

Conservation Work Parties Report 2018



Drystone dyking on Isle Martin

Members and non-members can join our conservation work parties. They take place on John Muir Trust properties and on our partnership properties. Participants arrange their own food, travel and accommodation.

These events are designed to enable our members and others to:-



Digging a borrow pit on East Schiehallion

- *contribute to the practical work of the John Muir Trust on Trust and partnership properties*
- *learn about the John Muir Trust and partnership properties and how they are managed*
- *practice some of the skills of conservation management*
- *meet other members and John Muir Trust staff*
- *experience and have contact with wild places.*

"Do something for wildness and make the mountains glad"
(John Muir, 1892)



Left - Drystone seat built for West Harris Trust in front of their new Talla na Mara centre
Right - Volunteers prepare to carry out a summit litter sweep on Ben Nevis



Overview

In 2018 there were 26 organised work parties planned (although three were cancelled before running mostly due to snow cover). There was also a wide range of volunteering by individuals and groups such as the John Muir Trust local members group work days and ad hoc volunteering on Trust properties such as the regular Thursday work days at **Glenlude**.

In total 149 different volunteers donated 584 days. This compares with 649 days in 2017 with only 140 volunteers over 30 work parties. The drop in number of work parties was largely due to fewer run at **Li & Coire Dhorrcail** as well as the continued shift at **Glenlude** from organised work parties to the regular Thursday work days throughout the year.



Beach cleaning – different beaches similar rubbish, Left fish farm pipe as part of haul on Sandwood Bay, Right carrying out a pipe found on beach on Isle Martin

As well as on our own properties, and two on **Glenridding** which is now being managed by the Trust, visits were made to partners and like-minded properties including the **Coigach and Assynt Living Landscape (CALL)** project that we are a member of, community owned estates that we have been involved with such as **Knoydart Foundation** and the **North and West Harris** estates as well as the like minded estate of **Corrour** where the Trust has been assisting with the conservation management

The number of work days achieved in the main programme was very similar to that in 2017 with an average work party consisting of ten people but due to the informal way that they are run (people look after their own travel and accommodation) people do drop in and out, usually to fit in hill walks or bags!

What was achieved?

- **Pathwork**
 - **Sandwood**; We continued to carry out maintenance on the path several times as well as resurfacing and landscaping almost a kilometre of the path
 - **East Schiehallion**; the built path continues to deteriorate badly, the path was maintained along its length three times, three water bars built, 15 m of surface re-laid and eight anchor bars added in the upper section. The path to Dun Coilich was cleared of bracken.

- **Harris**; 50 metres of the Huishinis to Cravadale path was completely rebuilt with new pitching and over two tons of surfacing excavated & laid in three visits during the year.
- **Quinag**; Maintenance on the path twice
- **CALL partnership**; A culvert and wooden bridge built on Isle Martin and a 3 metres section of path rebuilt, Culag Woodland paths maintained and four wooden bridges built. Two visits to Suilven path with four anchor bars added and around 5 metres of the new path resurfaced
- **Skye**; Blaven lower path maintained once with a few repairs, two days maintenance and rebuilding of a 10 metres section on Sligachan glen path.
- **Nevis**; Steal Gorge & Upper Ben paths maintained.
- **Knoydart Foundation**; two days maintaining ditches on the Ladhar Bheinn pony track
- **Glenridding**; maintenance on the Swirls car park to Hellvellyn path and paths on the Glenridding side along with parties from Fix the Fells, vegetation restoration and path definition in the summit area.



Old leet at Greenside mine near Glenridding Common cleared and wall was later repaired

- **Rubbish**

- Beaches cleaned included four cleaned twice at **Sandwood** (Sandwood Bay, Polin, Dromin & Oldshoremore) with three trailer loads alone taken out from Sandwood Bay. The majority of rubbish relates to the fishing industry but there was also a lot of camping rubbish out at the bay. In the CALL partnership the White Shore and area in **Culag Woodland** were cleaned as well as the back beach on **Isle Martin**. Huishinis, Teilesnish, Traigh Nisabost, Ceann an Ora and Scalpay beaches on **Harris** cleaned.



Above left building new bridges in Culag woodland, right working on the Ben Nevis path. Left laying new grass outside Talla na Mara on West Harris



- on **Nevis** two summit cleans on the Ben plus the path cleared a small amount of rubbish.

- **Invasives**

- Rhododendrons were removed on **Knoydart Foundation** land by hand pulling as well as around the new nature trail at **Glencanisp** and on Isle Martin
- Non-native Sitka was removed from large sections of native planted woodland on **Corrour Estate**
- Gorse was cut by hand at **Glencanisp** around the new nature trail
- At **Glenlude** cotoneaster removed by the farm



Working on Sulven path with Chris Goodwin the Trust's footpath officer

- **Woodland**

- Treeplanting; 400 trees at Talla na Mara on **Harris** along with some EE Scott school pupils doing their John Muir Award, mounding at Arvourlie in preparation for planting in 2019, 500 trees on **Corrour** in a new brash hedge, around a thousand trees planted in brash hedges and above the farm at **Glenlude**, 1000 trees planted on **Isle Martin**. Around five thousand trees were planted at **Li & Coire Dhorrcail** during two visits. Several hundred trees were planted at East Schiehallion as part of the Heart of Scotland Forest project.



Above left - Repairs to the Sligachan Glen path with stone gathered for new culverts, right – working on the tree nursery at Inbhir Dhorrcail taking seedlings out to plant

Below erecting perching posts at Li & Coire Dhorrcail to encourage raptors in areas of new tree planting.



- Seed collection was carried out at **Glenlude** and for the **CALL** nursery as well as hazel & juniper on **Isle Martin**
- Thousands of tree tubes were checked at **Glenlude** with mesh extensions added or removed if the trees have outgrown them.

- Many days of work were carried out at the **Glenlude** nursery, processing seeds, pricking them out and weeding. 2 days helping at the **CALL** tree nursery at Little Assynt weeding, and other activities.
- **Monitoring**
 - Various species were monitored including mountain ringlet butterflies and water voles at **Nevis**
- **Archaeology**
 - Water leets cleared at the old **Glenridding** lead mine and the old village street on **Isle Martin** cleared of bracken & brambles.
- **Estate management**
 - A drystone seat was built outside Tala na Mara on **West Harris** as well as more grass laid. A section of wall was also rebuilt at Borge.
 - at **Sandwood** the Blairmore end gate & signage repainted
 - at **Culag Woodland** in the **CALL** partnership the main car park signage shelter was taken down and rebuilt and several sections of drystone wall were stripped down and rebuilt on **Isle Martin**.
 - A section of sheep fencing was rebuilt on **East Schiehallion**

Ditching on stalkers path up Ladhar Bheinn with Knoydart Foundation.



Local Members' Groups

The most active group again was the North East Scotland group. The Yorkshire Members group also held several work parties in the Yorkshire Dales. (See reports elsewhere on John Muir Trust website)

Photographs of activities in 2018

You can see photos of all of these work parties on the Flickr sites listed below



- Western Isles www.flickr.com/groups/westernislesworkparties/
- East Schiehallion www.flickr.com/groups/schiehallionworkparties/
- Glen Nevis & Ben Nevis www.flickr.com/groups/nevisworkparties/
- Glenlude www.flickr.com/groups/glenludeworkparties/
- Sandwood, Quinag and our partners in the Coigach Assynt partnership (CALL) www.flickr.com/groups/sandwoodquinagcallworkparties/
- Skye and Knoydart (including the Knoydart Foundation and Li & Coire Dhorrcail) www.flickr.com/groups/skyeknoydartworkparties/
- Local member group volunteers www.flickr.com/groups/2463314@N25/

All the photos in this report are taken from the Flickr sites where you can see credits for photographers and descriptions of where they were taken.

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The programme for volunteering in 2019 appears at the John Muir Website at www.johnmuirtrust.org/support-us/volunteer/conservation-volunteering

Dates for 2018 John Muir Trust work parties

Dates	Property
1-3 Mar	Glenlude (cancelled due to snow)
18-Mar	East Schiehallion (cancelled due to snow)
23-25 Mar	Li & Coire Dhorrcail (Knoydart)
6-8 Apr	Skye
9-11 Apr	Li & Coire Dhorrcail (Knoydart)
16-20 Apr	Knoydart Foundation (Inverie)
23-27 Apr	Corrour
30 Apr-4 May	Western Isles
11-13 May	Sandwood
19-20 May	East Schiehallion
09-Jun	Ben Nevis
25-29 Jun	CALL partnership & Quinag
6-9 Jul	East Schiehallion
13-15 Jul	Glen Nevis
16-20 Jul	Western Isles
27-29 Jul	Glenridding (England)
3-6 Aug	Sandwood
20-24 Aug	CALL partnership & Quinag
26-Aug	Ben Nevis (moved from 25th)
3-7 Sep	Western Isles
14-16 Sep	Glenridding (England)
22-Sep	Ben Nevis (cancelled)
24-28 Sep	CALL partnership on Isle Martin
29-30 Sep	East Schiehallion
4-6 Oct	Glenlude
22-24 Nov	Glenlude