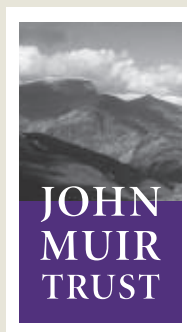


JOHN MUIR TRUST JOURNAL

No 41 October 2006



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Cover photo Rum from the bay of Laig on Eigg,
by JOE CORNISH. Joe's galleries are in
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COVER STORY



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

JOURNAL

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Go – and do it! THE BILL WALLACE GRANT

A lasting and very personal memorial is being arranged for Bill Wallace, who was a stalwart of the John Muir Trust.

BILL WAS ADVENTUROUS, inspired others and made a huge personal contribution towards increasing awareness of the need to safeguard wild places both in Scotland and overseas.

Now a grant scheme capturing the very ethos of the man, 'Go – and Do It!', has been launched to give others an opportunity to follow in his footsteps and to seek out life changing experiences in wild places of the world in ways which will benefit both the person and the wild places themselves.

Bill's 'Go – and Do It!' approach took him to many of the wildest places on earth. He was a quiet man who never blew his own trumpet – but who

spoke eloquently through his deeds. A worthy disciple of John Muir who called on us to 'Do something for wildness – and make the mountains glad'.

Bill died with his boots on in February 2006 executing a perfect turn at the end of a week long ski mountaineering tour in the Eastern Alps. But his legacy lives on – a legacy of selfless devotion to wild places, relentless hard work for and dedication to the John Muir Trust, and a treasure of inspirationally rich memories for all who knew him. Now four areas of Bill's life have come together to create a memorial we hope is fitting to an exceptional man:

- His wife Maureen who was his soulmate and companion for over 40 years
- The Scottish Mountaineering Trust and the Scottish Mountaineering Club for whom Bill was secretary for many years before becoming president
- The family and firm of Tiso's, the outdoor equipment suppliers, for whom Bill worked for many years as a key member of staff
- The John Muir Trust with whom Bill served as secretary and treasurer for 16 years often working over three days a weeks on a totally voluntary basis.

A fund has been set up triggered by £1500 of donations to the John Muir Trust from Bill's funeral and supported by additional funds of £1500 each from the Trust, Maude Tiso's family and business, and Andrew Thin, former chairman of the Trust. The Scottish Mountaineering Trust is considering supporting the fund.

Members of the JMT are asked to consider contributing to the fund, which is administered by the Trust, so that it can become a lasting memorial to Bill. Anyone wishing to donate can send a cheque payable to John Muir Trust to Go – and Do It!, the Bill Wallace Grant, John Muir Trust, 41 Commercial Street, Edinburgh EH6 6JD.

JMT Trustee and SMC member Dick Allen is chairing the 'Go – and Do It!' panel. Anyone who



In Greenland

would like to discuss matters before applying is welcome to contact him or David Picken. Contact details are in the box to the left.

The grant panel will invite short-listed applicants to meet them in early 2007 to discuss their plans, and an announcement of the recipient or recipients will be made at the John Muir Trust's AGM on 13 May, 2007 in Fort William. The person or persons chosen will be invited to attend the AGM in the following year to tell how they 'went – and did it!'

Dick Allen said: 'Bill was a very special man, with very special qualities. He represented all that was best in Scottish mountaineering and in having and sharing an enlightened approach to safeguarding the mountains and wild places of the world.'

'We believe this memorial is a fitting tribute to the man – and will help to ensure that his ethos is carried forward in succeeding generations.'

The grant of £500–£2000 will be made on merit to a person who wishes to 'Go – and Do It!' in the spirit of Bill Wallace.

The project will involve travel to wild places, must be adventurous, of educational or scientific significance, and be a life changing experience leading to a commitment to practical action to conserve wild places.

Eligible will be:

- People of all ages
- People of all abilities
- People with a Scottish interest
- People of all races and ethnic backgrounds
- People who like Bill can show stoicism, determination and commitment
- People who can convince the grant panel that they will 'Go – And Do It!'

To apply for the grant:

- Look for 'Go – and Do It!' on the JMT website at www.jmt.org, or contact David Picken.

Contact details:

- Dick Allen, chairman, Award panel, 01539 821540, rallen@croft-head.net
- David Picken, Award administrator, 0845 456 1783, education@jmt.org

Applications for 2007 should arrive no later than 15 January, 2007.

HF HOLIDAYS AD

WEIR'S WAY on DVD – members' offer

Earlier this year The Scotsman newspaper and the DVD producers Acorn Media requested those taking up their DVD set special offer to donate to the JMT. £993 was donated, and we are very grateful to both The Scotsman and Acorn Media.

Acorn Media is now extending the special offer to all John Muir Trust members.

The 5-DVD boxed set includes walks in Glen Affric, Wester Ross, Loch Maree, Tarbert, the South End of Kintyre, Anstruther and Largo, Eriskey, and many other places. Extras include an interview with Tom Weir.

Buy direct from Acorn Media UK for the special price of £39.99 (including UK mainland P&P) – saving over £40 off the individual DVD price.

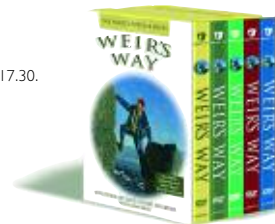
How to Order

Online: www.acornmediauk.com/offer (Code JMTWW).

Phone: Acorn Media UK, 0845 123 2312, Mon–Fri 09.30–17.30.

Post: Acorn Media UK Limited, 16 Welmar Mews, 154 Clapham Park Road, London SW4 7DD.

All credit / debit cards except Amex, or cheque payable to Acorn Media UK.



Journey for the Wild batons are reunited at the foot of the Ben



A SHINGLE BANK IN THE RIVER NEVIS was where the Journey for the Wild 2006 culminated, as the four batons from North, South, East and West were reunited on 25 August.

The final routes were walked and paddled by schoolchildren from Lochaber, including pupils from Inverloch, Invergarry, Roy Bridge, Spean Bridge, Banavie, Caol, Lochside, Inverloch, Upper Achintore, and Anlar at Fort William High School.

Radio Scotland's Out of Doors programme was broadcast from Glen Nevis, and a conservation work party took the four journey sticks to the summit of the Ben and toasted them with a dram of Ben Nevis whisky.

As we went to press the Journey's final route was under way. It was due to bring the batons down the Tay river system, around the Fife coast, and across the Firth of Forth to Dunbar, John Muir's birthplace. From there local schools were to carry the batons through East Lothian to Edinburgh where they were to be presented to the Scottish Parliament on 4 October.

● Travellers' Tales – a Journey roundup, page 16.

Beaully–Denny inquiry

The Trust has welcomed an announcement from the Scottish Executive that there will be a Public Inquiry into the proposed Beaully–Denny Electricity 400kV Transmission Line Upgrade. The Trust asked for a Public Inquiry and a Strategic Environmental Assessment at the time we submitted an objection to the proposal, so that other options, such as undergrounding parts of the line or using subsea cables, could be properly assessed.

Our objection is based on the following:

- that the line will pass through land which is regarded as wild land
- that the line will have significantly more impact than the current 132kV line
- that undergrounding the electricity cable in specific wild land areas is said by the developers,

Ingrid Taylor and Myles Farnbank are holding the batons in their elmwood roundel; next to Myles are Charles Kennedy, MP for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, and JMT director Nigel Hawkins. Journey coordinator Sam Baumber is at far Right.

Scottish and Southern Energy, to not be a feasible option

- the precedent this would set for allowing encroachment on other wild land.

It seems that there will be meetings held in October to discuss the arrangements for the inquiry, which is likely to be held in early 2007. The Trust will be submitting evidence.

- Director's Notes, page 7.

Bilingual funding for Award

The John Muir Award has secured £10,000 from the Countryside Council for Wales towards producing bilingual versions of its new information handbook and PR leaflet. This reinforces our commitment to working in Wales, and with Welsh-speaking communities in particular. These resources will be of great help to **Gwydion Tomos**, our CAE-funded project worker in Snowdonia.

'Gwydys' has hit the ground running, and has started leading several groups towards completing their John Muir Awards. The CAE funding is proving to be an excellent way of helping disadvantaged young people to explore and become aware of the fantastic environment right on their doorsteps.

Wearing his other (freelance) hat, Gwydys has

NORTHWOOD TRUST

In JMT NEWS, July 2006, we wrongly identified the Northwood Trust as the Westward Trust, and mistakenly made reference to them as a family trust fund of D C Thomson & Co. We apologise for these errors and thank the Northwood Trust once again for their generous support.

News

been to Patagonia with a group of pupils from Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen, undertaking their Explorer Level awards.

The Wales team would like to thank **Helen Berry** for her considerable contribution as administrator over the last two and a half years, and to welcome **Liz Watt**, who's stepping boldly into her shoes.

Trust launches group membership

The John Muir Trust has opened a new class of membership. Group membership is for not-for-profit organizations – clubs, youth groups, John Muir Award Providers and schools – who value wild places and wish to support the work of the Trust.

By joining the JMT such organisations will be making a statement about their own environmental credentials, whilst gaining a direct association with the UK's leading wild land conservation charity.

Group members will give us a stronger voice whilst campaigning for the protection of wild land, and help provide more opportunities for people to engage with wild places.

Group membership only costs £50 and offers a range of benefits including a large print of one our estates. For further information, or our leaflet, please phone Fiona Allan on 0131 554 0114.

John Lewis

A big thank you to retailer John Lewis (Edinburgh) for a donation through their charitable committee John Lewis Foundation. The donation supports the work of the John Muir Award.

Forum airs Cape Wrath concerns

The Ministry of Defence has set up a committee of neighbouring landowners and local conservation bodies with an interest in Cape Wrath as a discussion forum relating to the MOD's use and management of the area. The cape is about 10 miles north of the Trust's Sandwood Estate.

Cathel Morrison, Sandwood estate manager, was invited to attend the initial meeting, where the main concerns expressed were:

- Increased battalion activity.
- Sea bombardments from the SW of Cape Wrath.
- Quad bikes being used regularly on the southern boundary.
- Access to hill walkers being curtailed.
- One of the biggest combined exercises taking place during the nesting period, with implications for the seabird and moorland bird populations.

Cathel will continue to be involved in the forum.

We join Breathing Places

The Trust is to become a partner in the BBC's Breathing Places campaign, which aims to mobilise people to create nature-friendly green spaces across the UK between now and 2008.

The aims of Breathing Places are remarkably similar to our own vision that wild places are valued by all members of society. It promotes John Muir's ethos that connecting with nature is good for physical and mental well being. We believe too that the campaign presents a good opportunity to raise the profile of the Trust and of the John Muir Award by accessing a large BBC audience. We will be able to register our estates and our public events as Breathing Places on the BBC website, and the John Muir Award can apply for Phase II funding (up to £10,000) from the Big Lottery Fund, to support and promote the campaign.

Toby Clark, John Muir Award regional manager for the West of Scotland, is our Breathing Places contact. Watch out for BBC programmes Autumnwatch and Springwatch for details, or get involved through www.bbc.co.uk/breathingplaces and www.johnmuiraward.org/makeadifference.

John Muir joins the JMT!

JOHN W MUIR, Chairman of the Muir Group, was keen to find a way of supporting the work of the Trust, and so recently signed up for his namesake's charity with a gold membership of the Trust's corporate scheme.

J W Muir Group has its head office and timber systems factory at Inverkeithing in Fife. As Muir Homes, they specialise in timber-framed construction and manufacture all their own houses including the quality internal natural timber finishings and doors. They take pleasure in working with other Scottish manufacturers and have a keen commitment to understanding the environmental needs of their customers.

Energy efficiency is high on the list of considerations for Muir Homes, with a commitment to timber frame construction with high-grade insulating materials.

John said: 'Environmental conservation is an important issue to the Muir Group. We admire the work John Muir Trust are doing to protect and preserve some of Scotland's most iconic wild land and we are pleased to lend our support.'

Gatliff numbers

The four Gatliff hostels, on South Uist, Berneray, Harris and Lewis, attracted over 6500 visitors last year. There's been a steady upward trend since the blip caused by foot & mouth disease. Their website www.gatliff.org.uk now includes a forum for information and thoughts on the hostels in particular, and the Outer Hebrides and travelling in general.

Revamped resources for providers of the John Muir Award are now available.

The Information Handbook gives guidance to people running the Award. As well as background on John Muir, the John Muir Trust and the Award, it covers biodiversity and outdoor access.

The Record Book is for participants to keep a record of their experiences.

JMT members are welcome to request a set of the resources. We don't charge for them — all we ask is that you put them to good use!

Contact:

info@johnmuiraward.org, 0845 458 2910, or
41 Commercial St, Edinburgh EH6 6JD



ART IN THE PARK



John Muir Award participant John Skinner (L), with Award manager for the Cairngorms Alan Smith and Rhona Brankin.

Rhona Brankin, Deputy Minister for the Environment and Rural Development, visited John Muir Award participants in Glen Tanar Estate in Aberdeenshire in July. She met people with learning difficulties working with WEA Reach Out in conjunction with the Award in the Cairngorms National Park.

The group is doing conservation work and environmental art towards their Discovery Award. The artwork on the forest floor is a calendar whose segments show the divisions of the old Celtic year.

The minister said that the project 'demonstrates how we can use parks to help the most vulnerable in society get their lives back on track, through learning new skills, meeting new people and building

up confidence.'

Alan Smith, John Muir Award manager in the national park, added: 'Absolutely anyone can take part in the Award, from school children to pensioners, but we are increasingly seeing groups like WEA Reach Out using it as a way of helping peoples' rehabilitation.'

DRYSTONE DAYS



At Sandwood, 17 volunteers joined Thurso dyker George Gunn (top) and estate manager Cathel Morrison for drystone dyking. While the novices got their hands in repairing three gaps in the common grazings walls, the others started shifting stone from the derelict former post office at Balchrack. Over 30 tons were taken to the Blairmore car park where under George's instruction a seated area next to the new toilet block and a shelter around the bins were constructed.

Llandudno/Alaska expedition



Pupils from St. David's College in Llandudno followed in the footsteps of John Muir on an expedition to Glacier Bay, Alaska, the location of Muir Inlet and Muir Glacier. Exploring by sea-kayak, and conducting a wildlife survey for the National Park, they saw the impact of climate change on the rapidly retreating glaciers. They met grizzly and black bears, a wolf, bald headed eagles, transient orcas, Minke whales, humpback whales, porpoise, Steller's sea lions, seals, river and sea otters, porcupines and red squirrels. All earned their Explorer level John Muir Awards.

Partnerships role for Fran Lockhart



FRAN LOCKHART joined the JMT staff last month as partnerships manager responsible for our estates at Ben Nevis, and Li & Coire Dhorraicail in Knoydart. She'll be our main point of contact with partner organisations the Nevis Partnership and the Knoydart Foundation. Fran, who succeeds Kirsty Leitch in the partnerships role, was formerly with the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group in the north of Scotland.

Say cheese...

Once again our friends Gordon and Angela at the John Muir Country Store will kindly make a donation for every Scottish cheese hamper sold to Trust members and supporters. Hampers

can be tailor-made and are an excellent gift for Christmas. Visit www.johnmuircountrystore.com/jmt (the JMT identifies you as a member or supporter) or phone 01 620 8603 13 (identifying yourself as JMT).

Annie's web work



Volunteer ANNIE SHIMMIN played an important part in the recent redesign of the JMT website, www.jmt.org. Annie spent several weeks working with our design partners Image Scotland in setting a new structure for the hundreds of pages on the site.

- What do you think? Take a look at the new site and email your impressions to admin@jmt.org. Your name will go into a prize draw to win a set of Pacer walking poles. Reply by 17 November please.



Making a difference at Knoydart

Our partners the Knoydart Foundation and Knoydart Forest Trust were pleased to host around 20 volunteers from a JMT work party in August. This was a chance for the visitors to really make a difference to the southern side of the Knoydart peninsula – rhododendron eradication, beach cleaning and seed-collecting were all tackled with enthusiasm.

The Foundation and the Forest Trust are very grateful to all volunteers, and look forward to meeting them again. Keep an eye on the Ranger section of the Knoydart Foundation website, www.knoydart-foundation.co.uk, for details of their workparties, phone them on 01 687 462242 – or join the Friends of Knoydart!

The Old Forge at Inverie *above* was a great place to relax and welcome the arrival of one of the Journey for the Wild batons. Volunteers still found time *top*, by Alan Scott to look out over the wilds of Knoydart.

Quinag and Drumrunie

Sandy Maxwell writes: John Muir Trust's first conservation work party in Assynt covered both our own land at Quinag and our partner the Assynt Foundation's land at Drumrunie. On Drumrunie we did several days' work on the path to Loch an Doire Dhuibh from Loch Lurgain between Stac Pollaidh and Cul Beag. On our own Quinag estate we laid in two 1-km woodland transects for monitoring as well as removing cairns from the summit and doing a small amount of repair to the path. On a glorious sunny day we introduced two members of the workparty to Corbett-bagging on the summit of Quinag which was looking at its best. Along with some general exploration of the area we fitted in a quick beach cleanup too!

- Glencanisp Lodge, which sleeps 20, is again available for rent. Contact Derek Loudon, Assynt Foundation development manager, on 01 571 844 117, or LoudenDW@aol.com.

Happenings at Dùn Coilich

Robin Hull writes: Though little seems to have changed at Dùn Coilich (the estate next to JMT's East Schiehallion) thousands of Scottish native trees have been planted on its NW aspect, which when grown will be visible from the Schiehallion path.

More easily seen is the newly opened car park (by the B846 at 772536) serving the eastern side of Dùn Coilich and the spectacular Allt Mor glen. Also new are the scrapes excavated in marshland at 769528. When filled with winter rain these will provide habitat for aquatic plants and animals.

Fundraising by the Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust continues for a planned observation and educational facility, combining a bird hide with educational material on geology, history and wildlife. The discovery of a colony of water voles indicates recovery of a species threatened by mink predation.

Members who have used www.everyclick.co.uk as their internet search engine raised over £150 in just a few months.

Visit [Everyclick](http://www.everyclick.co.uk) and follow the instructions to identify the John Muir Trust as your chosen charity. Then, for every new search that you make using Everyclick, a donation will be made to the Trust. You can use Everyclick as your home page too.

And don't forget our own Directory Enquiries service – telephone 118310 – as again a donation will be made for each call.

tiso ad

Bombus distinguendus – Sandwood resident



Research this summer showed that there is still a small but strong breeding population of the Great Yellow Bumblebee, *Bombus distinguendus*, in Polin and Oldshoremore on JMT's Sandwood estate. The area used by the bees is larger than was previously known, with the centre of activity clearly at Polin, but probably free exchange of individuals between the two areas.

Six queens were seen in a short time at Polin, and two at Oldshoremore. It may be assumed that the actual population is greater.

Murdo Macdonald carried out the survey. He was asked by estate manager Cathel Morrison to find out if the bees were still present, to search in the wider area, to provide advice on appropriate habitat management, and to provide some training in the field for JMT staff and residents of the area.

Berghaus on Schiehallion

Staff from Trust corporate member Berghaus travelled to Schiehallion this summer to spend two days with JMT staff on conservation activities. They helped to clear waterbar silt traps and drainage culverts, and to

repair areas where walkers leaving the main path have damaged vegetation. They took time out to walk to the summit – a first for most of them.

Andrew Campbell, JMT's land and property manager, was impressed with the enthusiasm of the group: 'They were really keen to learn about Schiehallion and the realignment of the footpath and they got stuck in with the tasks that we set.' Trust director Nigel Hawkins joined the group for dinner and presented certificates to thank the team.

● As well as their work on the ground, Berghaus staff raised over £400 through sponsorship.

Sea eagle danger

Birdwatch reports: A Norwegian wind farm has caused a crash in the white-tailed eagle population. Turbine blades have killed nine birds in the last 10 months on the Smøla islands, a group about six miles off the NW coast of Norway. The Norwegian government ignored advice on the danger the wind development posed to eagles.

Taste the Wonderwall!

Ice cream maker Mackie's of Scotland is supporting the Journey for the Wild with a Wild Wall page on its website, www.mackies.co.uk. Visitors are invited to donate £5; in return Mackie's sends a gift voucher for a tub of ice cream to anywhere in the UK and donates £2.50 to the Trust. Every eighth 'wild tub' earns the purchaser a free voucher.

sconser lodge

A HIGHER PROFILE ON ENERGY

Liz Miller Photography



'We are deeply concerned at the headlong rush towards onshore wind generation at the expense of investment in other means.'

Director's Notes by Nigel Hawkins

THE DEBATE OVER THE IMPACT on landscape and nature of large scale industrial wind turbines and massive new grid transmission lines has hotted up in recent weeks as a crucial stage is reached in the drive towards more energy from renewable sources.

Applications for wind turbine developments in several areas of key wild land are now being considered, and proposals for a major upgrade of the Beaulieu to Denny grid transmission line through some of Scotland's finest countryside to take this power south are to be considered at a public inquiry.

The John Muir Trust favours a raft of measures aimed at reducing our use of fossil fuels – and the emission of greenhouse gases which are causing climate change – but is deeply concerned at the headlong rush towards onshore wind generation at the expense of investment in other means of meeting our energy needs.

We believe the starting point is in actually agreeing what those needs are. Do we need to heat and light every room in the house? Do we need to light long stretches of motorways and other roads? Do we need to use the internal combustion engine as much?

Reducing rather than increasing consumption is surely the way if we are really concerned for the future of our environment. At the same time we must avoid wastage by ensuring proper insulation of buildings and taking other measures.

That then takes us to micro-generation. In the past all houses had chimneys related to the energy source. Why don't houses today have their own individual windmill along with solar panels, provision for using biomass fuels and perhaps thermal heating from the ground?

This involves all of us taking personal responsibility for energy and the environment. Given increased demand for personal energy generators, the price of these will fall – I believe dramatically – in only a few years' time.

The Trust supports community scale renewable energy schemes including wind turbines where the scale is determined by the size of the population – generating the equivalent of the use by local people. This will result in smaller scale schemes located close to settlements with limited impact on landscapes. At the same time there will be a very meaningful financial advantage to local people as well as a worthwhile contribution to the fight against global warming.

We recognise there will be large scale onshore wind schemes but the Trust believes these must not be where their impact on landscape and nature is at its greatest – namely on key areas of wild land.

We must invest more in coming up with the right technologies for harnessing predictable sources of renewable energy, especially tidal flows, while achieving minimal impact on the marine environment.

The Trust believes that the same approach needs to be taken to major new transmission lines – these must not be where their impact on landscape and nature is at its greatest, namely key areas of wild land.

If the only way for transmission lines to avoid key wild land is to go sub-sea then that is a price the nation must be prepared to pay in order to safeguard its priceless wild natural heritage.

Our new leaflet poses the question 'What's your view of wild



'What's your view of wild land?' – our leaflet has had a tremendous response.

Land?' and asks if it is a landscape full of large turbines and pylons. We have had a tremendous response to the leaflet from members and others who have welcomed the fact that the Trust is becoming more high profile in its stance on this matter.

The Trust called for a public inquiry into the proposed Beaulieu-Denny line in order to ensure that all the issues are fully and publicly considered. We are pleased that the Scottish Executive has decided to do exactly this and we look forward to making a thoughtful and positive contribution.

Journey for the Wild

A tremendous demonstration of the importance of wild places to people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds has been shown by the way people have engaged in the Trust's Journey for the Wild (centre pages of the *Journal*).

This carrying of the batons from the four compass points of Britain has been all about inclusion and creating opportunities for everyone who wants to be a part of it to be so.

This engagement of people in wild land is critical to achieving

John Muir Trust Corporate Members

Environmental conservation is an important issue to the Muir Group. We admire the work the John Muir Trust is doing to protect and preserve some of Scotland's most iconic wild land and we are pleased to lend our support.

JOHN MUIR, Chairman, J W Muir Group PLC

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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Graham Tiso Limited
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Profitmaster Systems Ltd

Great partnerships – Great benefits

All these companies support the Trust through corporate membership and in return gain valuable promotional benefits. The Trust will tailor its corporate membership packages to suit your company, and we are always open to ideas, like the Mackie's of Scotland Wild Tub Wall (www.mackies.co.uk) where people 'buy' a gift tub of ice cream on their website, personalise the virtual tub, and receive a voucher for ice cream as well as making a donation to the Trust.

Ask your employer to give us the opportunity to explore how we can work together. We will find the best way for you and your company to benefit in return.

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

Director's Notes, continued

public and political support for safeguarding and conserving wild areas. This was something John Muir himself understood so well – he was no elitist; he wanted people to see and understand wild land and then to cherish it.

He realised that the future of the planet was in our own hands.

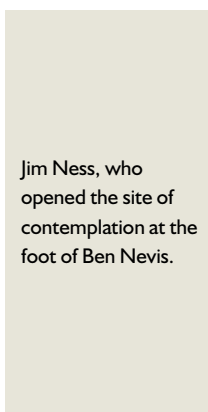
Musical Mystery

The mystery of how a piano came to be found by Trust volunteers removing cairns from the top of Ben Nevis created a wonderful opportunity to focus on the issue of litter left on mountains and wild places.

The media interest in the story resulted in unprecedented publicity not just in this country but from around the world with just about every major newspaper on earth carrying the story.

More than 50 radio interviews were given including one to the Pan Hispanic radio network emanating from Colombia and going across the Spanish speaking world – South America (except Brazil), Central America, and parts of the USA as well as Spain and the Canaries – an audience of an estimated 200 million!

It was disclosed that all sorts of things have been taken up the Ben including an organ and a gas cylinder – but all have now been removed. What seemed an exciting challenge twenty years ago is now viewed very differently with growing recognition of the need to safeguard wild places and keep them as natural as possible.



Jim Ness, who opened the site of contemplation at the foot of Ben Nevis.



Memorials

Another issue has been the matter of memorial plaques and other items on the summit of the Ben. Although great sensitivity is needed for the thoughts of relatives and friends who placed them there, these memorials undoubtedly detract from the experience of people climbing the mountain, which for many is one of the most memorable days in their lives.

Instead there is now a Site of Contemplation at the foot of the mountain provided by Highland Council and the Nevis Partnership – and a place for memorials on the partnership website where fitting tribute can be paid to departed relatives and friends.

We hope people agree these are the better ways of meeting both personal needs and the needs of the mountain.

Staff changes

Alison Russell has been appointed as the Trust's new Head of Finance and Administration following the departure to pastures new of **Scott Williamson**. Allison has considerable experience of strategic financial management having worked with major financial institutions in London and she also brings with her a great interest in the outdoors. She will be based at the Pitlochry Office.

Scott has left to take up appointment as finance manager with Street Work, a charity based in Edinburgh. Scott was a valued member of the Trust's management team for over two years and all his colleagues wished him the very best for the future.

On 12 August 1911, at the age of 73, John Muir sailed from Brooklyn harbour and embarked on an 8-month, 40,000 mile voyage to South America and Africa. One of his goals in South America was to investigate several rare species of the Araucaria tree.

Sandy Franklin followed him down.

ANCIENT forests of the ANDES

JOHN MUIR WAS SEEKING *Araucaria braziliensis* and the even rarer *Araucaria araucana*, better known to us as the Monkey Puzzle tree. We know that the tree grows in the Andes in southern Chile and SW Argentina at elevations of 900–1800 metres, but John Muir didn't.

Muir travelled to Santiago and then headed further south, led by botanical instincts, to Victoria where he met two sawmill owners, Mr Smith and Mr Hunter, who he hoped would help him locate the *Araucaria araucana*. From Smith's ranch Muir travelled with the men into the Andes. His diary entry for 20 November 1911 tells us that having crossed ridges, streams and meadows, he finally 'came in full sight of a ridge... bordering the south side of a glacier meadow, the top of which was fringed with the long-sought-for *Araucaria*'. In his diary he records his joy at the discovery: 'A glorious and novel sight, beyond all I hoped for. Yet I had so long dreamed of it, it seemed familiar'.

This entry in Muir's diary seemed uncannily familiar to me when I read it, because I, too, after years of dreaming of seeing Monkey Puzzle trees in their native habitat, had stood in these primordial forests in southern Chile and marvelled at the sight, a sight 'beyond all I hoped for'. But I am leaping ahead of myself and must go back many years and tell you more.

*On Christmas Eve 1960, at the age of seven, I stood in my grandfather's garden admiring a Monkey Puzzle tree ablaze with Christmas lights. The next day my stocking contained a children's encyclopedia, a present from my grandfather. The first article I read was about the Monkey Puzzle forests of Chile, and how the Victorian plant collectors had brought seeds back to the UK. The seed was sown in me; I vowed, at that tender age, to see the *Araucaria araucana* in their native habitat one day.*

MOST DREAMS, if we pursue them with enough determination, can come to fruition – some just take a while! Many years after that 1960 Christmas, my husband Tim and I set off to spend 6 weeks in Chile and Patagonia during the northern hemisphere winter of 2005/2006. Just as it had been for Muir in 1911, one of our primary goals was to see the *Araucaria araucana*. By a remarkable coincidence we arrived in the Araucania region of Chile on Christmas Eve. A guide would take us into the Cani Sanctuary, an area noted for its Monkey Puzzle forest, on Boxing Day 2005.

The Cani Sanctuary is about half an hour's drive from the tourist town of Pucon in the Chilean Lake District, heading east into the Andes, and about 80 miles south east from where Muir had set out in search of the forest. It is a magical place. Due to be logged in early 1990, the 500 hectares of the Cani Sanctuary were instead purchased with the assistance of the Ancient Forests International, leading to the formation of the Fundacion Lahuen.



*The *Araucaria araucana* forests of Chile*



This foundation, dedicated to forest protection and conservation, administers the Sanctuary, and supports projects such as a native tree nursery nearby, education projects for schoolchildren, and guided tours. Within the Cani Sanctuary the old endemic Monkey Puzzle trees are highly distinctive with their tall, straight trunks and an umbrella of branches at the crown. They grow at about 2 cm a year to a height of 50 m, and may live for more than 1000 years. Their bark can be up to 8 cm thick and frequently it is covered with dense lichen that gives it a whitish appearance.

By the time we arrived in Pucon Tim and I had cycled 600 miles south from Santiago in glorious weather, detouring over the coastal range where two additional, but thought to be genetically distinct, populations of Monkey Puzzle trees are found in the Cordillera de Nahulebuta. But on the day we were, at last, to walk in the forests of Cani we woke to cloud obscuring the world. It was going to be even more atmospheric than I had anticipated! Although a permit is not required to visit Cani, the Foundation does require visitors to be accompanied by a guide, easily achieved via its offices in the popular Hostal Ecole in Pucon.

We met our guide Andreas, drove out to the sanctuary, and began our walk. An old track, originally used to bring out the logged trees by ox and cart, led us through dense Coigue forest, one of the six species of *Nothofagus* (southern beech) found in Chile. Soon, having climbed steeply and having paused at a refuge hut built entirely with wood from windfall, we were walking beneath ancient Coigue and Lenga, Manio and Ulmo trees. Goat's beard lichen dripped off the trees, and wild flowers and bamboo created a dense understorey. We came to Laguna Sec, a lake dense with rushes, the trees alive with the songs of Chilean parrots and woodpeckers, the air still thick with mist. Waving to the non-existent view across the lake, Andreas said, 'there are your trees lining the hill tops on the other side'. But sadly, not a trace of one could be seen.

We walked on for some while, the mist began to clear, then we turned a corner in the path, and there they were – tall, ancient Monkey Puzzle trees growing in a forest on the slopes of the Andes. I stopped, stood, stared, and I believe I jumped up and down with the excitement of the 7 year-old I had once been. Then came an even bigger surprise: we were surrounded not only by the ancient trees, but also by a large number of saplings that had regenerated since the Sanctuary had been purchased and logging had been banned.

We stopped for lunch by Laguna Negro, sitting by an old Indian

cabin and firepit. The mist cleared, the sun came out, and I felt immensely privileged and fortunate to be sitting in the heart of this ancient forest. Fortunate, because Monkey Puzzle forests still exist. Over time they have been destroyed and degraded by logging, fire and grazing, so that it was thought more specimens existed in European gardens than in the native habitat. However, in 1976 the tree was declared a national monument in Chile, a status that prohibits logging, and although the status was revoked in 1987 it was reinstated in late 1990 due to pressures from conservationists and indigenous people.

Eventually we climbed to the highest point, the Mirador, at 1800 m. Although this viewpoint is only 9 km from the entrance to Cani, and Cani is in the popular holiday area of the Lake District not far from the larger town of Villarica, we felt remote and as though we were the only people on the planet. It is not uninhabited country here. The Mirador is a fine rocky outcrop affording views across the tops of the nearby trees, the females swollen with yellow cones, the seeds of which were an important food source for the indigenous Pehuenche

people. We sat and lingered looking out over the unique vista that Monkey Puzzles cast in the mountains as they emerge high above the canopy of the smaller *Nothofagus* trees.

It was time to leave; we were already late, we had lingered too long. 'If I had to go home today', I said to our guide as we left Cani, 'I could do so happily now that I have seen the forest'. But Tim and I still had almost 4 weeks left in Chile: to sea kayak in the fjords of northern Patagonia and trek in the mountains of the Torres del Paine National Park in the north - and we knew those journeys would bring us in touch with further wonders, not least the world's largest icecap outside of Antarctica and Greenland.

Over the next few weeks I reflected on the Sanctuary: it provides an example on a small scale of how the ever more rare and precious southern forests can be conserved and restored. And I was filled with hope because, despite some continuing pressures from logging in Chile, today the tree is valued for its uniqueness and natural beauty, and recognized as providing important tourism and recreational opportunities. And I also wondered – could the Cani Sanctuary have been the place where John Muir saw the *Araucaria araucana* in November 1911...



From top: Monkey puzzle trees swollen with cones in the Cani Sanctuary; Sandy and Tim en route to the top of Volcano Villarica, with the Cani Sanctuary behind in the far distance.



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A TOE IN THE WATER



We start our look at coastal wild land with the prospects for Scotland's first coastal and marine national park. It could be here soon.

Loch Sunart, Nevis and Hourn penetrating eastwards into the mountainous interior, the influence of the coast remain strong.'

The Trust has not taken an individual stand on the proposals, but as a member of Scottish Environment LINK we've signed a briefing paper welcoming the prospect of a CNMP.

LINK notes that 'Scotland's coasts and seas support over 40,000 marine species, over half of our total biodiversity. We have two thirds of the global resource of machair. Scotland's coastal landscape is internationally famous and is fundamental in maintaining the vitally important tourism industry... and Scotland's coasts and seas contain a wealth of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, from 9000-year-old Mesolithic rock shelters, to more recent harbours, jetties and fishery stations and crofting landscapes – the result of people working with nature for millennia.'

Some commentators make 'Argyll islands and coast', an area centered on the Firth of Lorn, the front runner for designation. SNH noted the landscape features here as: 'The combination of land and sea, the views across open water, the movement of waves and tidal currents interspersed by rocky skerries and the quality of light, are all important characteristics of these landscapes. Each of the islands has its own special character: low rolling moors, sand, mudflats and wide sandy beaches on Islay; remote moorland and hills of Jura; cliffs and mountains on Mull; and the sandy beaches and machair on Coll and Tiree.'

(It's worth noting that none of the five area 'profiles' compiled by SNH contains the words 'wild land', or indeed 'wild' at all, except of salmonids!)

Threats - and opportunities

There have been lively exchanges during planning and consultation. Some definitely feel threatened by the prospect of living and working in a park; they're against yet more landscape designations and governmental layers; they don't see any threat to our coast that compares to, for example, the visitor pressures on Loch Lomond or the Cairngorms. Some fishing interests are especially worried about more controls on their livelihood, or outright bans. Others are worried that their particular patch is *not* on the short list, or would like a bolder approach encompassing the whole north-western seaboard.

The 'opportunities' point of view was posted on SNH's message board by someone who runs a shellfish farm and whose words can't be improved on:

The concern by some people about layers of bureaucracy and stifling of local enterprise on creation of a national park is hopelessly out of date, if ever it was a real problem. I ask these people to raise their horizons and learn about all the positive aspects of becoming members of the world family of national parks and stop fearing the future... think on about all the issues that confront us – declining population and threats to indigenous culture, tankers in the Minch, waste disposal, Common Fisheries Policy, lifeline ferry services, aquaculture, wave energy, off-shore wind energy etc, etc. Unless you are an anarchist, surely it is better to argue from a position of strength and be able to confront bad decisions with proper argument and debate.

SCOTTISH MINISTERS ARE COMMITTED to setting up the country's first coastal and marine national park (CMNP) by 2008. As we went to press they were studying a report by Scottish National Heritage with a short list of five possible areas, though they're not bound to accept any of the areas or their proposed boundaries. From south to north, the five candidates are:

- Solway
- Argyll Islands and Coast
- Ardnamurchan, Small Isles and the South Skye Coast
- Wester Ross and North Skye Coast
- North Uist, Sound of Harris, Harris and South Lewis.

Among the criteria were that the area should not be too remote, and should have potential for 'access and enjoyment'; that it should include land as well as sea; and also that park status should make a significant contribution to its social and economic development.

If the third area in the list, Ardnamurchan, Small Isles and the South Skye Coast was chosen, the Trust would be directly affected. As described, this includes all Skye's Strathaird peninsula, and therefore our Strathaird and perhaps also Torrinn estates. Though the waters of the Sound of Sleat and lochs Hourn and Nevis are in the area, no land on the Knoydart peninsula is included. Presumably it's thought too remote.

Of this area the SNH report says: 'Sea, lochs and mountains dominate the scenery ... with open visibility, wide and distant views, quality of light, and tidal movements all adding to the landscape experience. Skye's Black Cuillin, Rum Cuillin and the hills of Eigg provide a distant backdrop to many views while travelling by sea...on the mainland coast, the experience can be smaller scale and more intimate...But with long sea lochs such as

Above, Skye Cuillin from Loch Scaivaig, by Eric Meadows. Maps show two of the possible park areas from SNH's report: paler tints are extensions to the core area.



The Rock & Brine Club

OVER A DECADE AGO, I BEGAN TO EXPLORE the Hebrides by yacht. No expensive, 20m luxury yacht, but a lively, 9m lady rented from a fellow club member and crewed by as odd a foursome as any you might find. The skipper was the only one with experience, suitably long in the teeth. There was another man of mature years, with a mild predilection to falling in, a French girl, cheerful and easy on the eye, and myself. We were a motley crew, let loose to chance the fates in waters which, though amongst the most beautiful in the world, could also be the most dangerous. Two of us, myself and the old man, had been steeped in mountaineering for a lifetime; no strangers to discomfort, danger, mortal peril even. And I suspect the four of us were little different from any other adventurer who had grasped the chance to explore the mountains from the sea.

There is of course a long history of mountaineering from a boat, especially if one counts the exploits of the early travellers who wished to reach and discover the islands such as Skye in the years before trains and ferries. Written descriptions date from 1549, with the description of Skye by Donald Munro, High Dean of the Isles. The mineralogists appeared in 1800, with Robert Jameson actually ascending Beinn na Caillich. He had, however, been beaten to the first ascent, by Thomas Pennant, in 1772, the first recorded ascent of any Skye mountain. Soon, a veritable wave of adventurers was beating on that island's shores, followed quickly by the mountaineers.

But to April 1897, when the Scottish Mountaineering Club assayed to mount a yachting expedition to the Western Isles. From the S.S. *Erne*, climbs were made at Rum, Loch Hourn, Loch Nevis, Ballachulish and Jura. The indomitable Harold Raeburn was there. In fact, along with his brother John, he was a skilled racing yachtsman, with a cup named the Raeburn Trophy in their honour still being raced for by members of the Royal Forth Yachting Club, based in Granton.

It was Raeburn who wrote in 1903: 'To beat to windward against a strong wind and heavy sea, has something akin to the feeling of fighting one's way up the ice pitches in a snow gully, or difficult traverses on a steep rock face.'

View from the deck of the 'Alpha', a 1904-built Bristol Channel Pilot Cutter; looking NW towards the entrance to Loch Hourn, with the 'Eda Frandsen' in the lead and Beinn Sgritheall in the distance. 'Eda Frandsen' (pronounced 'Ada') is a 60 year old gaff cutter, originally built in Grenna, Denmark in 1938. She started life fishing for lobsters, and then seine netting out of Lemvig, Denmark. Between 1990-95 she was totally rebuilt and refitted by the Robinsons at Doune to combine her natural seaworthiness and reliability with romance and tradition. Photo: Ken Crocket.

This yacht meet of 1897 was brought to life 100 years later, with a Centenary Meet held by the SMC. Within hours of leaving Oban, a veritable fleet of boats was scattered over the Hebrides, mainly en route to Skye, via Rum. Sailing on the classic Bristol Channel Pilot cutter *Alpha*, with a small number of other climbers I was dropped off on the south of Rum and made my way, via a rock climb and the principal peaks, to Loch Scresort, where we whistled for our boat's crew to pick us up for dinner on board. It was a small taste of what a boat could provide.

After some years' sailing I decided that I was enjoying it enough to pick up some formal knowledge, and so worked for a Day Skipper's

Certificate. This has the dubious property of making me, in theory, competent to skipper a boat, as long as I'm safely tucked into my sleeping bag before it gets dark of course! If you have mixed with 'yachties' for long enough, you will realise that motor boats (disparagingly called 'Gin Palaces') are not PC. Much of the enjoyment is in the knowledge that you are moving using wind power alone, an art with a very long history. Motors are for when the wind drops, or you are feeling your way along a difficult loch or nudging up to a mooring. I would venture to suggest that the sudden drop in noise when the engine is shut off and the sails go up is like entering your snug tent and escaping from the gale outside.

My experiences follow that of most; a small group



by Ken Crocket

Right Rum ahead! Ken Crocket *below left* at the helm of the 9m yacht 'Hecla II', somewhere in the Hebrides! Much of his sailing and exploration has been on this boat with three others. Landing on the roadless west coast of Jura *below right*, a small rocky buttress rising out of a raised beach was spotted and a fine corner taken by Ken and his companion. An easy Severe rock climb, not recorded. Photos: Crocket Collection.



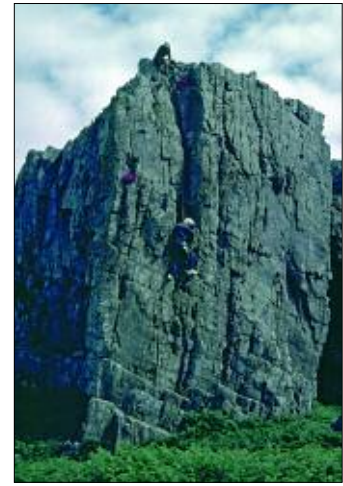
of climbers share a yacht using a method called bare boating, or chartering a suitable boat but self-crewing, with no paid skipper. If it's a small boat it can easily become quite squalid, so it's well suited to climbers, used to cramped, squalid quarters.

There will have been literally thousands of sea-mounted climbing expeditions, and that in Scotland alone, never mind the wider world. Indeed, in the last 20 years there has been a huge increase in the number of new climbs made in the islands, starting with a small party being taken to their chosen island by a local boatman. The magnificent Lewisian cliffs alone are being assaulted from the sea every summer, with other islands such as Barra, Mingulay and others also very accessible by this approach. Many, if not most such explorations, are made by arranging a landing with a local boatman. It's now fairly steady business in the summer months, though not without some fun and games as many landings are heavily weather dependent. You take extra food and phone in sick.

It's really a summer game – we are after rock after all, and snow and ice rarely live for long on the sea's edge. The weather is often cruel and dangerous in the winter. Also, many boats are laid up at the end of summer.

And there is little room for a passenger – no one wants to be left on the boat when there's exploring to be found. One exception is when no anchorage can be done. I landed on a small island with the curious name of the Dutchman's Cap some years ago, but only after I had motored up and down offshore for a while as other members made an ascent, having jumped onto rocks from a rubber dinghy.

Personally I have made a modest contribution to such explorations. A few years ago, on a sailing trip, we went to investigate an island (which shall remain nameless), on which there were prominent coastal



cliffs. The boat was incredibly useful, as we sailed up its coast peering through binoculars as we went. I noticed that the rock strata on one particular cliff seemed to slant at a helpful angle, despite its overall steepness; and so it proved, as we made several new climbs after landing. To arrange a landing without private boat would have been possible but not best convenient, and then there is always the weather!

I am still haunted by the memory of a huge buttress on a far-flung island, with grey slabs sweeping down to the sea. We spent a night anchored further up that sea-loch, wondering whether we should attempt the buttress in the morning. In the end, time pressures prevailed, and we sailed away. But I still wonder.

Some climb and rarely record their routes, while other outings may end up in the pages of the *SMC Journal*, later to be published in a guidebook. I can tell you that in the last decade or two, there have been enough new rock climbs recorded in the Western Isles to fill more than one new guidebook. There is much still to find.

There is much, much more to this than merely approaching the hills from the sea however. As Raeburn observed, there is a lot in common between climbing and sailing. Both have adventure, and discomfort. Both take you into uncharted areas, whether land or sea. To tie the two together is an experience which I would recommend to anyone.

To sail up Loch Hourn, land on the beach at Barrisdale Bay and walk over Ladhar Bheinn to a haven at Inverie was a day which made all my early painful long walk-ins feel like another world. I have not even mentioned the obvious benefits of seeing wild life from another angle. And then there's a comfortable lack of midges at sea...

We often have little idea of just what magnificent scenery we have on our doorstep, scenery which has to be protected. That includes coastal waters as well as the land. In Scotland, there really is no separation, as the view from many a summit will testify. So why are you waiting? Learn some basics, find some like-minded pirates, and up anchor!

JMT AGM 2007 12-13 May FORT WILLIAM

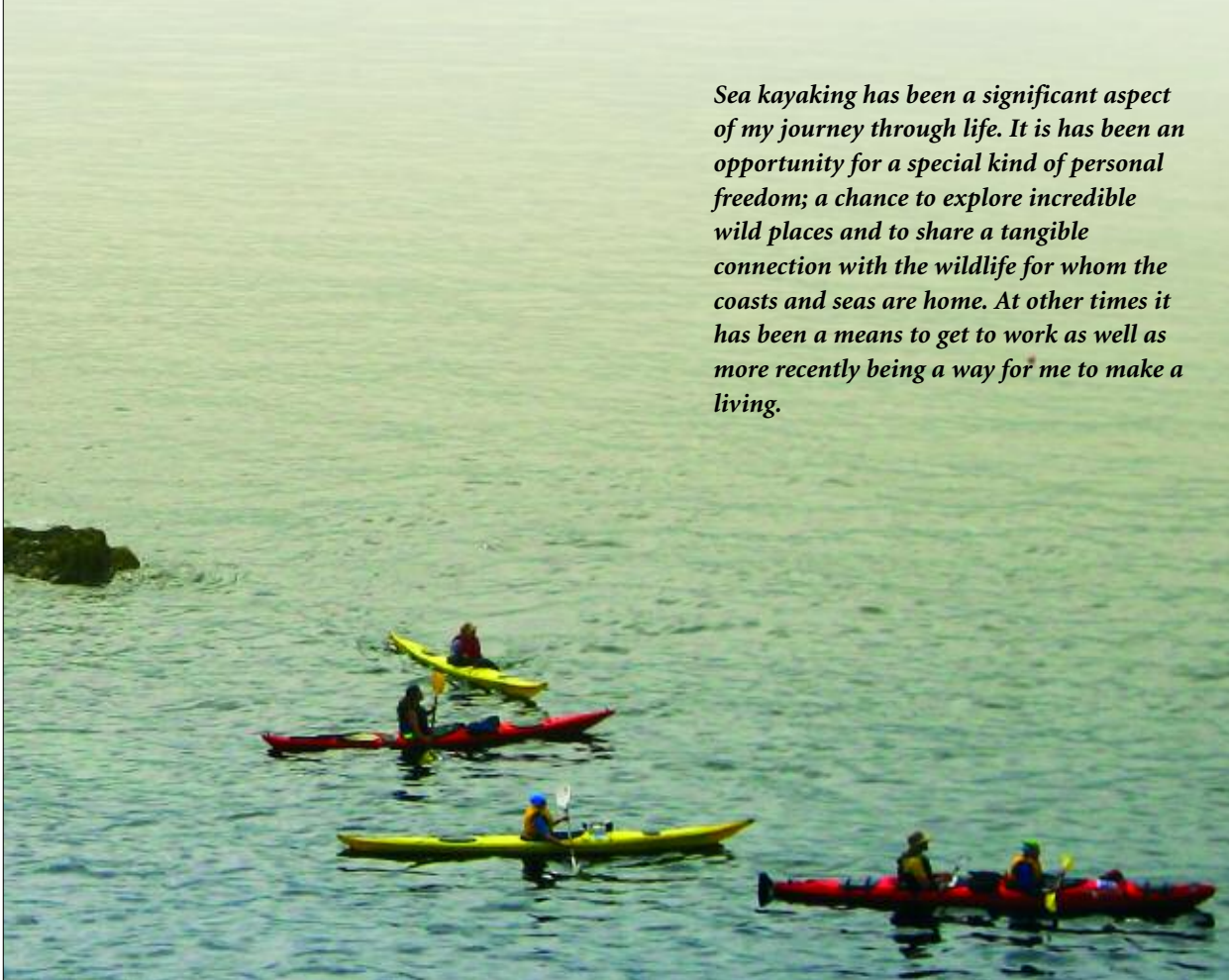
HONOUR THE SEA

*'Nach uramach an cuan – How worthy of honour is the sea.'
Myles Farnbank on what makes sea kayaking special.*



Sea kayaking has been a significant aspect of my journey through life. It has been an opportunity for a special kind of personal freedom; a chance to explore incredible wild places and to share a tangible connection with the wildlife for whom the coasts and seas are home. At other times it has been a means to get to work as well as more recently being a way for me to make a living.

A sea kayak has meant different things to different people over the ages. These sleek craft have indigenous roots in various parts of the Arctic where they were primarily hunting craft. Over the last 30 years they have become a recreational craft allowing exploration, exhilaration and fun for people all over the world.



IMAGINE IF YOU WILL PADDLING ON A SEA that looks like mercury with the sun setting and a warm summer breeze blowing. Another time you face a mental and physical challenge as you steel yourself to paddle through six foot breaking waves at the start of a journey. Maybe paddling on a clear dark night, such that you feel as if you are floating not on but in the sea of stars all around you. Yet again you might find yourself paddling with phosphorescent algae lighting up every paddle stroke. I feel very privileged to have experienced these and many other profound, nay spiritual moments, either on my own, or with friends or clients.

Although I have paddled in some amazing locations around the world, all the moments I describe happened in Scotland. The west and north of the mainland as well as the Western and Northern Isles are world class sea kayaking destinations. The sea caves and rock architecture in Shetland, the beaches and turquoise seas in the Uists, the infamous Corryvreckan whirlpool and The Grey Dogs above and below Scarba are just a few of the many spectacular wild places to visit in a sea kayak.

The John Muir Trust's property at Sandwood Bay is another incredible, albeit serious place to kayak, with sea stacks and a good chance of seeing Orca at the right time of year. One much less serious but very special place for me is the Summer Isles near Ullapool where I have run a trip as part of the JMT Activities Programme for the last six years. The pictures accompanying these words were all taken on this year's trip.

Sea kayaks perhaps more than any other craft allow you to visit land and seascapes rarely seen by humans. They leave nothing behind but quiet ripples and are powered by your arms and guided by your knowledge and experience. One of the things that I love about them is their graceful lines making them a thing of beauty in themselves as well as an extremely seaworthy craft. They can carry all you need for a self-contained journey for as many days as you can find.

Guided responsibly they have a minimal impact on wildlife, allowing often close contact with some of the world's most spectacular creatures such as whales and dolphins. Such beautiful creatures that accept your presence with curiosity and calm, often approaching to



within touching distance, seemingly unthreatened by the dip of your paddle. There is a difference in being close to a pod of Orca in a kayak as opposed to a bigger boat. It is a humbling experience feeling vulnerable alongside a creature that could easily spoil your day if it so chose.

I have been involved with the John Muir Trust as a leader for quite a number of years, helping develop the range of water-based journeys in sea kayak and open canoe. This involvement has been a very significant part of my development as a wilderness guide. Through my work with the Trust I have been able to explore the relationship between the technical skills of paddling and the opportunity to travel and experience truly wild places. These journeys can offer a chance to explore natural and cultural heritage in a minimum impact, carbon neutral way.

In the UK we are blessed with extensive and varied coastlines with islands, bays, huge cliffs, sandy beaches to name just a few. There is something for everyone of pretty much any age and ability. However, this range of opportunity brings with it a need for responsible use. We are not very good at looking after our seas and coasts,

often viewing them as a never ending cornucopia of resources or a bottomless dustbin. Things are getting better but there is a very long way to go. If you live on or are visiting a coastal location, take a moment to consider what will happen when you flush the loo.

The sea itself is an ever-changing environment with many moods, sometimes tranquil, at other times a veritable maelstrom. As a result it is not a place to venture without due regard for possible outcomes. In fact I would suggest strongly that your first exploration by sea kayak be alongside a qualified and experienced instructor or guide.

If you are not already a sea kayaker I hope I have been able to inspire or excite you a little, and look forward to perhaps meeting you out there.

Finally I suspect John Muir would approve of sea kayaking as a means to explore one's connection to the natural world. Interestingly, in certain Gaelic speaking parts, the word *muir* means 'sea', which although not important is a nice coincidence!

● Get details of the 2007 Activities Programme from www.jmt.org or 0845 456 1783.



AN HISTORIC PANORAMA



One of our members has very kindly lent us his precious first edition copy of **View from Ben Nevis – A panorama seen from the Observatory on the summit of Ben Nevis.**

Drawn by James Shearer and published by R S Shearer & Son, Stirling, in 1895, the panorama gives 'the names of the chief Mountains, Lochs and Islands, extending from Arran to Inverness, and from the Outer Hebrides to the Ochils.' It shows many of the JMT mountains.

We have made a limited supply of prints from the original, in two sizes:

- 3-page centre section, as above, 90cm x 15cm (including white border) £20 including P&P
- Full panorama 250cm x 15cm (including white border) £35 including P&P

Prints are on thick paper, unmounted and supplied in a strong tube.

This is a rare opportunity to buy a copy of the map to keep and enjoy, or to give to someone who loves Scotland's mountains.

To order your copy, please send payment (cheque made out to JMT Trading Co Ltd), or phone and pay with a credit / debit card:

Katie Jackson, John Muir Trust, 41 Commercial Street, Edinburgh EH6 6JD
Tel 0131 554 0114.

Please note: all other JMT merchandise should be ordered from Image Scotland using our merchandise brochure, or bought online from the shop at www.jmt.org.

Batons on sea and shore



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- 1 The western baton in the church on St Kilda.
- 2 The southern baton on the storm-lashed beach of Sennen Cove, near Land's End. A foretaste of weather on the North Cornwall coast.
- 3 Duncan and Angus with the western baton on a 'families' journey' on Eigg.
- 4 Underwater handover in Barrisdale Bay, in the care of Inverness Sub-aqua Club.
- 5 Sophie Wynne-Jones at the Water of Nevis with four batons in their elmwood roundel.
- 6 The birlinn Orcuan, built and manned by the GalGael Trust in Govan, takes the southern baton from Glasgow Science Centre to Helensburgh.
- 7 A yoal: in these traditional Shetland boats, Unst Yoal Club rowed the baton across Bluemill Sound to Gutcher on Yell, and Yell Yoal Club brought it to Shetland's Mainland.
- 8 Paddling with dolphins around Barra.

❖ **Diary, Karen Knamiller:** I don't think that there could have been a more amazing way for the baton to begin its journey from the West. For three days it was sea kayaked around a plethora of small uninhabited islands off the coast of Barra...As we headed towards white sandy beaches we were joined by a pod of nine bottle nosed dolphins. They stayed with us for an hour, leaping out of the water and nosing up underneath our boats, close enough to see the white lines by their eye.



Chris McNulty



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To date participants on the Journey have raised £8000 through sponsorship. You can still contribute to the Journey now, and it would be fantastic if you could help us to hit £10K. To send a message and make a donation, please visit the Journey website or post them to us at the JMT Edinburgh office. Thanks!



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Ernie Husson, Marina Gallery

Road-River-Mountain

- 1 A summit meeting on Snowdon – Richard Ellis, Alice Kerly, Nicholas & Daniel Albert.
- 2 Lorraine McCall's transport on the road to Durness.
- 3 Minehead Station to Trig Point Brean Down was cycled by Sarah Jeffrey and friends.
- 4 Mid-Wales – when painter David Bellamy met baton-carrier John Newitt.

❖ **Diary, Daniel & Nicholas Albert:** Dehydrated mush at the hut for first breakfast was followed by the real thing, cooked at the café - courtesy of Sophie and Del, from JMT...By the time we got to the YH, we were told that dinner had been cleared away. We seemed in for a hungry night until we mentioned that we were on The Journey. The chef then treated us like royalty...We took a left away from the crowds [on Snowdon] and enjoyed the Bwlch Main ridge walk. Underneath an enormous orange rucksack, we found Richard; Alice was nearby. Summit meeting and summit photos over, we made our own way down the Llanberis path.

❖ **Diary, John Newitt:** I had selected a route that would take me through lonely places in the Elenydd wilderness that I had last cycled and walked through over 40 years ago.

At Dolgoch hostel, volunteer wardens, Derek, Angela and dog made me thoroughly welcome. The small gaslit hostel is scheduled for closure this Autumn, with its two neighbours. What a pity it is so little used...I met up with the wildlife artist, David Bellamy. He had painted the view and added me as I appeared in the distance on the path...Cath, the landlady, kindly took me into Aberystwyth where the doctor diagnosed a hernia and advised against walking alone in remote places.

This challenge gave me motivation to visit place that I had walked and cycled over 40 years ago. To me, wild places can include very different environments. The remoteness of the Elenydd remains special.

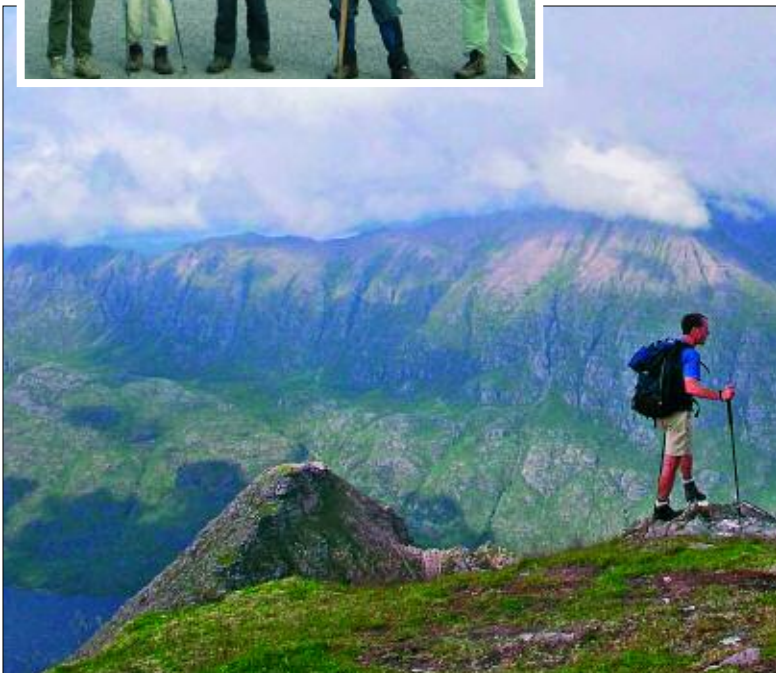
The greater ranges

- ❶ At the foot of Ben Nevis, Dick Balharry, JMT chairman, toasts the Journey in the local spirit – thanks to Ben Nevis Distillery! Waiting their turn – Sophie Wynne-Jones, Nigel Hawkins, Dave Picken, Alison Devey.
- ❷ Judy Wilkinson, Peter Willimott, Chris Wilkinson, Mike Brown and Mike Gray gather at Kingshouse before taking the southern baton to Glen Nevis.
- ❸ In Letterewe’s wilderness, Mick Phartley on Beinn Dearg Mor.
- ❹ Keith Miller on Ben Avon.
- ❺ Andy Gallagher in the vastness of the Monadh Ruadh.

❖ **Diary, Mike Brown:** With five miles to go there was now a veritable Birnam Wood of staffs, batons and sticks descending upon Glen Nevis. We were not being at all competitive about this but we should mention in the interests of accuracy that the Glasgow group were first back with their stick... Steall Hut is a magical place to stay – though beware the challenging wire bridge, not for the small of stature. The improvised stepping stones we used on arrival had vanished after a night of heavy rain. As for the Ben [on a work party the following day] – it has rather a lot of people who leave rather a lot of litter and build too many cairns – but we did have the satisfaction of wiping out a few of them (the cairns that is).



Iain Ferguson, the White Image



❖ **Diary, Nic Bullivant, Cairngorms crossing:** This gave me the chance to walk through Glen Feshie, always a pleasure, and Glen Geldie to Deeside, which I did arriving at Mar Lodge rather footsore at 6pm. At 7.00, shouldered my pack and we set off for Linn of Quoich, where I thought we would camp. Keith had other plans. The other four of us took the baton up through the woods and over Carn na Criche to camp at the top of Gleann an t-Slugain. I pleaded for a stop for

camping as I had walked 43 km with a full-weight backpack that day and it was 10pm, and I hadn't had a meal. Everyone else was surprised. They had eaten before setting out!... On Ben Avon, the cloud came in to blind us, leading to premature summit celebrations before a further uphill section led us to the real summit tor, Leabaidh an Daimh Buidhe, the couch of the yellow stag, where quite a strong wind was blowing. Leaving the summit was one of the most desolate scenes.





Right: Schiehallion by Paul Craven. A print of this painting is available from the Trust.



East Schiehallion

Perthshire

KEY FACTS

Acquired by the John Muir Trust in September 1999



Summits

1083m (3547 ft) in height, Schiehallion is Scotland's 57th highest mountain.

Area

915 ha (2260 acres).

Designations

- Part of the Loch Rannoch and Glen Lyon National Scenic Area (shown green in map above).
- Contains part of the designated Schiehallion Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

- Part of the Schiehallion to Strath Fionan Geological Conservation Review (GCR) site.

Partnerships

- The Trust works with the Local Schiehallion Group in setting objectives.
- The John Muir Trust is an active member of the Breadalbane Deer Management Group, which represents landowners including neighbouring estates.

Population

No resident population.

Maps

- OS Landranger 1:50 000, sheet 42, Loch Rannoch. Braes of Foss car park is at NN 753557.

Right: approximate boundary of East Schiehallion Estate, with the summit path line in blue. Map reproduced from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright, Licence No AL 100034628.

THE LAND

East Schiehallion was the Trust's first purchase outwith the Highlands and Islands. This part of Schiehallion includes the summit and main path, and the quieter and wilder Gleann Mór on its southern flank. Schiehallion is a symmetrical mountain with a long east-west axis, and its widely visible summit makes it one of Scotland's iconic hills. The view includes Loch Rannoch, the wilds of the Moor of Rannoch and the hills of the central highlands. Schiehallion has a rich botanical life, interesting archaeology, and a unique place in scientific history for 18th-century experiments in 'weighing the world'.

Why are we here? We were invited to purchase by the previous owner, who felt 'the JMT were the right people to take it on for the future'. In taking on East Schiehallion we accepted a major challenge. Being popular and accessible, the mountain attracts some 20,000 visitors a year and by 1999 the main path, running from the Braes of Foss car park to the summit, had become an ugly scar. In a five-year effort we set out to realign the main path onto an older and more sustainable line, and to restore the scar. The 3.4 km realignment has been in use since 2003, and we're now in our third season of healing the scar along the former path line. Interestingly, the former 'mud motorway' line was itself quite recent, dating only from the opening of a car park at Braes of Foss in the 1970s.



Above: the wooded gorge of the Allt Mòr on the S side of Schiehallion.

Right: Schiehallion across Loch Rannoch Ken Paterson.

VISITING SCHIEHALLION

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.

Walking on Schiehallion From the car park, the summit may be reached along the realigned east ridge path. There's no waymarking. The summit ridge is high, rocky and exposed to the weather, and summit visitors should be able to navigate, and should come equipped as for any mountain walk. A lower-level walk starting off on the new path, but heading south to Gleann Mór, can be very rewarding. This quiet, open glen on the sunny side of the hill has a wooded gorge, and grassy areas round the remains of shielings.

Getting there by car The Forestry Commission car park on the minor road at Braes of Foss is the only formal parking around the mountain. It's about 10 miles from Aberfeldy, and 5 miles from Tummel Bridge and Kinloch Rannoch.

Public transport Buses from Pitlochry serve Tummel Bridge and Kinloch Rannoch. Pitlochry and Rannoch Station, both about 20 miles away, are the nearest railway stations.

Facilities Public toilets at Braes of Foss car park (closed in winter). Tourist information centres in Pitlochry and Aberfeldy. Accommodation, shopping and restaurants in those towns and also in Kinloch Rannoch and Tummel Bridge; hotel at Rannoch Station.



Natural history

Geology Schiehallion is part of the Grampian Highlands, between the Highland Boundary Fault and Great Glen Fault. Its metamorphic rocks were formed during the Caledonian mountain building period, about 500 million years ago. It is just south of the boundary between the Moinian (older) and Dalradian (younger) series. The summit of Schiehallion is outcropping quartzite – a white-grey finely crystalline rock. The lower slopes comprise a series of schists – rich in mica, and some quite lime-rich. The size and shape of the hill, and of the big lochs nearby (Rannoch, Tummel and Tay) date from the last ice age. Schiehallion has been free of ice for about 10,000 years, and the soils above its rocks have all formed since then.

Vegetation Schiehallion supports a rich variety of upland habitats, in contrast to some surrounding hills, because of its underlying limestone. Heather-dominated heathland on the lower slopes is interspersed with other vegetation types including bracken, bog and small areas of herb-rich grassland and base-enriched flush. Locally there are patches of limestone pavement, rare in Scotland. At higher altitudes there are blaeberry (*Vaccinium*) heaths, and the summit ridge has bare blocks of shattered quartzite and patches of heath and bog.

Woodland with birch, aspen, rowan and willow survives in the Allt Mor and other gorges, where protected from grazing and fire. There is potential for the rehabilitation of some habitats, particularly eroded peat, and degraded native woodland and scrub, and in the longer term for restoring the natural tree line.

Fauna Over 60 species of mainly upland birds have been recorded on Schiehallion, though not all breed there. Important breeding species include hen harrier, merlin, ptarmigan, black grouse, ring ouzel and twite. As vegetation responds to changing management, it is anticipated that many bird species will benefit from increased shrub growth, though some open ground dependent species may decline in the long term.

The commonest large mammal is red deer, mostly on the S side of Schiehallion. They are increasing. In August 2004 there was a count of 80 (mostly hinds) and in October 2004 a herd of 114 was seen. Roe deer, and mountain and brown hares, may be seen but are not numerous. On invertebrates, little work has been done except on lepidoptera. The Mountain Ringlet butterfly was recorded on the south slopes in 1986. There are at least seven moths of national interest, with one nationally rare species (*Ancylis tineana*) recorded, primarily from an area near Lochan an Daim (NW of the estate).

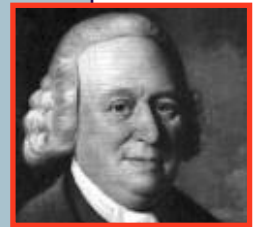


From top: heather flourishes near the realigned path Alan Scott; Astronomer Royal Nevill Maskelyne by John Dowman by kind permission of the National Maritime Museum; JMT Glasgow Group visiting the old shielings in Gleann Mór with archaeologist Clare Thomas Mike Brown; volunteers doing maintenance on the new path line, 2005 Kirsty Leitch.

More about East Schiehallion Estate at www.jmt.org

Weighing the world

Schiehallion's symmetrical shape earned it a place in scientific history and discovery in the late 18th century. In 1774 the Rev Nevill Maskelyne, Astronomer Royal, camped out there collecting data, with the aid of a plumb line and the stars, on the gravitational pull of the mountain. 237 measurements were taken from two stations, still discernible, on the N and S of the hill. The calculated weight of the earth was substantially correct. At the end of the season a highly successful party was held in which the surveyors' bothy burned down! Charles Hutton, during his work on the survey data, devised the concept of contour lines, so important for modern hillwalkers.



Human history

Clare Thomas's summary of the hill's archaeology, commissioned by the John Muir Trust, shows that Schiehallion was lived on and cultivated from more than 3000 years ago until about 200 years ago.

The earliest remains to be found have been a cup-marked boulder and stone axes, most probably from 3000–2000 BC. Settlement and cultivation began sometime between about 1500 BC and the early centuries AD. One hut circle from that era, Aonach Ban, is at 410 m at NN 7475 5405 near the end of an old track. The people who lived there would have grown crops and probably raised cattle, sheep and goats.

Much later, there is evidence for farming on the NE corner of Schiehallion up to the 18th century, for example at a location to the W of the new path, and uphill from it in a grassy area. These farm-touns were permanent, year-round habitations. Shielings for summer grazing and peat cutting can be seen on the N side at Ruighe nan Coireachan and on the S side in Gleann Mór where Ruighe nan Eachraidh (NN 7455 5352) is very impressive. Sheep rearing increased in importance, and became the estate's principal

activity in the late 18th century. One sheep-fank is beside the new path at NN 74820 54789. Older settlements on JMT ground had by that time been abandoned. In the 19th century, Schiehallion became a sporting estate. Traces of grouse butts remain.

John Muir Trust at work

We invested more than £800,000 in path realignment and restoration, aided by £506,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and with support from many other benefactors. The 3.4 km realignment, used by almost all summit walkers, was completed in October 2003. It's a 'stalker style' path: narrow, with a consistent gradient, and a free draining stone base. All material was won locally and some was moved to the site by helicopter.

To help heal the scar of the old 'mud motorway' path line, we embarked on a programme in late 2003 which has been the focus of work since then. Reprofilling, reseeding, and preventing damage from water runoff have been the main tactics. You may see 'deflection bars' across the old path line, formed from rocks and spoil and capped with turf. To reprofile gullies we have

undercut the vegetated edges so that the plants on top sag down and the undercut soil can be placed in the gully bottom. Work near the car park includes the rebuilding of drystone dykes and the building of two new bridges. Information boards have gone up in the car park.

In addition to contractors, much of our work has been done by volunteers, including parties from BP Amoco and Berghaus. The wall rebuilding was mostly the work of JMT conservation work parties on a dyking course.

On purchase the estate had rough grazing for sheep and a shooting tenant for seven years. Some culling of red deer has been undertaken by the tenant and the Trust will be increasing culls to facilitate vegetation regeneration. All sheep were removed from East Schiehallion, but incursions contribute to the grazing pressure.



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

ON THE TRAIL OF JOHN MUIR

Dunbar's 2006 invasion of the Golden State

WITH THE 2006 THEME of California History Institute's spring conference being 'John Muir in Global Perspective', three members of Dunbar's John Muir Association travelled to take part in the event, hosted by University of the Pacific, Stockton, California.

John Muir Birthplace manager Jo Moulin's presentation was 'The Boy from Dunbar: Celebrating John Muir in his Scottish Birthplace'; founder member Graham White spoke about 'John Muir's 1893 Return to Scotland'; Will Collin's 'From Mountain Daisy to Giant Redwood' explored the influence of the writings of Robert Burns on John Muir. They were joined by Californian attorney and DJMA life member Harold Wood, chair of the Sierra Club John Muir Education Committee, on 'John Muir in India'.

Before Stockton, Jo, Will and wife Val visited friends in Dunbar's 'twin city' Martinez and then travelled to Yosemite Valley to attend the Yosemite Association's spring forum on 25 March. (YA has a membership of around 10,000 and 500 or so made the journey to a valley reeling from a long, hard winter and probably the wettest March on record.) A full programme of talks and walks occupied the day from sunrise to sunset, or would have if the sun could be seen through non-stop, 'west of Scotland' rain.

Between events Jo and Will maintained a presence at a Birthplace/Dunbar exhibition in the visitor centre, speaking to many who had visited Scotland already and many more who intend coming 'some day'. Hospitality for the four-day stay was generously provided by Valley School teacher Catherine Soria and her husband, valley dentist Dale.

A conference outing to Martinez took in the John Muir House and the Muir gravesite, and gave ample opportunity to meet John Muir's grandson Ross Hanna, his wife Gladys and other Muir descendants.

The conference proper got underway on 31 March, with Will and Jo in the first morning's programme. They were then able to relax and enjoy what proved to be a very intense couple of days. Among other contributors were

John Muir actor Lee Stetson and Garrett Burke, designer of the John Muir California quarter, while part of one session was devoted to the relationship between John Muir and fellow Scot, artist William Keith.

Will Collin

THE EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME for a party of 25 from Dunbar Grammar School was a trip to California in June, taking in Martinez, Yosemite Valley, the High Sierra and San Francisco. The drive to the valley might have been a nightmare when a landslide across the main road forced a 4-hour detour. The wait was worth it though, as the bus came round the mountains at 6800 ft and entered the valley from the south. 'All at once the great sights of Yosemite queued up to be seen: El Capitan; Bridal Veil fall; Three Brothers; Cathedral Spires and Half Dome. The bus fell silent!'

The three day trek from Tuolumne Meadows (pictured) was done in two smaller groups to minimise impact, and everyone had the chance to try something new in a spectacular landscape. For some it was the first time they had 'wild camped', for others the first time sleeping under the stars. One student was even brave enough to eat an ant; they taste of lemon!

The Yosemite Institute's instructors were knowledgeable, thought-provoking and dedicated to the American 'Leave no Trace' principle. Trip members gained the John Muir Award at Discoverer level.



BERGHAUS

'His eyes were luminous too. They weren't just that cruel yellow but had a kind of silver grey light'

IN ARKADIA

Wilderness, culture and communities

This is an edited extract from an award winning account by **Penny Turner** of her solo adventures on horseback across the rugged wilds of Greece. It is a reminder that culture and communities are an integral part of the wild – now and probably in the future too. –*Will Williams, JMT Trustee.*



fastness of Arkadia? Some might say that it is to do with the larger area, the lower human population and the wilder mountains. But it could be more to do with the fact that the god Dionysos, Mr Life Force himself, whose companions are wolves, held sway up here until very recently.

This official acceptance of a nature cult and the cathartic rites associated with it, followed by the more recent absorption of many of the tenets of the old religion, into the type of Christianity practised in the north, has meant that the wild was respected and the hills remained holy...until very recently. Now the wilderness is disappearing by the hour.

'It is the spirit of the age,' says Gore Vidal, 'to

believe that any FACT, no matter how suspect, is superior to any imaginative exercise, no matter how true.'

Once I worked on a project that attempted to manage the present day interaction between us and the wilderness. This project was designed to 'save' the wild wolves in northern Greece. It was a project in tune with the spirit of the age. We seriously thought that if we could show facts about *Canis lupus*, that separate it from its mythical, legendary and folkloric reality, remove its savagery, destroy its mystique and undermine its harmful connection with the devil and persistent confusion with werewolves, we might have an animal that the public would buy into saving. In presenting this new saccharine wolf, we avoided words like *Mystical, Poetic, Imagination, Terror, Love, Ecstasy*. We were afraid of those words. What have they to do with facts? Biology is all about facts. Biology is what we were doing.

And then, one evening I met a real wild wolf.

The peasant people say if you encounter a wolf on the road he will conjure your soul away. You won't be able to call out or move. I met this wolf in the gloaming, and that's exactly what happened to me. His eyes were luminous too. They weren't just that cruel yellow but had a kind of silver grey light, or seemed to have. If you see the wolf first your gaze will dissolve his wildness, so they say...and he did stay still as if he too were bewitched. But only for a moment. He was a lone wolf passing through. He faded into the dusk. Not before I had recognized him though. This was the wolf that dwelt in my heart, whose very existence I had been suppressing and busily replacing with a biological one.

What words did I need to describe one of the most exciting and altogether wonderful experiences of my life? See the list above.

We have intimations of what the wilderness may mean and we recognize its truth when we meet it. And what happens to us when we go looking for

continued...



'George. Half Greek horse, probably Thessalian breed, half show jumper, probably English. He was a carriage horse in Corfu town but proved too energetic, plus refused absolutely to stop at traffic lights, and was always competing. Customers found this unnerving. I bought him – I didn't think I would be bothered with traffic lights in the mountains. However, on the one occasion we met some he resolutely refused to stop, and I had to jump off to hold him. Have done six treks with G, the 1000-mile and five others, each one about a month.'

IN ARKADIA IN SOUTHERN GREECE there are no wolves now. The ancient forest has gone from the slopes of Mt Lykaios.

Burned. But, once upon a time, there was a wolf cult there. Pausanias, who visited the place in the second century AD, hinted at human sacrifice and gave reports of werewolves running away from the altar at the mountain top. The altar to Zeus the Wolf at the summit of Mt Lykaios was one of the places I visited when I was travelling on horseback round Greece. I went there because I wanted to know what a wolf cult could have meant then, and what it means to us now. Sadly, there was no weird howling, as the clouds scudded across the moon. The stones didn't speak to me about blood soaked rituals. They didn't speak about anything. The cult had been dealt with, once and for all. And the view is different now – the hills are bare; treeless and no wolves.

In the north of Greece things are different. Sometimes, when there is a big moon and the sky is full of diamonds, you can still hear the wild wolves howl. Standing alone on a rocky mountainside, your heart jolts with atavistic fear. Wolves are not dangerous to people, and yet... and yet... a lone wolf travelling at what the Greeks call wolf light, has a dark magic that defies logic.

Why were the wolves allowed to remain up here, defying logic and scaring the pants off us, when they were so thoroughly purged from their ancient

In Arkadia continued...

this truth we hold in our hearts? Too often we get palmed off with low rent wolves and second rate wilderness, as if that is all we are good for. Naturally we feel cheated in some fundamental way, because when we aspired to the profound, we got fobbed off with facts.

A very long time ago, there lived some pretty big scary wolves. Their remains have been found in caves. They lived concurrently with our distant ancestors. Whose blood, I would imagine, froze when they heard those brutes howling. Like ours does when we hear wolves today. We have changed, the wolves have changed, but the effect of the adrenaline is the same. Fear and dread mixed with some heady ecstasy.

Here in these mystical connections, in the longings and nostalgia for what we once were and never can be again, we find the true wolf – splendid and murderous.

By trying to make the wolf into some kind of fluffy pet, our project probably did great harm. We tricked people out of the wolf they *knew*, by lying and saying it didn't exist, had never existed, and made them lose faith in their intuition. We intruded

in their souls and removed the perfectly good wolf they had imagined and replaced it with a poor substitute.

I know now that these petty gods – Cash and Facts – do not need to be placated, because they can be utterly defeated. All we need to do is refuse to speak their language, and refuse to accept their terms of reference.

If we could forbid detachment, insist on emotional commitment, encourage passion and ridicule an inability to take things personally, more consideration would automatically be assigned to our feelings.

We'll need a new vocabulary too. It is very difficult to talk about anything profound because we accept conventions that demand that all serious discussion be conducted in a way that is relentlessly factual, provable and actual. There is no love allowed.

A concept can exist only if there are words to express it. If we could take over the language then the holy hills would be safe for all time because it would be impossible for anyone to conspire against the Life Force ever again: there would be no words to form such a profane intention.

- *With completion of her 1000-mile solo ride, Penny Turner is a member of the the Long Riders' Guild and has also worked on the conservation of wolves, bears and the rare Skyros horse in Greece.*

Wild Places, Wild Journeys

A writing competition in association with the Fort William Mountain Film Festival 2007

We are looking for your writing, fact or fiction, on wild places. It can incorporate a journey or expedition on land or water, the exploration of a remote place, a climb, a walk, a river, a loch, a mountain – the scope is endless!

The judging panel will include Professor Margaret Elphinstone and Cameron McNeish.

The winning entry, up to 1200 words in length, will appear, with illustrations of the author's choice, in the *JMT JOURNAL*.

Send entries by 26 January 2007 to

Nevis Conservation Officer, John Muir Trust,
Glen Nevis Visitor Centre, Fort William,
PH33 6JF.
Or to nevis@jmt.org.

A children's poetry competition with Gaelic and English categories will be run concurrently, through local schools, on the theme of 'Nature, wild places and wild animals'.

DEWAR'S AD

WIN A LUXURY CHRISTMAS HAMPER

from DEWAR'S WORLD OF WHISKY

We've got together with corporate member Dewar's World of Whisky for a fabulous Christmas prize draw. The luxury hamper from the House of Dewar's range includes their Aberfeldy whisky, whisky fudge, chocolates, marmalade and more.

Dewar's World of Whisky, distillery and visitor centre in Aberfeldy, Perthshire, is just a short run from East Schiehallion. It is part of John Dewar & Sons, whisky blenders for over 150 years. Dewar's World of Whisky houses an unique exhibition and interactive centre, celebrating the courageous spirit of the Dewar family, and offers tours of its distillery.

Everyone's a winner - Everyone who enters and sends an SAE will receive a pair of 'two for one' tickets to their visitor experience, valid to December 2007.

To enter the prize draw simply answer the question below:

Q How long has Dewar's been blending whisky?

Send your answer together with your name and address (please print) and optional SAE (for 2 for 1 tickets). to:

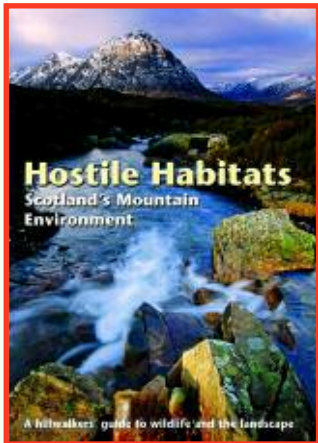
John Muir Trust Hamper Competition, 41 Commercial Street,
Edinburgh EH6 6JD.

Closing date for entries
30 November 2006.

As this competition is run jointly with Dewar's World of Whisky (DWW) data will be shared. Under the terms of the Data Protection Act you have the right to advise us at any time if you do not want to receive further mailings from JMT or DWW.



Know your mountains



Mark Wrightham

Hostile Habitats: Scotland's Mountain Environment, a hillwalker's guide to the wildlife and landscape, ed. Nick Kempe and Mark Wrightham. Scottish Mountaineering Trust. 256 pp, £15. ISBN 0 907521 93 2. 'Hostile Habitats' sound like places to avoid, but this book is actually aiming to encourage the reader to visit Scotland's mountains and in doing so to understand and appreciate them more.

As the subtitle makes clear, it is intended to provide one source of information for the hillwalker and mountaineer who wants to understand better what they are seeing around them in the hills.

It can add so much to our enjoyment of the mountain experience to grasp even a little of the complex interactions of events, both historical and current, which have resulted in the scene before us, whether that be a landscape, a plant community, a mountain hare or a dragonfly.

So this holistic account covers the innumerable diverse features that one might see in the Scottish hills and, as stated at the beginning, its aim is to explain not just 'what' occurs, but 'why'. Such information is widely available but scattered throughout innumerable books and scientific papers. Here it is gathered and integrated in one comprehensive tome, and it achieves well this ambitious objective.

Two very experienced editors, Mark Wrightham and Nick Kempe, as well as providing a specialist chapter each, have drawn on the expertise of ten other lovers of the Scottish uplands, each with a deep professional knowledge of one environmental aspect.

The 'mountain environment' is taken to mean land above the 'enclosed and more intensively managed farmland'. Nine chapters take us through the traditional

sequence of climate, geology, landforms, flora, fauna and archaeology before a more speculative look into the future for our mountains.

Each chapter describes and discusses the subject, including its historical context, before providing an identification section, where the commonest examples of rock types, landforms, plants, invertebrates, birds, etc are described in detail and illustrated with excellent photos.

The text ranges from the prosaic to the poetic but the facts are always simply stated and for such a major gathering of specialist information it is mercifully free of jargon. As well as high quality and well chosen photos, various graphics and maps add much to understanding.

To make best use of the identification sections, it would be necessary to have the book with you in the field, but, although quite slim, it would be quite a heavy addition to the rucksack. Fortunately, most of the content is best assimilated at home or in the tent.

Man's use of the mountains and his impact on them is dealt with in a chapter on Human Traces, though this is primarily archaeological. Current and recent uses are touched on throughout, though mainly in the last chapter dealing with the future.

This thoughtful concluding appraisal does not so much speculate on the future as stimulate all mountain users, with the additional insight that this book provides, to consider wider questions about how our mountain environment should be used.

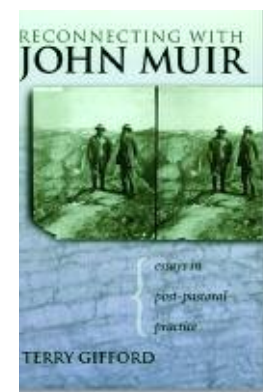
In bringing together all this wealth of information, distilling it into what is most likely to be experienced by the non specialist, providing a consistency of treatment and quality while not submerging the diversity of expression by different

From the book:
Ciste Dhubh from the east. Over the last 4500 to 6000 years, former woodland has declined and blanket peat has expanded, against a background of natural climate change and changing human use of the land.

authors, this book does Scotland's hills and all of us who love them so much, an immense favour.

Peter Tilbrook

Reconnecting with the pastoral



Reconnecting with John Muir: Essays in post-pastoral practice by Terry Gifford. University of Georgia Press, 216 pp, cloth, \$39.95. ISBN 0 8203 2796 4.

'When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.' This comment by John Muir is central to his thinking. He recognised that the human race, empowered by a culture of technological advance, had dislocated itself physically, intellectually and emotionally from nature and so he made it his life's work to persuade others to reconnect with the cycle and keep 'faith with the source'.

Such was the determination of this son of an immigrant farmer, he was able to overturn conventional scientific thinking through the most unconventional means and even persuade the President of the United States, by inviting him to camp in the wild, to support his concept of a

National Park that would be free of the predations of a materially voracious humanity.

Terry Gifford's book examines the life and writings of the 'scientist, poet, preacher and conservationist' and describes how this multiplicity of approach gave Muir the opportunity to understand more fully how the outer processes of growth and decay can throw a light on the inner cyclic processes of nature. But this book goes much further. As the full title suggests, Gifford wishes to apply Muir's method to his own academic field, namely the teaching and criticism of literature.

' the pastoral tradition, much derided as sentimental.'

He feels the time has come for writers to reconnect with the pastoral tradition, recently much derided, at least in the UK, as excessively sentimental. The concept of post-pastoral practice is based on a critical interaction of scholarship, writing and teaching that will illuminate the question of how we can become responsible stewards of the planet.

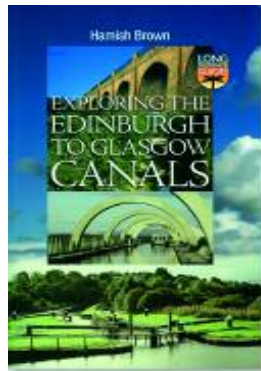
To demonstrate the practice, Gifford describes methods of teaching and textual investigation from an environmentalist's standpoint. The emphasis, as with Muir, is on the actual rather than the theoretical and the acts of writing and reading are always at the centre of any discourse. Indeed Gifford's own poems, 'Letters to John Muir', interleaf the chapters.

The above paragraphs do scant justice to the extent and significance of the ground covered or exempla given. *Reconnecting with John Muir* is a timely and scholarly book, aimed at academic and mountaineer alike. As such, I thoroughly recommend it to any member of the Trust who wishes to reconsider what John Muir really meant when he wrote, 'Going to the mountains is going home.'

Graham Wilson

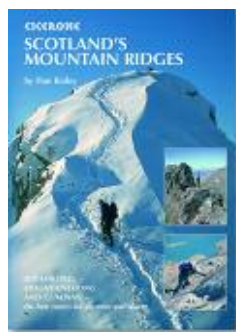
- *Graham Wilson's latest book 'A Rope of Writers' (Millrace) has been shortlisted for this year's Boardman Tasker Prize.*

Guide to the guides



Exploring the Edinburgh to Glasgow Canals by Hamish Brown. Mercat Press, 162 pp, £12.99. ISBN 1 84183 096 8.

An update of the guide to perambulating the Union and Forth & Clyde canals, important wildlife refuges as well as offering some of Scotland's quietest walking.



Scotland's Mountain Ridges by Dan Bailey. Cicerone, 256 pp, £17.95, ISBN 1 85284 469 8.

48 ridges, from summer scrambles to technical rock climbs and winter routes, in a book which 'aims to celebrate these thrilling climbs as much as to document them'.



The West Highland Way Official Guide by Bob Aitken and Roger Smith. Mercat Press, 176 pp, £16.99. ISBN 184183 1026.

26 years on from the first edition, this is version eight, with an entirely rewritten text, and including a dedicated Harvey map.



High Cup: weathered whinstone above the 'greent gulf' of the upper Eden.

Congratulations to Iain Brown, the latest JMT member to venture into publication with **The North Pennines: Landscape and Legend**. Iain writes: 'This is one of Britain's less well-known upland areas, sometimes called 'England's last wilderness'. The book explores the dales, fells and villages in pictures (over 200) and words. It shows that although the district is justly renowned for its remarkable rocks and flora, as well as its large swathes of wild land, the human history is perhaps most extraordinary. As with the Highlands, the land was once much more peopled. Lead-mining as well as subsistence farming occurred high up into the hills leaving fading relics of the mythical 'Old Man' and his peers. These sweeping landscapes have an important human and cultural dimension as well as their eye-catching natural heritage. Perhaps even a future role for the John Muir Trust?'

The North Pennines: Landscape and Legend. Summary House Publications. A4, 252pp. £18.95, ISBN 0-9553588-0-9.

Essential reading on access

Access Rights and Rights of Way: A guide to the Law in Scotland by Professor R R M Paisley. Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society. £10 direct from Scotways. ISBN 0 9546735 2 2.

What's like us, eh? The best access rights in Europe, freedom to roam, no problems. So can we dispatch the be-tweededs of the Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (SRWAS) to a well deserved whisky and heather scented retirement? Mebbies naw. The Society might contain more scribes than is strictly healthy, but there is still real work for it to do. Produce guides like this for a start.

Ominously for reform of access legislation, the Scottish Bill was launched just as foot and mouth hit the country and engendered a climate of irrational panic and senseless restriction. Skiing ok in one corrie and climbing banned in the next, and so on. As the work to develop a sensible and proportionate approach to the disease continued the proposed legislation was scrutinised, and we Scots, who had been sniffily dismissive of the parallel legislation for England and Wales, found we were being offered even worse rights. SRWAS worked hard, with the Ramblers, MCof S, and others to persuade the Scottish Parliament to make the Land Reform Act 2003 the landmark legislation it certainly is.

The new act does not amend or change any of the pre-existing rights. This strange situation reflected the disagreements about what the pre-existing rights were, with the legal establishment on one side and the access takers, marshalled by the redoubtable Alan Blackshaw, and most parliamentarians on the other. Rangers, access officers, estate managers and others exercising or managing access need to be aware of all the key legal points and Professor Paisley's succinct and readable summary is essential reading.

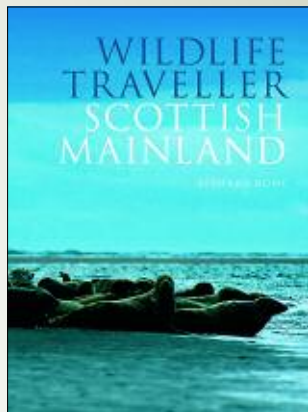
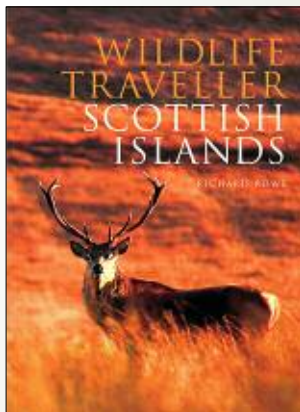
It is early days for the new legislation, with some local authorities slow off the mark. It does, nevertheless, seem to be improving access and reducing disputes. It could even work on the other side of the Tweed.

There is also a companion volume containing summaries of 79 cases relating to rights of way in Scotland. Haud me back!

John Donohoe

John is a JMT Trustee and a member of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Access Forum. He writes in a personal capacity.

Classic wildlife sites to visit



Wildlife Traveller: Scottish Mainland ISBN 0-9550822-3-4; Wildlife Traveller: Scottish Islands ISBN 0-9550822-4-2, by Richard Rowe. Pocket Mountains, £6.99 each.

Both books are value for money, in a handy pocket size (4 x 6 inches) with well illustrated summaries of iconic places for Scottish wildlife.

Extremely useful for those planning a wildlife travelling adventure in Scotland, each book has about five area maps showing key classic wildlife sites to visit. Each area, eg Cairngorms and North-East Coast, has about eight wildlife destinations, with a description of each, general overview photographs and inset photographs and descriptions of wildlife highlights. There are no detail maps but reference to the relevant OS map for each destination.

A brief introduction summarises how to use the guide and the need for responsible wildlife watching, and refers to the association of wildlife tourism operators – WildScotland – with their own wildlife charter. There is brief advice on access and when to visit, a handy species index, and a list useful websites on the back cover flap.

An easy to use reference for outdoor enthusiasts who are planning adventures to experience the rugged and dramatic Scottish landscapes, these guides make the connection between landscapes and wildlife. Also useful for the experienced wildlife traveller to reflect on the wealth and diversity of wildlife, maybe over a good Scottish malt on a winter's night.

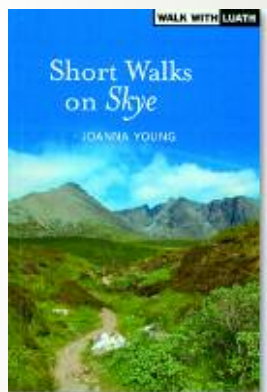
Many of these wildlife destinations are managed reserves. Hopefully those who use this book and enjoy these incredible and

inspiring wildlife spectacles, will consider contributing to the organisations, many of them charities, that manage these sites.

Will Williams.

Will is a JMT Trustee who writes in a personal capacity.

Quick walks



Short Walks on Skye by Joanna Young. Luath Press, 138 pp, £4.99. ISBN 1 84282 065 6.

Short's the word! No walk is longer than 35 minutes. There are 40 routes, from Knock Castle to Duntulm, in a pocket-sized book with sketch maps.

Next Journal April 2007

Please contact the editor by the end of December with your ideas for longer articles.

Contact details, page 1

LAST CLEARANCE?



The former outflow of Loch Mullardoch, where today the dam stands.

The Last Highland Clearance by Iain MacKay. Bidean Books, 12 Torgormack, Beaulieu. 65 pp, large format, £23. (Also available from

Loch Croispol Bookshop, Balneil Craft Village, Durness, Sutherland.) Books published recently on the post-war drive to construct large dams in the Highlands reflect conventional wisdom of the time that these developments were hugely beneficial and had few downsides. This is not the view of Iain MacKay, in this limited edition book.

The author was brought up on the remote Patt Lodge by Loch Monar (a neighbour of Iain Thomson who wrote *Isolation Shepherd*), later becoming an employee of the estate. He was one of the few to object to the Monar dam and attended the public enquiry in Edinburgh, December 1957. By today's standards the enquiry was a farce. In a revealing anecdote, a representative from the Hydro-Electric Board claimed MacKay had no right to be there, arguing, 'he is only an employee and owns nothing'. That objection was overruled but the dam went ahead.

The author reminds us of the government and HEB promises – 'propaganda', he calls it – of new life for the glens, cheap electricity, jobs; there were even assurances that the dams would improve scenery and fishing. People must have believed them because between the late 1940s and 1962 over 50 dams and power stations were constructed, including 200 miles of tunnels and pipelines, 400 miles of new roads. Iain MacKay claims that their total energy is equivalent to one medium-sized

conventional power station, adding: 'if all other sources ceased, Highland water would keep the UK going for 29 seconds'.

For me the main strength of MacKay's arguments are found in the pictures, an extraordinary series of archive plates that show various Highland glens before inundation, a landscape few of us would recognise today. We see the original shorelines, islands and marshlands, the farms and cottages that were flooded, the estate workers and their families that were displaced. Other photographs might have been taken last week: the same loch but now raised and larger, ringed with drawdown scars. For anyone interested in the pre-war Highlands or concerned about the present proliferation of hydro schemes, this book deserves to be read.

Mike Cawthorne

- *Mike Cawthorne's 'Wilderness Dreams, the Call of Scotland's Last Wild Places' (Neil Wilson Publishing) has just appeared.*

Words from the Journey

Only in the wild untouched places can we truly experience what it is to be alive, to be part of the web of all life on Earth. It is possible that life exists only on our planet. We therefore have an awesome responsibility to care for that life; to nourish it and not to destroy it by our thoughtless actions.
—Hilary Shearer, Glasgow

Paul van Vlissingen

Paul van Vlissingen, who died in August, was the laird of Letterewe, a conservationist with international vision, and a party to the mould-breaking Letterewe Accord on access to wild land.

John Muir Trust representatives first met Paul in 1990 through the West Ross Deer Management Group and he expressed great interest in the development of the new Trust which he found shared his views on the importance of safeguarding wild places. He was later to make a donation of £150,000 to the Trust which was important in enabling us to buy Strathaird estate on Skye in 1994. Paul's partner of many years Caroline Tisdall Mackenzie served on our board and Trustees twice held memorable weekend meetings at Letterewe.

'Paul was a great friend of the John Muir Trust and gave us real practical help at a crucial stage. The purchase of Strathaird was a milestone – and he supported us with a large donation with no strings attached. Paul placed enormous faith in us and we are very grateful to him for his support – and personal encouragement – over the years,' said Trust director Nigel Hawkins.

Paul bought Letterewe from the Whitbread family in 1977 and he subsequently added Fisherfield estate, the two estates together forming the largest and in the views of many, the finest, area of wild land in this country. Access problems there in the early 1990s showed his ability, and readiness, to get down and talk about the issues rather than engaging in a standoff. The Letterewe Accord of 1994 brought together the warring parties at the time, has proved robust ever since, and is one of the foundations of Scotland's present countryside access laws.

Subsequent purchases of the Little Guinard River and neighbouring North Kinlochewe made Paul the



guardian of 81,000 acres and he and Caroline saw themselves very much as stewards of this incomparable area of wild land. Run as a traditional deer estate, it was also the setting for research which produced a book *A Highland Deer Herd and its Habitat*. Nick Luard summarised one of the book's conclusions as: 'In deer forests we should be actively thinking about enriching our natural landscape by reintroducing native predator species like the wolf and lynx, which belong there and which we've ethnically cleansed.'

Africa was the focus of Paul's interest in recent years. He talked about wildlife with Nelson Mandela in 1998. African Parks, a Netherlands-based charitable foundation, was set up to form public-private partnerships to manage and finance national parks, and thus to contribute to the socio-economic development of their regions. It now works in six countries, managing eight national parks, and is responsible for more than 4 million acres of African wilderness.

In Scotland, he and Caroline have recently supported Skye's Gaelic college, Sabhal Mor Ostaig, where Letterewe Scholarships now help those who want to go to Skye to learn the language.

Fundamental to this Accord is the recognition that all who visit, or live and work on the land and water of Letterewe, must cherish and safeguard the area's wildlife and beauty. Such places are increasingly rare in a world where the natural environment is under ever growing pressure. A new approach is needed. Cooperation between individual and community interests in the sound management of wild land is one element. It reaffirms that human needs are inseparable from those of the natural world.

—opening words of the Letterewe Accord

It is understood that there will be continuity in the management of Letterewe, and that Caroline will be spending a lot of time there. The Trust wishes Paul's daughters and Caroline a long and successful stewardship of this wonderful land.



May 1994: Paul and Caroline wave goodbye to JMT trustees departing by boat from Letterewe.

Sydney Scroggie

One of Scotland's most remarkable hillgoers and a John Muir Trust member, Sydney Scroggie of Strathmartine near Dundee died last month. A hard climber in the 1930s, Syd served through the war and, weeks before VE Day, was blinded and lost part of a leg to a landmine.

'Ten years after my getting blown up in the war,' he wrote, 'I had my first visit to the hills as a blind man with a tin leg'. It was to Corroun in the Lairig Ghru. His book *The Cairngorms Scene and Unseen* relates that, and is packed with vivid pictures of those hills and their denizens and howffs, both before and after he lost his sight. 'The inner vision had the brightness of immediacy' wrote Tom Weir.

I never met Syd but once, nearing the old Luibeg bothy, I was 5 minutes behind a close-walking couple heading down the track. The hut book had one entry for that day: 'We came here for the sake of old Bob Scott – Sydney and Margaret Scroggie'.
MM

Wheel-friendly trails

Walking on Wheels: 50 Wheel-friendly Trails in Scotland by Eva McCracken. Cualann Press, £10.99. ISBN 0-9544416-8-0. www.cualann.com, proceeds to Walking on Wheels Trust.

This little book about walks for disabled people is written by someone who knows what they are doing. It's not just the surface that matters, but gradients, cambers and width. As a new wheelchair user I am learning how much these things matter; a recent visit to a Perthshire beauty spot I remembered as a nice flat track had to be abandoned because what were quite small stones in my hillwalking days now became mini-boulders.

It is born out of the determination of the author, Eva McCracken, not to abandon the delights of her beloved hillwalking once she was confined to a wheelchair. She has listed 50 walks, and carefully audited them, not only for the suitability of the trail but for many other factors that disabled people will need to know. There are descriptions of the walk,

map references, distances, availability of toilets (even whether there is room for a wheelchair to the right or left). A map shows the walk as easy, difficult or challenging and there is a photo. Walks are through forested areas and more open country, and along canal towpaths, with notes about access, gates, and roads which may need to be crossed. I was very impressed by the walks around Loch Morlich, where I often walked in pre MS days; I found a track I did not know about, and more to the point found I could borrow a scooter from the visitor centre! I thought my days on the Glenmore Forest tracks were just a wistful memory, but thanks to this book I shall be back there again as soon as possible. Thank you, Eva McCracken. Many disabled lovers of the outdoors will bless your name.

It would be good if other wheelchair walkers were to audit paths in their area and pool the information for a second edition to the same high standard. I am sure that there will be a demand for someone to do the same for England.

John Berridge

TOM WEIR

'A cheery face, a bright woolly hat and a fierce campaigner'

Tom, who died in June, is remembered by Nigel Hawkins

THE GREAT WORLD OF THE OUTDOORS in this country has seen many great characters but all of them I am sure would agree that Tom Weir was the most remarkable.

For nearly eight decades he was a familiar figure in outdoor Scotland and through his writings and television appearances became known to – and loved by – an audience of millions.

In 2000 he received the John Muir Trust's first ever Lifetime Achievement Award at an emotional ceremony at the Mitchell Theatre in his native Glasgow. At the time Tom said the award meant more than any other honour or recognition could. But in truth it was the other way round for he honoured the Trust by accepting the award.

Tom was part of a generation of walkers and climbers who escaped from the Depression in Glasgow during the 1930s by hitching, walking and cycling to the hills at weekends – and enjoying epic adventures when the body was strong and the spirit was free.

But Tom was forever young at heart – his bubbling enthusiasm for the Scottish mountains, glens and lochs and the great characters he encountered there was with him to the very end of his life.

Only two years ago he celebrated his 90th birthday with a tour de force, staying up late into the night at a party in his home village of Gartocharn and chatting to and entertaining all of us privileged to be there.

And what wonderful stories he had to tell. For he was a wonderful story teller and could bring alive places and people in a way that was truly unique. He brought this skill to his writings for over 40 years in *The Scots Magazine* and his classic television series *Weir's Way* produced by Scottish Television. Watching the programme you thought Tom was speaking directly to you and to no-one else – he was there in the sitting room with you.

And you felt so comfortable with him.

From his exciting early days rock climbing Tom's inquiring mind led him to become an expert on all things that make up wild places – the rocks, birds, animals, plants, insects, and of course the ever changing weather and light.

All of this he could communicate through his wonderful writings and oh so memorable television chats. And he captured it too in pictures for a he was a superb photographer.

During the Second World War Tom served as a gun battery surveyor with the Royal Artillery and during this time wrote his classic book *Highland Days* telling of wandering in the Highlands long before the modern boom in outdoor recreation.

Professor Sir Robert Grieve, a close friend of Tom, said the book was really about Tom's Garden of Eden – and this was a 'shout of joy from the garden.' It was a shout of joy we were to hear from Tom all his days.



2000: Rhona and Tom in the Mitchell Theatre after Tom's acceptance of the Trust's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Tom and a group of friends including another famous writer about the Scottish mountains WH Murray took part in the first British post-war Himalayan expedition leading to his book *East of Kathmandu*. He also climbed in the Alps, Norway and Morocco and journeyed through Kurdistan. He wrote 13 books and an endless flow of articles for journals, magazines and newspapers.

In the 1960s Tom campaigned to stop the impoundment of the Water of Nevis in Glen Nevis, and that beautiful glen, one of Scotland's finest, can be seen unspoiled today largely because of Tom's efforts.

Fierce is not a word often associated with Tom with his cheery face and bright woolly hat but he was a fierce campaigner for wild places by speaking and writing so eloquently about them and creating greater understanding of their importance not just for humans to experience and enjoy but for their own sake.

In this he shared the same illuminating vision as

the man whose name this Trust carries.

Tom's great companion his wife Rhona shared his love of the outdoors, and she asked that donations at Tom's funeral at the lovely church near Gartocharn be for the John Muir Trust.

It was a glorious sunny June day and sitting in the church the thought flickered across that Tom was sitting up there in the sky saying to all of us that we shouldn't be inside on such a day but outside tramping the hills.

I am sure many people are remembering Tom while doing just that.

In *The Scots Magazine*, his friend and fellow writer for many years Rennie McOwan, said:

One of the great characters of modern Scotland has gone. His memory remains, cherished and honoured. There will never be another quite like him.

Everyone who knew Tom personally or through his chats and writings will agree.



On the North Peak of The Cobbler, 14 February 1987. Climbing with Ken Crockett, Tom had just finished an early ascent of Chockstone Gully, and the first ascent of Heart Buttress, 100m Grade III. This was Tom's second route by front pointing.

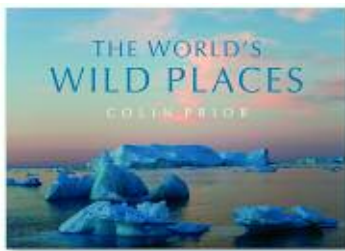
Events

Glasgow & West of Scotland

Thu 7 Dec Talk, Glasgow

Project Ptarmigan and the British Trust for Ornithology – illustrated talk by Jacqui Kaye about the retiring ptarmigan and the work of BTO with upland bird populations. 7 pm, Hamish Wood Building, Glasgow Caledonian University.

● Contact Mike Gray or Mike Brown for information about the group or its events. mike.gray@linktech.co.uk, 01360 550962 (eve) mbrown99@dircon.co.uk, 0141 357 2181.



1 Dec–8 Jan Photo exhib., Glasgow

Photographer Colin Prior's latest book *The World's Wild Places* (Constable & Robinson) is 'an awesome collection of photographs of the world's last remaining wildernesses'. As well as photos there are articles on each continent and essays about our dwindling wilderness. A launch exhibition at London's Oxo Tower runs till 22 October, and is at Glasgow Science Centre from 1 December–8 January. It will also tour to Edinburgh and Inverness during 2007.

Aberdeen area

Sat 4 Nov Work party

Volunteer work party in Glen Tanar, meet 10 am at visitor centre car park.

Fri 24 Nov Ceilidh, Aberdeen

Station Hotel, Aberdeen, 8 pm. Please ring Donald Thomas for tickets, 01224 624 709.

Wed 6 Dec Talk, Aberdeen

Evening Talk for the Cairngorm Club, 'Knoydart to Assynt with the JMT' by Steve Green. 7.30 pm, Mannofield Cricket Club, Aberdeen.

● Please call Steve Green for details, 01339 885574.

JMT NEWS

Next JMT NEWS will reach you in mid-January. Contact the editor by early December with news, pictures or ideas.

Contact details on page 1.

Edinburgh special

An evening with John Dunn

2 November

Where else can you ski beside the ocean, watch passing whales, and dodge polar bears.... all at the same time?!

Wilderness explorer and photographer John Dunn's new talk and multimedia presentation will follow his recent eye-opening expeditions on Canada's Devon Island.

John's reputation goes before him and pictures from his pioneering traverse of Baffin Island have featured in National Geographic.

English-born, John lives in Canada so this is a rare opportunity to hear him speak.

Doors open 6.45 pm for 7.30.

Tickets: £7 available from JMT (send SAE with cheque to 41 Commercial Street, Edinburgh, EH6 6JD) or phone 0131 554 0114 for credit card payments.

Sponsored by Berghaus and Tiso.

JMT exhibitions, raffle and Christmas merchandise available during the evening.



Rest of UK

2006/7 planting, Carrifran woodland



19 Nov, 21 Jan, 18 Feb, 18 Mar, 15 Apr, 20 May and 17 Jun. Meet Carrifran car park, 10 am. A708 12 km from Moffat. Volunteering: Hugh Chalmers, Hugh@bordersforesttrust.org, or Philip Ashmole, philip@ashmole.org.uk; email reminders: Peter Dreghorn, dreghorn@supanet.com. Picture shows treeline woodland at Coire Choimlidh, below the Grey Corries. Carrifran Wildwood goes up to over 2000 ft, and there are thoughts of encouraging regrowth of this kind with the help of volunteers. Last Word, p 32.

21–22 Oct Conservation, Wensleydale

Yorkshire Region weekend in Upper Wensleydale. Bunkhouse at Hardraw booked for Friday and Saturday nights. Work to be confirmed, may be tree planting. Tools, tea

and coffee provided. contact John Page if you can attend for part or all the weekend, and if you need accommodation.

j.page@thomson.com, 01904 425175.

Sun 22 Apr Flora London Marathon

We are looking for runners for next year's Flora London Marathon. Our aim is for people running for the JMT to raise a minimum of £700. Up for the challenge? then contact Fiona on 0131 554 0114.

12–13 May AGM, Fort William

The members' weekend incorporating the AGM comes to Fort William in 2007. More details will be in the January JMT News, but following the success of this year's event in Drymen it would be advisable to book your accommodation as soon as possible.

Activities programme

Most of the 2007 Activities Programme is now open for booking on the JMT's website, www.jmt.org. Members without internet access are welcome to get details from the programme's office on

0845 456 1783

JMT local contacts

Aberdeen area

Steve Green, 01339 88 55 74

Glasgow & West of Scotland

Mike Gray, 01360 550962,
Mike Brown, 0141 357 2181

Strathspey

Alan Keegan, 01479 811047

NW Highlands

Sue Hopkinson, 01854 612756

Edinburgh & Lothians

Karren Smith, 07977 182137

NE England

Eric Gendle, 01642 281235

NW England

Alan Bowring, 01606 834093

Yorkshire

John Page, 01904 425175

Bristol

Brian Pollard, 0117 942 4951

Hampshire

Rog Harris, 01794 522157

Newbury area

Mike Merchant,
01488 608672

Oxford area

Fiona Hunter, 07729 484870

Cambridge

Richard Hindle, 01223 504264

South Wales

John Taylor, 01568 614831

North Wales

Rob Collister, 01492 582448

Some contacts are JMT groups, but most are individual members willing to be a local contact point. Email addresses are at www.jmt.org.

Turbines on Harris

It was with disappointment that I read (*JMT News*, July) that the JMT supports a wind turbine development on Harris. It says, 'we believe that communities have a right to try and make a sustainable living...'

Wind produced electricity in the grid is NOT sustainable because of the nuclear/fossil conventional power backup required at all times to ensure a stable electricity supply. If the backup is fossil produced there will be no reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Windpower cannot meet the needs of any community unless that community only needs electricity when the wind blows appropriately!

Windfarms are built to generate ROCs (Renewable Obligation Certificates) which sell for several times the electricity underpinning them. The UK Parliament Public Accounts Committee under Sir Edward Leigh said that it was an uncontrolled public subsidy. David Cameron, the North Harris Trust director, should be aware of this. These three turbines will be an obscenity on Harris.

A R Nelson

Scarletmuir, Lanark

Windiest and wildest

I am absolutely astounded at the opposition to windfarms by JMT near Lochluichart, and by the letter ('Windfarms are a liability') in the last *Journal*. I actually find them scenically attractive and pause in my journey to look at them.

After all they are just modern versions of windmills, the remnants of which people take great pains to preserve, or use a high carbon emission flight to visit on Mikonos or other Greek islands.

They are certainly more attractive than coal or

gas fired power stations and infinitely more so than nuclear; for this is the alternative. Whether we like it or not there is an increased demand for energy and something has to be done, so if we oppose wind power then we condone these other methods.

Of course we can all do our bit to reduce energy use and perhaps install a microgeneration system (photovoltaic, hydro or wind) which has the benefit of feeding electricity first to the building before the grid, where there is considerable loss in transmission. But then people or the planners will oppose us if we want to put wind generators on our houses. Can we not make a positive stand for wind in all its forms?

Sadly the windiest places are always going to be the wildest places so JMT will always be in conflict.

Roger Webber

Ardfern, Argyll

We would like to thank all those members who made donations or signed up to our Monthly Giving Initiative on receiving the 'What's your view of wild land' leaflet. This focused on our renewable energy stance. The Trust does support renewable energy schemes: however, this does not include ones which impact adversely on wild or unique landscapes. We are pleased that many of you have also signed up to hear how you can take action and make a difference – and that we have recruited new members as a result.

- *To see online versions of our policy papers on energy, or copies of the 'What's your view' leaflet, please look on www.jmt.org, or contact JMT Edinburg office – details on page 1.*

YOUR LETTERS

To the editor by end January, please.

Contact details on page 1.

Stuck for a Christmas present? Look no further. **SEEING SCOTLAND** by Charlie Waite is the answer.

Presented by the renowned landscape photographer, Seeing Scotland is a ground-breaking 6 part series that explores and discusses the inspiration, dedication and human interest behind photography. Each journey takes a look into one of the many elements involved in making a photograph, from light, through to composition, wildlife and even ways of improving portraiture. Set amid some of Scotland's most stunning scenery, and enlivened by Charlie's encounters with local characters, Seeing Scotland is a lavish pictorial celebration with breathtaking images, moving and still.



And if you didn't get it the first time round, the hugely popular 'Mountains of Scotland' DVD is still available. Both are available at £14.99 inc P&P. For each DVD ordered through the JMT, a donation of £1 will be made to the Trust by Enlightenment Media.

To order Send your name, address, telephone number and the name of the DVD(s) you wish to order together with your cheque payable to **Enlightenment Media** to:

SEE SCOTLAND BETTER WITH THIS DVD



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‘The nature of the upper fringe of the lost woodland is little understood. In modern Scotland, these habitats are rare and often degraded or endangered.’

The Carrifran Wildwood Project seeks new heights. By PHILIP ASHMOLE



Firth Hope at Carrifran.

THE JOHN MUIR TRUST has been associated with the Carrifran Wildwood project of Borders Forest Trust since 1997. The support given by JMT staff and members was a key factor enabling a small grass-roots group to arrange the purchase (without the use of public money) of the spectacular 1660-acre Carrifran valley in the Moffat Hills for an ambitious initiative in ecological restoration. A decade on, the lower part of Carrifran is largely clothed with embryonic native woodland and the Wildwood Group has begun to focus on establishment of appropriate vegetation at higher levels.

Carrifran, like almost the whole of the Southern Uplands and much of the Highlands, lost its natural woodland cover centuries ago. Pockets of trees survive in precipitous places nearby, as they do in parts of the Highlands, and give an idea of the woodland that once clothed the valleys and the lower slopes, which can be supplemented by historical and pollen evidence. However, the nature of the upper fringe of the lost woodland is little understood. In Scandinavia and other mountainous regions, a transitional treeline zone between high forest and open montane heath may be occupied by various types of scrub and dwarf woodland. In modern Scotland, however, these habitats are rare and often degraded or endangered. The Montane Scrub Action Group has focused the attention of ecologists on the missing habitats, but active restoration efforts have been limited – with the

National Trust for Scotland leading the way on Ben Lawers and the adjacent Tarmachan range.

At Carrifran there are opportunities to extend the natural sequence of habitats from the valley bottom up the steep slopes and into small hanging valleys near the rim of the plateau surrounding White Coomb (821 m). The Wildwood Group has no intention of blanketing the summits with dense woodland. Instead, the vision is of patches of shrubs and groups of stunted trees in hollows and gullies, interspersed with open heathland, and of scattered windblown trees among the rocks. Patterns of this kind can be seen in a few places in Scotland, as at Creag Fhiaclach in the Cairngorms.

Establishment of treeline woodland and scrub is slow and difficult, and not well adapted to the inevitable constraints of grant-giving bodies. The plan at Carrifran, therefore, is to raise funds from private individuals and charitable trusts. This will enable the work to be spread over several years, using plants of appropriate provenance and size, and gradually learning from experience how best to get the plants to grow. A good start has been made with a trial plot established at 690 m at Firth Hope, in spring 2002. It now has a range of tree and shrub species growing – some doing much better than others.

Planting on exposed hillsides at over 2000 feet is bound to be a challenge, and the group hopes that much of the work can be done by volunteers. Many members and staff of JMT have worked at

Carrifran in the past, but the aim is now to recruit volunteers more actively. The Carrifran project officer, Hugh Chalmers, usually has several fit people helping him on site on Tuesdays, and this may be expanded during the next few planting seasons (September to May), with high-level planting whenever the weather is suitable.

Another idea is special high-level planting days, for instance on the day before the normal Sunday volunteer day. Work parties of fit hill-walkers, with a qualified leader from Borders Forest Trust, would be given training in the special planting techniques required at high altitudes and could undertake rewarding work in magnificent surroundings.

If successful, establishment of treeline woodland at Carrifran could perhaps point the way for similar initiatives in restoration of treeline habitats in some of the more extensive mountain regions managed by the John Muir Trust. Much of our remote land in Scotland – though it may be considered wild – is very far from natural. Judicious establishment of low scrub and patchy dwarf woodland of stunted trees would enhance our mountain landscapes, as well as enriching them with a greater variety of vegetation and additional species of birds, insects and other animals.

Philip Ashmole is co-ordinator of the Carrifran Wildwood project and a Trustee of Borders Forest Trust.

● Volunteering at Carrifran – see page 28.