MEMBERS' NEWS

JOHN MUIR Trust

Chair's welcome

January 2017

New Year is a time for new beginnings, adventure and learning – and 2017 is already shaping up to encompass all of these things.

I'm pleased to report that the Lake District National Park has started a consultation that could see the Trust lease Glenridding Common, including the summit of Helvellyn and Striding and Swirral Edges.

This is a special wild place, with a rich cultural heritage that we intend to respect, while making ecological improvements and raising the profile of the Trust in England.

The Park Authority will hold a three month consulation with local stakeholders to determine the details of a land management plan.

To support us through this period, the Trust has brought on board respected local Pete Barron whose depth of knowledge of the Lake Distirict and the people who live there will be invaluable as we move forward.

We hope that in time, this arrangement could, with the support of the local people, grazing tenants and the wider community of interest in the Lake District, lead to a long term involvement on the site.



The Trust has 30 years of experience managing similar landscapes. We believe that working alongside others to manage this special location fits with our accumulated skills, experience and aspirations, and our progressive approach to land management.

The coming months will see us develop a vision and long term plan for Glenridding Common in conjunction with the local communities and organisations.

We will keep you informed of progress as matters develop and trust you will support this exciting development.

You can read more about the property itself and the Trust's newest member of the land team, Pete Barron, on page 3.

Finally may I wish you a Happy New Year. At the time of writing the first snow is on the hills and I hope you make the most of the walking, climbing and ski-ing opportunities over the next few months.

Peter Pearson

Stuart Brooks moves to new role at NTS

The Trust's chief executive Stuart Brooks is to leave the organisation at the end of February 2017, following eight years in charge, to become head of natural heritage (policy) at the National Trust for Scotland.

Peter Pearson, chair of the John Muir Trust said: "On behalf of members, trustees and staff, I'd like to thank Stuart for his immense contribution.

"Over these eight years, he has raised public awareness of the Trust to new heights, while shaping a highly efficient and modern organisation capable of facing the future with confidence.

"His leadership has positioned the Trust at the cutting edge of nature conservation and the protection of wild places."

The Trust has started the process to recruit a new chief executive.

We will carry a full interview with Stuart Brooks about his time at the Trust in the Spring 2017 issue of the Journal.



Help shape the future direction of the John Muir Trust

It's time for our annual call for nominations to our board of trustees. Any member is welcome to stand. The Trust is run by a board of 15 trustees, currently led by Peter Pearson. Three of our trustees – Jim Gibson, David MacLehose and John

Finney – will be standing down having served two terms. We encourage people who live near wild areas to fill the five vacancies. Nominations must be received by Monday 6 March. See more at **johnmuirtrust.org/trusteecall**



Following a two-year review into deer management in Scotland, there are optimistic signs that politicians might be ready to take action to reduce overgrazing pressures in the uplands

Mike Daniels, head of land management for the John Muir Trust, has given oral evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee in support of more effective management of deer.

The committee was considering a report from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) - Deer Management in Scotland - which expressed concern about the damage caused to Scotland's natural heritage by overgrazing and concluded "we are not confident that present approaches to deer management will be effective in sustaining and improving the natural heritage in a reasonable timescale".

Along with other environmental organisations, including the

Scottish Wildlife Trust and the RSPB, the Trust has welcomed the report and called for a tightening of regulation to bring Scotland into closer alignment with most other European countries.

Mike Daniels said: "This review offers a golden opportunity to reform deer management to get more from our land, for the sake of the land itself, for nature and for all the people of Scotland. "We are asking for SNH to be given new powers to approve culls to ensure they are in the public interest.

"This would allow existing deer stalkers and managers to carry on as they are, but in a much more transparent and accountable manner to deliver wider environmental, social and economic benefits for all the people of Scotland."

Wild land protection update

In October, the Trust publicised its disappointment at the Scottish Government's decision to approve the Creag Rhiabhach wind farm at Altnaharra Estate near Lairg in Sutherland.

Five of the development's 22 turbines will fall within the boundary of Wild Land Area 37 (Foinaven-Ben Hee). This contradicts previous Wild Land Area (WLA) decisions and could set a damaging precedent attracting proposals for other large scale industrial developments in these Wild Land Areas. The Trust is seeking re-assurance from the Scottish Government that it will protect WLAs.

In November, Trust policy officer John Low gave evidence at the Public Local Inquiry into the proposed 25 turbine Crossburns wind farm that would be visible from Schiehallion, raising concerns about wild land, landscape and socio-economic henefits

The Trust is evaluating proposals by SSE Electricity Networks for a transmission line between Fort Augustus and Skye. In the Lake District, we welcomed National Grid's plans to underground new transmission in the National Park. However concerns remain about proposed pylons in south west Cumbria, close to the National Park boundary. The Trust had commented on this.

We are speaking to the government about Stronelairg legal costs. Thank you to everyone who has supported us and more recently those members who have been keeping up the pressure on MSPs and SSE.

Other campaigning activity

- · For the third year running the Trust won strong recognition for its campaigning work at The Great Outdoors Awards 2016, gaining the 'highly commended'accolade in the Outdoor Campaigner of the Year category. Trustee Chris Townsend also received two commendations - in the Outdoor Personality of the Year category, and for his book Out There.
- The Trust held a wellattended fringe meeting at the SNP conference in October, where a panel of invited quests discussed 'Protecting landscapes - What are the costs and benefits?' We continue to meet with MSPs from all parties, their staff and civil servants. In November we held a week-long exhibition in the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood in Edinburgh.





A jewel in the crown of the English uplands

Pete Barron offers an overview of Glenridding Common and Helvellyn

If the Trust does get the opportunity to manage the special landscape of Glenridding Common, we will strive to work with all interested parties to protect and enhance the ecosystem while respecting its cultural traditions.

The Common covers a total of just over 1000ha and includes Striding and Swirral Edges and Helvellyn summit. Within its boundaries, there are also two quiet valleys – and, on the northern edge, an area of 200ha which is managed jointly with the National Trust and contains Lakeland's only ski tow.

The property is common land, a traditional English and especially Cumbrian way of land management under which 'commoners' have individual rights to the land. On Glenridding Common there are two commoners with the right to graze a particular number of sheep (mostly Swaledale, a hardy upland species). The numbers are lower than in the past due to an agri-environment scheme in partnership with Natural England.

Its outstanding natural assets include the arctic alpine flora of the high crags, significant juniper stands, the schelly – Britain's second rarest fish which inhabits the Red Tarn – and England's highest stickleback population at an altitude of 718m. The mountainous site is home to several upland bird species such as the raven, the wheatear and the ring ouzel.

Helvellyn is the third highest mountain in

England at 950m, and being relatively accessible, attracts many walkers and climbers. The cold, eastern crags of Helvellyn get significant amounts of snow and ice compared to most other Lakeland fells, which makes the mountain a popular destination for winter climbers. The mountain's year-round popularity poses some management challenges, such as footpath erosion, damage to alpine flora, littering and inconsiderate wild camping.

In Lakeland, a range of organisations and volunteers have historically been involved in repairing footpaths. Since 2007, that work has been coordinated by Fix the Fells, a coalition of partners including the Lake District National Park Authority, the National Trust, Natural England, Friends of the Lake District, Cumbria County Council and Nurture Lakeland. Helvellyn continues to be a priority – Fix the Fells recently carried out difficult and expensive work to stabilise the headwalls of both Striding and Swirral Edge.

The arctic alpine populations are vulnerable to the impact of wider climate change, but they can also be damaged when winter climbing tools are used in sensitive areas when the turf is not frozen solid. To guide climbers, the BMC has produced the Lake District White Guide [thebmc.co.uk/lake-district-winter-conditions-guide] with superb crag pictures showing climbs and sensitivities.

About Pete Barron

The newest member of our land team, Pete has lived and worked in the Lake District for most of his life. He has a passion for landscape, wildlife and rural life, and has worked as a ranger with the Lake District National Park Authority for 23 years. His work included upland management, fell path maintenance, raptor protection and supervising volunteers. His role involved meeting and talking to people and groups - including parish councils and major organisations. Away from work, Pete enjoys fell running, cross country ski racing, licensed bird ringing, mountain rescue and looking after a search dog.





John Muir Award up 15% in Scottish schools

Almost half of secondary schools now delivering Trust's flagship initiative

Our John Muir Award has celebrated another successful year in Scotland, with 16,000 students and teachers achieving one - a 15 per cent increase over the previous year.

The newly released data for 2015-2016 also shows that one in five of all John Muir Awards achieved (3,362) were gained by pupils experiencing some form of disadvantage.

Thanks to all our funders, including Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), we are now working with 45 per cent of Scottish secondary schools to provide the John Muir Award across all 32 local authority areas.

Dougie Pollok, SNH biodiversity communications manager, said: "This environmental engagement scheme has proven to be popular with both teachers and pupils. As part of the Curriculum for Excellence, it promotes health and wellbeing and recognises achievement. We are particularly heartened by the number of pupils taking part who experience some form of disadvantage."

More HLF support for John Muir Award in England

A major supporter of the John Muir Award has committed to supporting our work in England until 2018. The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has awarded a further £137,000 in recognition of the Award's success in encouraging more people - particularly people from 'inclusion' backgrounds - to engage with wild places.

Two Award recipients become #iwill ambassadors

The Trust has pledged to involve 100,000 young people in safeguarding nature by 2020 through the John Muir Award. This is part of #iwill, a UK-wide campaign aiming to make social action a part of life for as many 10-20 year olds as possible by 2020. We are delighted that John Muir Award recipients - Jamie Bright and Matilda Hill - will join a team of #iwill ambassadors in 2017. Over the coming year they will continue to share their social action stories with others and encourage more young people to get involved. iwill.org.uk/pledge/the-



john-muir-trust



Nature ambassadors: Martha Hill and Jamie Bright



Edinburgh gathering brings together 50 Award Providers

Over 50 John Muir Award Providers and supporters met at Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Garden in early November. They spent the afternoon sharing ideas, information, insights and experiences.

A series of workshops enabled them to explore the benefits of growing and sharing food as part of a John Muir Award; take a fresh look at current sustainability links across the UK; and hear about other Provider experiences.

Special guests included Mission: Explore illustrator Tom Morgan-Jones – whose deft penwork brilliantly captured Award activities - and adventurer Alastair Humphreys who showcased Studiocanoe's latest film, Wilderness, a reflection on Scotland's wild places set to John Muir's words.

Read more about the ingredients of a successful event:

johnmuirtrust.org/whats-new/a-recipe-for-a-john-muir-award-providers-gathering

Skye pathwork project hits the ground running

Trust launches two-year training programme with a team of local students from West Highland College

A team of eight students from the West Highland College UHI Broadford campus has been out on the hills above Sligachan with the John Muir Trust. They are learning how to build cross drains, water bars and other footpath drainage features as part of their work towards gaining the Crofting and Countryside Skills certificate.

The pathwork part of the certificate is being supervised by Donald MacKenzie, a footpath expert from Glenelg who is spearheading the Trust's 'Skye's Wild Ways: Path Repair and Conservation Skills' project. The two-year project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, offers local volunteers and college trainees training in path repair skills under the guidance of

experienced professionals.

The West Highland College course leader and lecturer, Heather McNeill said: "We do seven big tasks a year on the course, including fencing, dry stone walling and other activities. The project is introducing the students to another type of outdoor skill that is important in this area.

"They come from a range of backgrounds and age groups. Some want to change their direction in life. Others are crofters and a few have moved into the area and want to work on the land here."

The group included students from Kinlochleven, Sutherland and Raasay as well as local people from Skye.

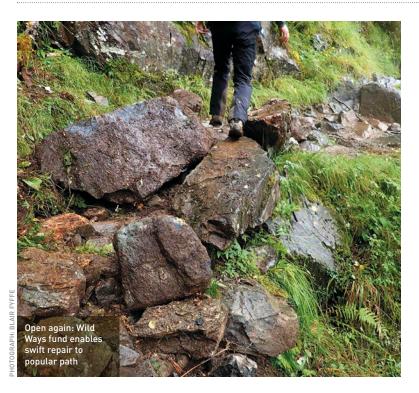
Crofter Maddy Norval from Sutherland



said: "We have a public right of way going through our croft, so the skills I've been learning here will be really useful.

"There's a lot more to path repair work than I had realised – for example, finding the right shape of rocks that blend in with the landscape, and aligning them properly to make sure the water runs off efficiently."

Donald MacKenzie who has worked on footpaths for 20 years said: "This work can be tough, especially in howling gales and driving rain. But, if you love the hills as I do, it can be a great way to make a living. Hopefully at least some of the students will be inspired to go on to further training and gain the kind of skills that will allow them to work and live locally."



Wild Ways donors come to the rescue of Steall Gorge following major rockfall in Glen Nevis

The Trust's Wild Ways Path Appeal has helped carry out £30,000 of emergency repairs following a serious rockfall on the popular Steall Gorge footpath through Glen Nevis.

The path had to close for six weeks following the incident that took place overnight on the 13-14 September, while two separate teams of contractors carried out work to remove unstable debris from the slopes above the path, and to repair structural damage to the path itself.

Alison Austin, Nevis Land Manager at the John Muir Trust said: "I'd like to thank the two local contractors, Thistle Access and Stonescape for their speedy and professional work in tackling the damage, and to all those Trust members and supporters who made the repair possible by generously donating to our Wild Ways path appeal."

To donate to the Wild Ways Path Appeal, please visit **johnmuirtrust.org/wildways** or phone us on **01796 470080**.

Conservation work party dates 2017

Choose from a fantastic line-up of conservation work parties this year

Date	Location	Proposed activity
14-15 January	Glen Nevis	Tree planting with Nevis Partnership
10-12 February	Glenlude	General
3-5 March	Li & Coire Dhorrcail, Knoydart	Tree planting (requires wild camping)
10-12 March	Glenlude	General
19 March	East Schiehallion	Path work/woodland
1-7 April	Li & Coire Dhorrcail, Knoydart	Tree planting (requires wild camping)
7-10 April	Skye	General
15-17 April	Sandwood	Beach cleaning and path work
22-23 April	Li & Coire Dhorrcail, Knoydart	Tree planting (requires wild camping)
24-28 April	Western Isles	General with North & West Harri Trusts
6-12 May	Li & Coire Dhorrcail, Knoydart	Bracken control (requires wild camping)
13-14 May	East Schiehallion	Path work/woodland
15-19 May	Corrour Estate	Woodland & peat restoration
22-27 May	Knoydart Foundation (Inverie)	Rhoddie control and path work
2-4 June	Li & Coire Dhorrcail, Knoydart	Bracken control (requires wild camping)
9-11 June	Li & Coire Dhorrcail, Knoydart	Bracken control (requires wild camping)
10 June	Ben Nevis	Summit litter and path work
16-18 June	Glenlude	General
19-23 June	Quinag & CALL project	General
7-9 July	Li & Coire Dhorrcail, Knoydart	General (requires wild camping)
14-17 July	Glen Nevis	Monitoring & path work
29-30 July	East Schiehallion	Path work/woodland
1-5 August	Sandwood	Path work/beach cleaning/ general
19 August	Ben Nevis	Summit litter and path work
21-25 August	Quinag & CALL project	General
4-8 September	Western Isles	General with North & West Harris Trusts
16 September	Ben Nevis	Summit litter and path work
18-22 September	CALL project (Summer Isles)	General
23-24 September	East Schiehallion	Path work/woodland
6-8 October	Glenlude	General
17-19 November	Glenlude	General

Find out more at johnmuirtrust.org/support-us/volunteer
To keep up-to-date with work parties, join our email listing at
workparties@johnmuirtrust.org, or contact Sandy Maxwell, Top
Right, 69 Hyndland Street, Glasgow G11 5PS t. 07766 380663



Adopt an acre

Members and supporters sign up to a new way to support Trust's conservation work on three popular mountains

We've been overwhelmed by the generous support for our new Adopt an Acre initiative since launching it at the end of October. At time of writing 575 acres have already been adopted – 132 on Ben Nevis (pictured above), 230 on Bla Bheinn and 213 on Schiehallion – raising over £17,000 for our conservation work.

Proceeds from each Adopt an Acre gift will fund essential work to protect and manage wild land on the three mountains, including restoring native woodland, protecting native species, monitoring wildlife and maintaining and repairing paths.

Adopt an Acre gifts make great presents for birthdays, weddings, Valentine's Day, anniversaries or a gift in memory of a loved one.

Simply choose your mountain and write your own message to create a personalised certificate. When you adopt two or more acres you can also include a print of the mountain in your adoption pack.

Find out more and order your own Adopt an Acre gift online at **johnmuirtrust.org/adoptanacre**

Are there other properties you'd like to see available through Adopt an Acre? Contact daisy.clark@johnmuirtrust.org



Knoydart Appeal update

Our goal is to plant 50,000 native trees over four years, to make a significant difference to the biodiversity of the land we manage in Knoydart.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our supporters, we managed to beat our fundraising target.

Since then our team of staff and volunteers, led by Knoydart property manager Lester Standen (pictured on the left), have been busy planting, weeding and growing

to expand the native tree cover once again.

You've enabled us to plant 11,000 birch, hazel and alder trees, and germinate 15,000 Scots pine seeds in our on-site nursery. These are growing well, and after two growing seasons, they will be ready to plant in spring 2018.

The team hopes to plant a further 10,000 trees in spring 2017.

Spirit of John Muir 2016

Hundreds held spellbound as adventurer Alastair Humphreys delivers second Muir tribute

An audience of 300 filled the auditorium at the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh in early November to hear adventurer and author Alastair Humphreys give the Trust's annual Spirit of John Muir talk.

The event explores and celebrates the relevance of John Muir through contemporary figures – each asked to bring to life one of the many qualities of Muir.

Alastair's feats – which are documented in numerous books – include cycling the world, rowing the Atlantic and walking the length of India.

But what sets him apart from other hardened adventurers is his insistence that adventure can be found right here on our own doorsteps. His book *Microadventures*, published in 2014, created and popularised a whole new sub-genre.

His latest experience was inspired by Laurie Lee's book *As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning*, which recounts the poets' jouney through Spain in the 1930s with a violin. Alastair too travelled through the country surviving on his limited skill with the instrument (which he proved on the night).

His story underlined the fact that adventure is a mindset, and not necessarily something that is defined by physical discomfort alone.

Alastair signed off the evening by premiering a new film *Wilderness* that he and film maker Studiocanoe created mostly on John Muir Trust properties.

Sandwood Bay, Steall Gorge and Quinag feature in all moods and conditions, wonderfully juxtaposed against the writing of



John Muir narrated by the Dundonian lilt of nature author Jim Crumley.

The evening was supported by equipment manufacturer Mountain Equipment and outdoor retailer Tiso, whose founder and fellow adventurer Maude Tiso also featured in a short film. Inspiring words from another young adventurer Zeki Basan, a John Muir Award participant and recipient of the Trust's Bill Wallace Grant, completed an evening covering a wide spectrum of adventure.

Read more about the evening and watch the evocative film *Wilderness* at **johnmuirtrust.org/spiritofjohnmuir**



Milestone for Wild Space visitor centre

Three and half years after opening, the Trust's Wild Space centre in Pitlochry has welcomed its 100,000th visitor through the door.

The centre opened on April 2013 as the Trust was celebrating John Muir's 150th birthday. It tells the story of Scotland's wildest places through film, audio, images, stone and wood.

Wild Space manager Jane Grimley said: "Wild Space and its associated Alan Reece Gallery has become an important cultural hub for locals and visitors, hosting regular talks and book signings by some of our greatest nature writers, and showcasing the works of talented landscape and wildlife artists and photographers."

See a list of our gallery's exhibitions at **thewildspace.org**

Wild moment: Val Dunmore

Trust member Val shares a sonnet inspired by her experiences in the Cuillin, Glen Brittle and Snowdonia.

HOME HILLS

Fast shifting shadows sweep the hillsides where I've tramped for miles in blissful reverie, with drifting mists my only company, elation in the place of worldly care.

And when I stand upon these slopes so bare I feel the friendliness of rock and scree, that stretch as far as straining eyes can see into the haze of vaguely shimmering air.

Gushing rock from rock the crystal streams vibrate the atmosphere with pulsing sound, that echoes and reverberates in dreams.

The greatness in these hills is so profound it brings a peace that through all trauma gleams, and I am stilled by all that I have found.

Share your own stories and poems about wild places at **johnmuirtrust.org/wild-moments**

LOCAL WORK PARTIES

North West England

10-12 March, Conservation work party in Duddon Valley, Lake District. Help restore Hardknott Forest to seminatural woodland To volunteer, email D.V.Spracklen@leeds.ac.uk for more details.

North East Scotland

Monthly dates at Glen Tanar: 21 January, 18 February, 18 March, 15 April, 20 May, 17 June, 15 July, 19 August, 16 September, 21 October, 11 November, 2 December. For details email James Brownhill james@brownhill.us



2017 AGM

Our 2017 AGM and Members' Gathering will take place in Fort William from 26-27 May. See booking form or visit our website for more details.

Membership offers

We're delighted to provide a range of fantastic member offers. However, to ensure that more of your contribution goes directly to protecting wild places, we do not provide membership cards. To find out more about taking up our offers visit johnmuirtrust.org/ member-offers or email promotions@ johnmuirtrust.org



An action-packed year for Members' Groups

The North East Scotland members had planned to kick off this year's local group gatherings with an evening with trustee Chris Townsend. Unfortunately, an unexpected trip to A&E (en route to the Aberdeen event) for the Pacific Crest Trail adventurer meant that fellow trustee Steve Green stepped in last minute with wonderful images and words from a ski tour of the Haute Route in the Alps. Meanwhile, volunteers from the group have helped local conservation efforts throughout 2016 including at Glen Tanar and Mar Lodge - with monthly meets to clear litter, repair paths, remove redundant fences and restore native habitats.

A first local members' gathering in Wales welcomed speakers including the Trust's Stuart Brooks; Upland Ecology specialist Barbara Jones; and researcher from the Wildland Research Institute, Steve Carver, in the line-up.

The North West England group began their year with a weekend of conservation work in spring, helping to restore the Hardknott Forest in Duddon Valley by removing invasive species and planting native trees. The group reconvened in Ambleside in the autumn to discuss the UK's special wild places with speakers including Pete Barron, National Parks Ranger (and now part of our land team).

In Bristol, the Southern Members' Gathering

had rewilding as a theme, with speakers from Rewilding Britain, Exeter University (Devon Beaver Trial) and the National Trust to present. The Southern Members' Group also organised a walk in the Brecon Beacons National Park with a former warden sharing local knowledge and expertise.

Edinburgh was the final stop this year for members' gatherings with new local group co-ordinator, Benedict Bate, doing a sterling job organising. More than 100 people heard Green MSP, Andy Wightman; senior policy officer at Scottish Land and Estates, Anne Gray; the Trust's head of land management, Mike Daniels; and author of 'The Ancient Pinewoods of Scotland', Clifton Bain discuss the state of wild land in Scotland today.

A huge thank you to all of you who have volunteered your time to help with local conservation activities or who have come along to a local members' gathering this year, supporting our work through donations and purchases of Trust goods. Over £2,000 has been made from local members' groups meetings this year - a true testament to the commitment of our members and supporters.

If you would like to get involved with the organisation of a members' group, get in touch to find out more. Email emma.cessford@ johnmuirtrust.org

Tell us your news!

What have Trust members and local groups been up to? We want your news and stories. Email emma.cessford@ johnmuirtrust.org

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COVER BANNER IMAGE: SUNSET OVER TANERA MOR IN THE SUMMER ISLES, ASSYNT, SCOTLAND BY PETER CAIRNS/2020VISION

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