loch Shin springs to mind. I really do not want them on the Quinag ridge, though if it's a case of the lights going out or windmills in some beautiful places, my vote is for

windmills.

I do not find overhead power lines in the highlands particularly obtrusive, they are dwarfed by the landscape. The 400 kV lines in the Cotswolds are much more of an eyesore and in a far more popular area. Undersea and underground cables are an expensive nightmare compared to an overhead line...a fault in an undersea cable can take months to fix. You are not going to persuade an operator to go this route without some very strong arguments to justify the expense. Money costs lives.

As Nigel Hawkins says, there are a lot of developments going on at the moment which may ease the whole problem. But none of them are proven, and it would be rash to depend on them working.

Excellent reviews of technical developments in this field are regularly published in the I.E.T. power journal which you should be able to access through your local library.

David Thornley C.Eng, M.I.E.E.

Malmesbury

JMT NEWS

Next JMT NEWS will reach you in mid-July. Please contact the editor by the end of June with news and pictures.

Contact details on page 1.

JMT Activities 2007

Book now ...

As we went to press, there were still several trips in the 2007 Activities Programme, for both adults and young people, with places unfilled.

For adults (18yrs and over)

- Cape Adventure introduction to sea kayaking (25-30 August), Sutherland, £430
- Geology, Lochaber (1-4 Sept) £200

For young people (16-24yrs)

- Sandwood Bay (18-25 August) Sutherland, £210
- Eryri Woodskills, North Wales (16-22 July) £210

If you're interested please contact the Activities Programme on 0845 456 1783, or programmes@jmt.org.

Self-catering



ABOYNE 4* s/c for 2, **ACHILTIBUIE** 3* 3 bedroom house overlooking Summer Isles. No pets; children 7yr+ welcome. Mrs J H Strachan, Doreway, Aboyne, Aberdeenshire AB34 5BT. 013398 86232; jo.strachan@virgin.net, www.holidayfreedomscotland.com.

ANDALUCIA small house in the mountains with private pool, panoramic views, remote rural situation, 45 minutes from Malaga Airport. Good bird watching, walks; Natural Park 10 minutes drive. £175–250 pw. www.las-fincas.co.uk, jimfdstott@yahoo.co.uk.

ARDNAMURCHAN Croft by the shore of Loch Shiell. Comfy s/c cottage, sleeps 6, secluded & unspoilt location, mature garden. Excellent views, walking, beaches, rich in wildlife. £250 to £350 per week. For more information call 0131 557 2657 or visit www.dalileacroft.co.uk.

ARRAN Millhouse at Pirnmill. Non-smoking. Sleeps 4, 3 bedrooms, 3*. Spacious accommodation with spectacular views and secluded garden. £310–400 pw; 10% JMT discount. Contact Alison Kilpatrick @southmorningside.edin.sch.uk, tel 0131 667 2267.

AUCHTERMUCHTY NE FIFE. New for 2006, superb lodge in quiet rural setting. STB 4*. The perfect self-catering hideaway. One king/en-suite, one twin/large bathroom. www.baincraiglodge.co.uk or phone Liz or Brian on 01337 828386.

BALLATER 2 newly completed 4* luxury self-catering apartments in heart of village. Perfect base for hiking and biking. Tullich apartment (£350–500) sleeps 4, Gairn (£500–750) sleeps 6. Both also have sofa beds. 0141 353 3839, www.ballaterlodge.co.uk.

Between **BEN NEVIS & GLENCOE** – Inchree Centre. Self-catering chalet & hostel accommodation. On-site pub & restaurant with good food, real ales and open fire. www.inchreecentre.co.uk for more info. Tel 01855 821287.

CAITHNESS Curlew Cottage. Superb views, attractive garden, STB four star. Otters, wildcats, seals, ospreys, puffins, wild coastline and flow country all near. Sleeps 4+cot, sorry no pets. £270–440 pw. www.curlewcottage.com, 01847 895638.

DORNOCH Maple Leaf Cottage, sleeps 4, close golf course and beach, ideal base for Loch Fleet Nature Reserve and exploring the far north. Discount for JMT members. Mrs Norna Hall, Matrons Cottage, Cambusavie, by Dornoch IV25 3JD. Tel 01408 633340.

DUNALASTAIR holiday houses, Perthshire. Secluded and unique cottages in Highland Perthshire overlooked by Schiehallion. 4-posters, log fires, fishing, tennis. Pets welcome. Central for touring. Ring Melanie on 0845 230 1491; dunalastair@sol.co.uk, www.dunalastair.com.

ELGOL, Skye. Snug, romantic 200-y.o. Force 10-resistant 2 room 1 bed cottage in Cuillins. Islands view. Lets year round. Details, availability, Robin@seafood-skye.co.uk, 07887 528087.

GALLOWAY Comfortable self-catering in Laurieston village, ideal for exploring Scotland's beautiful southwest. Hillwalking, forest walks, lots of wonderful wildlife. Sleeps 8 at a pinch, terms reduced for small numbers. Full brochure 01224-595561, a.c.paterson@abdn.ac.uk.

GLEN AFFRIC: cosy, well equipped cottage, sleeps 4 in the conservation village of Tomich. Ideal for walking, birdwatching, biking, fishing. Open all year. C/H, wood-burning stove, garden, dogs welcome. Details: dfpeck@btinternet.com, 01721 723339.

GLENELG Traditional cosy cottage, sleeps 4. Ideal for Skye (summer months) and Knoydart, as well as Glenshiel hills. Contact Robert on 020 89463319 or Robinsonrobt@aol.com.

HIGHLANDS 2 charming cottages, sleep 4, CH, open fires, lovely views. Cnoc Eoghainn: Kinloch Rannoch village, near Schiehallion and Loch Rannoch, STB 3*. Ballindalloch Cott., Errogie: isolated Monadiath moorland setting, South Loch Ness. 01456 486358, corinne@wildernesscottages.co.uk.

ISLE OF SKYE, Staffin. Pair of 2 bedroomed bungalows to let, views of sea/mountains. Sleeps 4, pets by arrangement, no smoking. Open all year, £195–£340 week www.staffinbaycottages.co.uk, enquiries@staffinbaycottages.co.uk, Paul & Helen Webster (01470) 562419.

LAKE DISTRICT nr Kendal. Converted barn, sleeps up to 5. Ideal base for Lakes, Howgills, and North Lancashire. Just bring your boots, or phone 01785-665834 for brochure.

LAKE DISTRICT Lorton-Buttermere valley. 3 well-equipped cottages sleep 2/5/8 in former hill farm. (ETB 3-star) Ideal for family reunions. Stunning views. Walk or bike from door. 5 lakes within seven miles. 0190085206, www.highswinside.demon.co.uk.

LOCHAVICH, ARGYLL Warm, comfortable cottage in isolated but accessible glen 18 miles south of Oban. Miles of walking and stunning scenery on doorstep. £230–£350/w fully inclusive. www.assc.co.uk/maolachy, Mrs Georgina Dalton, 01866 844212, maolachy@firenet.uk.net.

MORZINE, HAUTE SAVOIE Modern 2 bedroom apartment, sleeps 4-6. Located close to GR5 trail in unspoilt Alpine valley 1 km from village centre. Huge variety of walking and mountain biking. Geneva airport 80 mins. 01223 496570.

OLDSHOREMORE (Sandwood Estate) Caravan, sleeps 6, open April–October. Contact Anne Mackay, 01971 521335.

SANDWOOD area. At Rhiconich: Gull Cottage, sleeps 4, and the Barn, sleeps 2. Both fully equipped and open all year. Graham or Lynn, 01971 521717, Gull Cottage, Achriesgill, Rhiconich, Lairg IV27 4RJ.

SANDWOOD Lovely croft house near Polin beach by Kinlochbervie. sleeps 7/8. £175–300 pw. Email jude_cook@btinternet.com.

SANDWOOD Two self-catering family bungalows at Oldshoremore. 3 bedrooms, sleep 5 & 6. STB 3*, 4*. Own field centre, wonderful beaches, hill-walking, peace. Dilys & Michael Otter, Smithy House, Oldshoremore, Kinlochbervie IV27 4RS. Tel/fax 01971 521 729.

PERTSHIRE Secluded and peaceful self-catering accommodation for couples in highland Perthshire on the shore of Loch Tay. Adjacent to Ben Lawers NNR and Trossachs National Park. See www.moreishmews.com or call 01567-820527.

POOLEWE ideal base to explore Ross-shire. Lochside croft, stunning views towards Great Wilderness. 30 mins S to Slioch and Beinn Eithe NNR. Fully modernised cottage, 3 bedrooms sleeping 6. 01445 781307, seasidehouse@dialstart.net, www.seasidecroft.co.uk.

S BRITTANY house (5 beds – comfortably sleeps 7 adults) near Quimperle, large garden, £500/week. On estuary, with small fishing port, cliff walks, coastal path, beaches. (01344) 845395 evenings. 10% to JMT.

SECLUDED SNOWDONIA Self-catering rooms, bunkhouse, yurt, camping in upland valley overlooking Conwy valley, panoramic views of Snowdonia. Good base for your JM Award project, advice available. Del Davies 01492640906, del.davies@virgin.net.

SEDBERGH Self-catering and B&B in fabulous Victorian house at foot of Howgills. Sleeps 6 or 8, double/twin rooms, 3 bathrooms, shower. Open fire, dining kitchen, utility, garden. 015396 20360, ali@interact.co.uk, www.summerhillsedbergh.com.

SKYE Sligachan and Carbost. Two comfortable, well equipped, traditional cottages sleeping max 8. Either makes ideal base for exploring or climbing. Please see peppe@glendrynoch.co.uk for details, including availability calendar, interior and exterior photos. Tel 01478 640218.

SKYE, Trotternish STB 4* traditional croft house, sensitively modernised. Totally unspoilt situation. Panoramic views of sea, islands, mountains: Torridon, An Teallach, Kintail etc. Sleeps five. Two bathrooms. Mature garden. David Hudson, 01449 760428, http://freespace.virgin.net/david.hudson5.

SUTHERLAND Comfortable cottage on coast near Lochinver, Assynt (NC 053 264). Close to Quinag, Suliven and other fine hills. Local walks and unspoilt sandy beaches. Sleeps 5, £240–400. For details phone 0131 665 2055 or email jennymollison@yahoo.co.uk.

SUTHERLAND: my delightfully cosy Assynt home is occasionally available for letting by up to 4 very careful guests. If you are interested in finding out whether your plans fit mine, please call 07971 532356.

SUTHERLAND Ardmere peninsula, accessible by boat/footpath. 2 comfy cottages. Stunning scenery, otters + seals. Most northerly wood W coast mainland. Far from noise of traffic. Sea kayaking and climbing available. Marie Christine Ridgway, 01971 521229, www.johnridgway.co.uk.

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Hotels, B&B etc.



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ISLE OF SKYE Bed & Breakfast, Mrs Nancy Wightman, Inveralvaig, Penifiler, by Portree IV51 9NG. East shore of Loch Portree, NG 488423. Tel & fax 01478 612 322, www.isleofskye.me.uk.

SKYE Mrs Barbara Christie, Swordale House, Swordale, Broadford, Isle of Skye IV49 9AS, 01471 822272, Barbara@swordalehouse.freeserve.co.uk, www.isleofskye.net/swordalehouse. £18-£24.

SKYE. Double & family en-suite, single with private facilities. £28-£35 pppn. 4 course evg meal (£20) by arrangement. Ron & Pam Davison, Tir Alainn, 1/2 of 8 Upper Breakish, Skye IV42 8PY. 01471822366, pam@davison2454.fsnet.co.uk, www.visitskye.com.

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The Beaully–Denny inquiry

‘Why I believe this is a critical and central issue for the Trust’

by HELEN McDADE



AS POLICY OFFICER FOR THE TRUST, and Convenor of the Beaully Denny Landscape Group, I am almost fully occupied with opposing the Beaully–Denny electricity line at a public inquiry. So I wish to share with members why I believe this is a critical and central issue for the Trust.

There are so many misconceptions about this line that the main points can be easily lost.

- The first is the misnomer that this is a ‘Public Local Inquiry’. In name this may be the case. However, the proposed 400 kV transmission line is 220 km long from Beaully, in the north Highlands, to Denny, Stirlingshire, in the south, using approximately 600 steel lattice towers, mostly between 50 and 56 m tall, with some reaching 65 m tall. This makes it a national project. Indeed, the Inquiry will take place in venues as far apart as Inverness and Stirling. There is no record made of the proceedings so people who cannot attend cannot know what is being said. Local objectors may well turn up to ‘their’ part of the Inquiry only to be told that the issue they wish to raise has already been discussed at a previous session and so they can’t bring it up again.

Anyone interested in democratic process might feel uncomfortable about this. The only thing worse than this inquiry as a way of examining this national project would be no examination of the issues, at all.

- Another common fallacy is that this line is essential to fulfil the government’s carbon reduction and renewable energy targets. In fact, there are already enough renewable energy projects consented to fulfil Scotland’s 2010 target and we are well on the way towards the 2020 target. The electricity produced can be dealt with, without this vastly intrusive line. Even if it were felt by government that there is going to be even more onshore production, there are perfectly viable alternatives, using subsea cables or a less damaging east coast overhead line.

Why, then, is this proposal being pursued without any serious consideration of these alternatives? For the answer, I think we have to look at two aspects.

Firstly, politicians like to be presented with simple solutions. They have been told that this line is essential to hit their renewable energy targets. The Scottish Executive could have either formulated a Scottish energy strategy – having first compared all the options carefully, considering social, economic and environmental aspects – or they could accept what they were told. They did the latter.

Secondly, why are the electricity company (Scottish Hydro-Electric Transmission Ltd, ‘SHETL’) who are applying for the consent so determined not to consider these other, economically viable alternatives? Part of the answer

might be that this particular project will almost double their asset base, whilst they are guaranteed a good return on their investment.

It is because this case is complex, with economic and technical justifications being used to override the environmental issues, that we are working with economists and electricity experts to make the case, as well as using our own landscape experts.

We never lose sight of the fact that we are doing this because we wish to protect the wild and unspoiled land which this line will traverse. In other words, the environmental good is our reason for being involved. However, our case is hugely strengthened by challenging the business justification on its own economic grounds.

On the environmental evidence, in mid-March our solicitor made a legal submission that the inquiry should be halted because there was no evidence that Ofgem, the regulatory body, had considered the environmental and sustainable development consequences of the project, as it was legally obliged to do.

The lack of this evidence demonstrates that this case was brought forward in a cavalier fashion by applicants who would appear to have thought the planning process was a formality.

Anyone who wishes to see our environment protected and development to proceed in a truly sustainable way will hope, as I do, that this inquiry is not just going through the motions.

We want the right choice – not the quickest one.