JOHN MUIR TRUST
JOURNAL
57 AUTUMN 2014

Natural fit

How the John Muir Award works with national parks

JOHN MUIR TRUST
FOR *wild* LAND & *wild* PLACES

'There is at least a punky spark in my heart and it may blaze in this autumn gold, fanned by the King. Some of my grandfathers must have been born on a muirland for there is heather in me ...'

– John Muir, Letter to Mrs Carr (c. 1870)

Wild places are special. That's why the Trust is dedicated to protecting them for people and wildlife.
If you know someone who loves wild places, then why not give them the gift of membership this Christmas?
Go on line at www.johnmuirtrust.org and click join us, or call 01796 470080.

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PHOTOGRAPHY (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP): DON MARLEY; MISCHA HALLER/SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK; MAX MILLIGAN; LIZ GREEN; NORTH YORK MOORS NATIONAL PARK

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: LOVING AN AREA OF BIRCH WOODLAND, LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK, KATRINA MARTIN. INSIDE FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH: GREATER SUNDEW, MARK HAMBLIN/2020VISION

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Editor:
Richard Rowe journal@jmt.org

Managing editor:
Alan McCombes alan.mccombes@jmt.org

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HEAD OFFICE

John Muir Trust
Tower House
Station Road
Pitlochry
Perthshire PH16 5AN

t. 01796 470 080
w. www.jmt.org

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From the chairman

IT'S FAIR TO SAY that 2014 has already been a year of major developments. The writing of this welcome message follows two significant moments over the summer. First, we had the disappointing decision by Scotland's Energy Minister to approve the Stronelairg wind farm – the biggest to date in the Highlands – without a Public Local Inquiry. Then we had the rather more welcome decision by the Scottish Government to adopt a visionary new Planning Policy, supported by the new Wild Land Areas map (minus Stronelairg) that we had campaigned for vigorously, covering 19 per cent of Scotland's land area. Such are the contrasting experiences of a campaigning organisation that must try to make sense of the circumstances in which it operates.

And by the time you read this message, there will have been an even more significant development: the result of the historic referendum on Scottish independence will be known. The Trust is engaged on a strategic review which has been brought forward partly because of this. On several levels, members across the UK will be awaiting the result with great interest.

But back to this edition of the Journal – one that again highlights the diversity of our interests, experience and sheer range of activities across the UK. We have said much about the important footpath work on our properties of late, but perhaps not so much about the properties themselves. To put that right, our lead article this issue takes a tour of our properties – from the valuable volunteering resource that is Glenlude in the Scottish Borders to the deer-bitten woodland of Quinag – pulling out some of the highlights of another busy year, while also outlining the ongoing priorities at each. From conservation management to volunteer activity and building relations with local communities, our involvement at each site is rich, varied and, often, complex.

Whenever I speak about the Trust, the John Muir Award elicits a hugely positive response, although it is perhaps not that well-known that the Award now works closely with all 15 of the UK's national parks – a key relationship that we explore in more detail in these pages. This important work is just one reason why we hope you will help support the further development of the Award when it launches its first appeal later this year. The Award is not simply an education programme; through it, we identify, train and nurture the next generation of environmental community activists. Surely there is nothing more important?

Elsewhere, our chief executive, Stuart Brooks, examines the controversial issue of muirburn – a practice that is widespread in England and Scotland but that has been condemned by a variety of conservation organisations. It is an issue that resonates strongly with me since out-of-control muirburn came within 40 metres of my house in April last year during a widely-reported fire to the north of Fort William.

We also step over to mainland Europe as our footpath officer Chris Goodman provides an account of his recent trip to Romania, home to what he describes as "the last great primeval forest in Europe". Coming on the back of the report to Scottish Ministers of the Land Reform Review Group, Chris's comparison of community interaction with forest and woodland in Romania is especially instructive.

On a personal note, many members will be aware that I am almost at the end of my term as Trust chairman and the next Journal will allow an opportunity for reflection as well as a strategic look to the future. When I first became a member and later a trustee, I didn't harbour any ambition to become your chairman. What followed has been one of the most rewarding periods of my life.

I am sure that you will enjoy this edition of the Journal – and might even consider lending it to a friend who may wish to join us? I do hope so.

John Hutchison
Chairman, John Muir Trust

(Clockwise from below): cotton grass at Fylingdales Moor, North York Moors National Park; adder, Glenlude; Wild Kingdom bus, Romania; enjoying a Muir moment at a Carlisle nature reserve

PHOTOGRAPH: NORTH YORK MOORS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

PHOTOGRAPH: RHONA ANDERSON

PHOTOGRAPH: WATCHTREE NATURE RESERVE

PHOTOGRAPH: EUROPEAN NATURE TRUST

Stronelairg – the background to our challenge

By now, you may already know that the Trust has initiated a Judicial Review challenging the Scottish Government's approval of the proposed Stronelairg wind farm in the Monadhliath Mountains. Although the decision by Ministers is incredibly disappointing, we've seen wind farms consented in sensitive landscapes before. So what is different about this development and this decision? Here, we set out nine reasons why the Trust is taking legal action against the Scottish Government on Stronelairg:

1) Not only is Stronelairg the largest wind farm approved to date in the Scottish Highlands, it is also located in an area of wild land. There are larger wind farms in Scotland – Whitelee and Clyde, for instance – but this proposed development of 67 turbines (mostly 135m high, the same height as the London Eye) is to be located in a highly sensitive mountain landscape. This is arguably the wildest place in the UK where an industrial wind development has been approved. It covers an area with the same footprint as Inverness.

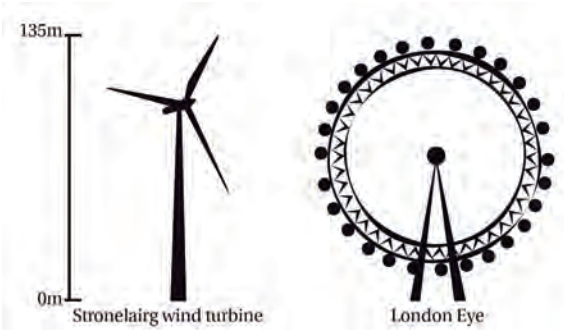
2) The proposed development is acknowledged in the Scottish Government's decision letter as creating "some significant landscape impacts" and will "have a significant impact on the wildness qualities" of the Monadhliath Search Area for Wild Land (the relevant wild land consideration under the planning policy relevant at the time of the decision).

3) The Monadhliath Mountains support one of Europe's most extensive tracts of upland blanket bog. The developer, a subsidiary company of Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE), acknowledges that the site consists of over 70 per cent wet blanket peat bog – Scotland's miniature version of the rainforest which locks in up to 20 times as much carbon per acre as the average British woodland. More than one third of this bog is unmodified – in other words in near pristine condition – with the rest capable of being restored.

4) This area was in Scottish Natural Heritage's (SNH) draft Wild Land Areas map when Ministers granted consent to the Stronelairg development on 6 June 2014, but was then excluded a few weeks later when the Wild Land Areas map was released. We have established through a Freedom of Information request that Stronelairg was subsequently removed from the map as a direct consequence of the decision to consent the proposal.

5) The United Nations Aarhus Convention and European environmental law require that there is proper public participation in planning applications that have the potential to cause impact on the environment. In this case, that has not been applied.

6) Despite a robust objection by SNH on wild land grounds, the Scottish Government did not call a Public Local Inquiry (PLI). Until the Scottish Government's 2012 decision to consent to the Viking wind farm without a PLI – another huge development involving SSE – it had been standard practice that a substantive objection from a statutory consultee would trigger a PLI so that the application could be properly scrutinised.



7) The Government's decision letter consenting Stronelairg acknowledged the environmental damage that would be caused, but claimed – without substantiation – that benefits from carbon emissions reduction and electricity production by such a large scheme would offset that loss. If this premise were accepted there would potentially be no wild land left in Scotland, as all that is needed to displace wild land is a sufficiently large wind farm development which boasts sizeable carbon target contributions.

8) We have already received heartening support from many of our members, supporters and other organisations such as Mountaineering Council of Scotland, Ramblers Scotland and the Scottish Wild Land Group. As one of our supporters said: "If we let this one – at the heart of wild land – go through, what chance for Allt Duine, Glencassley, Sallachy, Strathy Wood, Limekiln?" These industrial-scale developments, which would seriously diminish wild land, are all currently in the planning process. The logical end-point would be the loss of most of Scotland's wild land.

9) The Trust has not embarked on this legal action lightly. However, the Trust is of the view that there is too much at stake in terms of wild land protection both at Stronelairg and throughout Scotland to allow this decision to pass unchallenged. If we win the case, we can fight to return Stronelairg to its place as a recognised wild land area in SNH's map. So the Trust is fighting for our core principles – to ensure that generations to come can enjoy the wildness of this precious mountain environment.

Stop Stronelairg

Please help us mount a legal challenge against the Scottish Government's decision to approve the biggest wind farm ever to be built in the Highlands without a Public Local Inquiry.

Donate and help protect our wildest landscapes before they are lost forever:

- **Online, www.jmt.org/stronelairg.asp**
- **By phone, 0131 554 0114**
- **By post, John Muir Trust, Tower House, Station Road, Pitlochry PH16 5AN**

Thank you!

A hill track behind the Ledgowan Lodge Hotel that passes through the Achnasheen Terraces SSSI

Progress on hill tracks but more action needed says campaign group

The Scottish Minister for Local Government and Planning has announced a prior notification and approval process for hill track construction.

Scottish Environment LINK (of which the Trust is a member) has been campaigning for many years to persuade the Scottish Government to bring hill tracks under control and enable proper public scrutiny of any future tracks. It responded: "We are pleased that the Minister has listened to our concerns and we recognise that this new process is a step in the right direction."

However, the campaign group remains concerned about implementation and enforcement and believes that, while the move represents welcome progress, more action is still needed.

AGM & Members' Gathering 2015

The 2015 John Muir Trust AGM & Members' Gathering will be held in Caernarfon, North Wales from 15-16 May. Full details and a booking form will be included in the January edition of Members' News. If planning to attend, you are advised to book accommodation in the area as soon as possible.

Victories and challenges in fight for future of wild land

Planning consent for two large wind farms in the Highlands has been refused because of potential impact on wild land.

Following the Trust and others making a strong case at the Public Local Inquiry (PLI) into the 34-turbine Glenmorie wind farm in the Highlands, the Scottish Government refused planning consent due to unacceptable landscape and visual impacts, including on wild land.

The Wild Land Areas 2014 map of Scotland (published in June by Scottish Natural Heritage and supported by the Scottish Government) was a significant factor in the planning decision for the CarnGorm development.The Highland Council has refused permission to build this 14-turbine wind farm, stating that the development "would be detrimental to Wild Land Area 29 – Rhiddoroch-BeinnDearg-Ben Wyvis".

However, further large-scale developments such as Talladh-a-Bheithe, Limekiln, Allt Duine, Glencassley and Sallachy continue to threaten wild land.

The Trust has launched a robust defence of wild land, along with many others, in objecting to the proposed Talladh-a-Bheithe 24-turbine wind farm on the edge of Rannoch Moor. This proposed development lies entirely within one of the new Wild Land Areas and is a major challenge to the new planning policy.

The Trust has been supported in its work by the Wildland Research Institute which has graphically mapped the visual impact of current wind farm development in Scotland and how this would be exacerbated if the Talladh-a-Bheithe development goes ahead.

The Trust also worked with others to raise awareness of and encourage strong discussion about this development in a Members' Debate to be held in the Scottish Parliament at the end of September.

We have also given evidence on wild land at the PLI into Limekiln, a 24-turbine wind farm proposed near Reay in Caithness. This was the first PLI to include a specific session on wild land and the Trust is hopeful that the Reporter will advise that the development be rejected because approval would undermine the integrity of the Wild Land Areas map.

Decisions on Allt Duine, Glencassley and Sallachy are still awaited.

Keep an eye on our website and sign up to our monthly eNewsletter for updates **www.jmt.org**

PHOTOGRAPH: SSE

Construction of the Stronelairg wind farm would have a profound impact on a key area of wild land

Scientific finds on Nevis

A team of scientists and mountaineers have made several exciting new discoveries on Ben Nevis, the highest mountain in the British Isles.

Specially trained mountaineers will now carry out extensive and logistically challenging surveys over the next three years. Lead survey geologist Roddy Muir, of Midland Valley Exploration, said they will use the emerging data in structural modelling software to bring greater understanding of the processes which formed and changed the mountain.

Abseiling the sheer rock faces which descend from the whaleback summit plateau has already resulted in some important and unexpected geological discoveries. Breccias, formed by explosive eruptions, have been located at significantly higher altitudes than existing geological maps show. The team has also been able to measure the original orientation of the ancient lavas where these rocks flowed out of the volcanic fissure.

Similarly, the mountaineers have been able to identify new locations for nationally rare and scarce plant species. Many new populations of high priority species such as highland saxifrage, tufted saxifrage and wavy meadow grass have been recorded.

"The survey has exceeded all our expectations," commented Cathy Mayne from Scottish Natural Heritage. "Not only have we gathered potentially ground-breaking geological data and significantly added to the known populations of arctic-alpine species, the team has also discovered alpine saxifrage, which has never been found on the mountain before. Who knows what else we might uncover over the next few years?"

Climbers and botanists will continue to conduct their detailed roped access survey of the north face of Ben Nevis

Path work on Schiehallion

PHOTOGRAPH: LIZ AUTY

Green light for repairs following path appeal

Following an enthusiastic response to our Wild Ways path appeal, specialist contractors are starting work on a number of paths on Trust properties this autumn, including major repair work on Bla Bheinn in Skye.

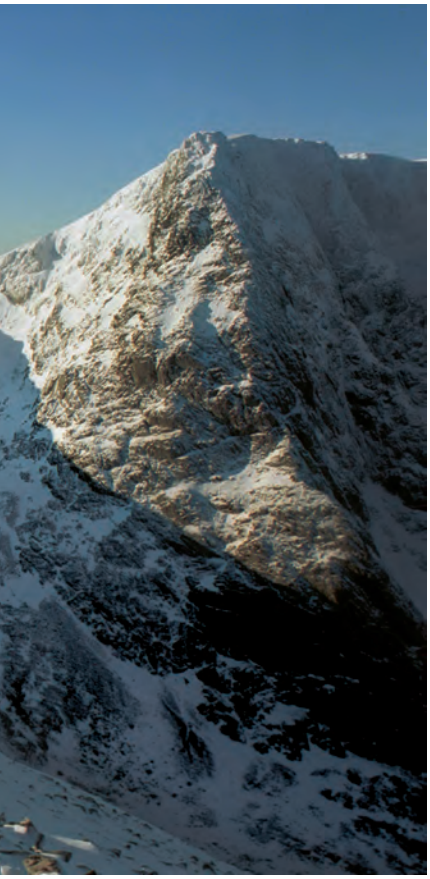
Relatively minor repair work has already started on the main Ben Nevis path, where additional drainage features are being put in around corners one to three to consolidate one of the busiest upland paths in Britain. Elsewhere, further preventative work is also underway on the Schiehallion path.

The contractor will then turn its attention to tackling the Bla Bheinn path between October and Christmas, with the focus on fixing a 300-metre section that has become badly gullied and is now up to seven metres wide in places .

Our path work – costing £60,000 per year – is funded entirely from donations. A monthly direct debit is the most valuable way to help, but we welcome any support you can provide.

Find out more and donate at **www.jmt.org/wildways.asp**

We would also like to say a sincere thank you to all those who have kindly contributed so far.



News in brief

• The Historic Scotland Commemorative plaque scheme is to honour John Muir, alongside Scottish pioneering mountaineers WH Murray, Sir Hugh Munro and Alexander Kellas. The plaque will be erected at the John Muir Birthplace Museum in Dunbar.

• Almost 50 years after his first ascent, Sir Chris Bonington has summited the Old Man of Hoy, aged 80. Sir Chris recently lost his wife, Wendy, to motor neurone disease (MND) and hopes to raise awareness and funds for MND charities in her memory.

• The Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority has launched its new biodiversity strategy by turning a 150-page action plan into an easy-to-read book. Tales from our Wild Park is a collection of stories covering the wildlife and habitat found within the park. **www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/wildpark**

Further education sign-up of Award

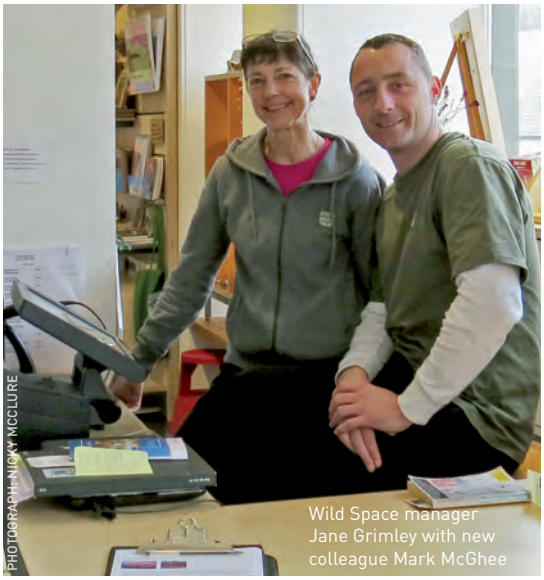
Trust figures highlight that 75% of Scotland's further education colleges now deliver the John Muir Award – a hugely welcome development that enables an increasingly diverse range of participants, including adult learners, to achieve Awards.

During the academic year 2013-14, more than 500 college students in Scotland achieved a John Muir Award, delivered through 46 unique college courses.

The Trust works closely with the

PHOTOGRAPH: POLISHED PROJECT

College Development Network to support college staff to engage with the Award. Aileen Duffy from the Network commented that colleges are keen to get involved because "they can see how the Award can complement their curriculum by providing students with the opportunity to develop employability skills, while recognising wider achievement".



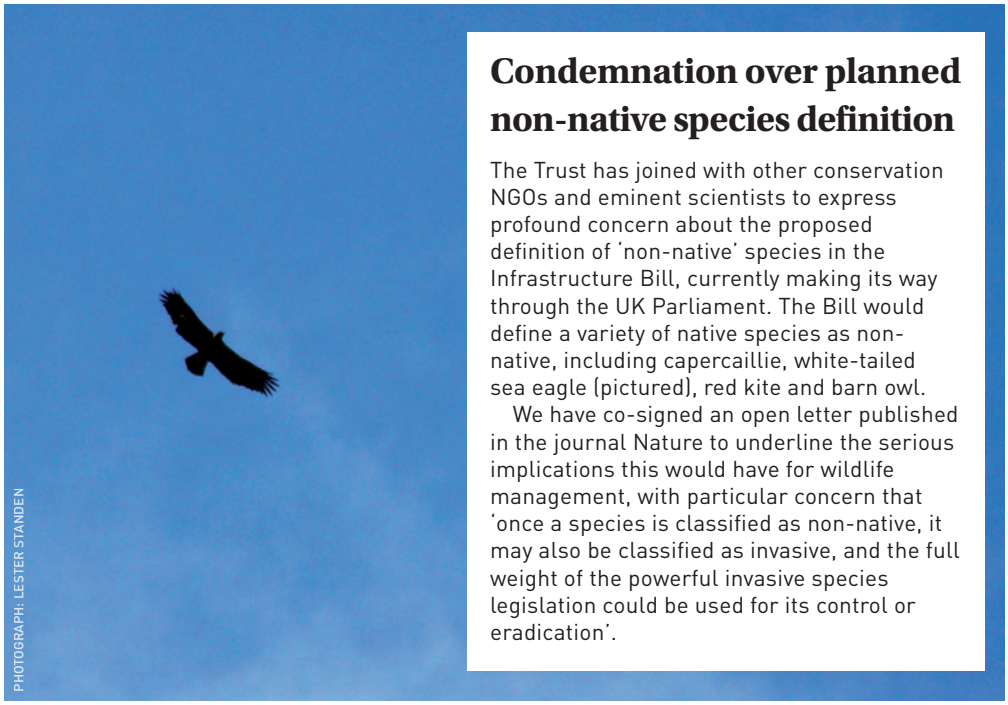
PHOTOGRAPH: NICKY MCCLURE

Wild Space manager Jane Grimley with new colleague Mark McGhee

Wild Space visitor numbers continue to increase

This year's summer brought sunshine in June and July, rain in August and more people than ever through the front door of our Wild Space visitor centre in Pitlochry. Visitor numbers were up almost 10% on the same period last year which was reflected in an increase in income, donations and new members – including two life members.

Wild Space Manager Jane Grimley was particularly pleased that the gallery's wild land art exhibitions – ranging from photography to mixed media collages and traditional paintings – all sold well. The high standard continues when the Wild Space's autumn/winter programme begins in mid-October with Scotland-based photographer Iain Stewart's collection of sky and seascapes, entitled Vesper.



PHOTOGRAPH: LESTER STANDEN

Condemnation over planned non-native species definition

The Trust has joined with other conservation NGOs and eminent scientists to express profound concern about the proposed definition of 'non-native' species in the Infrastructure Bill, currently making its way through the UK Parliament. The Bill would define a variety of native species as non-native, including capercaillie, white-tailed sea eagle (pictured), red kite and barn owl.

We have co-signed an open letter published in the journal Nature to underline the serious implications this would have for wildlife management, with particular concern that 'once a species is classified as non-native, it may also be classified as invasive, and the full weight of the powerful invasive species legislation could be used for its control or eradication'.

Wild at heart

From the Scottish Borders to the far north-west Highlands, the Trust cares for some very special areas of land. Here, we take a tour of our properties to highlight not just the outstanding wild places that we have the privilege of looking after, but also the sheer breadth of activity undertaken. One thing's for sure: life at each site is rarely dull

PHOTOGRAPH: STEPHEN BALLARD

PHOTOGRAPH: FRAN LOCKHART

PHOTOGRAPH: SANDY MAXWELL

LI AND COIRE DHORRCAIL, KNOYDART

Increasingly regarded as the Trust's flagship property, Li and Coire Dhorrcail provides a clear demonstration of what can be achieved with the benefit of time. After 27 years of Trust ownership, it is a place that continues to make good progress ecologically, while also delivering local economic benefit.

Native Scots pine trees planted in the early 1990s near Inbhir Dhorrcail are now maturing and producing increasing amounts of seed. Last year, the stand was registered on the national database as a seed source for native Scots pine, which enables the Trust to market seed for use in native pine planting schemes locally. "This year alone the Trust collected enough seed to produce up to 100,000 seedlings," explains property manager, Lester Standen.

It's now four years since the Trust began removing fencing from the upper side of this woodland; as a result, natural regeneration on the open area beyond is beginning to merge with the 'hard-edged' woodland, and a more natural aspect is developing. Recently, there has been an increase in the number of tree species regenerating; oak and cherry saplings have been noted in addition to the more rapidly spreading birch, while voles – often seen as a pest due to their seedling eating habits – are facilitating the rapid spread of hazel, from bushes in the gorge to the hillsides. Many of the nuts they carry to their nests are lost en-route and then germinate.

With deer numbers remaining high in Knoydart in recent years, the Trust has increased culling – a move that brings the added benefits of local employment and venison production, in addition to reducing habitat impact. Woodland and heathland regeneration continue to show improvements linked to reduced deer impact, with the average height of heath plants increasing significantly since culling began in 2008.

"Browsing to lead shoots on tree seedlings has dropped from 85% in 2010 to 36% in 2014, allowing a slow but steady increase in seedling height," reports Lester. "This year, 500 Scots pine seedlings were experimentally planted, unprotected by fencing. Their development is being monitored and it is hoped that they will survive with the reduced browsing levels."

→ continued

PHOTOGRAPH: KEITH BRAME

PHOTOGRAPH: SUSAN WRIGHT

PHOTOGRAPH: IAIN BROWNLIE ROY

PHOTOGRAPH: KEITH BRAME

Around the properties (clockwise from top left): woodland regeneration, Knoydart; rowan sapling, Nevis; plantation around the ruins of a cleared village at Keppoch, Strathaird; Schiehallion; Sandwood Bay and Am Buachaille; black grouse; a visit to Glenlude; small pearl-bordered fritillaries, Quinag

PHOTOGRAPH: LESTER STANDEN

PHOTOGRAPH: SANDY MAXWELL

Coming together (clockwise from above): Regenerating birch integrating with once fenced woodland, Inbhir Dhorrcail; the new polytunnel at Glenlude; fun and games on Schiehallion; violets are one of many wild flowers that grow on the slopes of Schiehallion; Beinn Dearg Mhor, Skye

Meanwhile, a gradual process of fence removal continues, but with some areas remaining fenced for the longer term. Some fenced areas have not regenerated as well as originally anticipated with ungrazed heather and grasses becoming unnaturally rank. More effort is now being directed toward these areas, to encourage seedling establishment, before they are opened up.

In another experiment, birch seed has been sown directly into areas of heathland beyond the range of seed spread from parent trees. Again the success of this will be monitored, says Lester. "In future, we plan to revitalise our planting programme utilising some of the better ground to ensure maximum success. This work will not only increase the need for volunteers but also generate more local employment."

GLENLUDE, SCOTTISH BORDERS

At just under 150ha, Glenlude may be the Trust's smallest property, but it nonetheless manages to punch well above its weight. A combination of easy access from the Central Belt and the north of England, good facilities, plus the sheer amount of work that needs doing, has seen Glenlude become the Trust's prime volunteer and engagement resource.

Since taking on its management in 2012, the Trust has continued the work begun by previous owner Sheila Bell – that of 'wilding' this small pocket of land on the edge of the Southern Uplands. And with much of the hill ground having been either grazed by sheep in the past or, as it is now, cloaked in Sitka spruce and hybrid larch, there is plenty to do.

But despite the impact of forestry and past agriculture, the estate has a surprising mix of habitat, from open grassland around the summit of Glenlude hill to riparian areas along the banks of burns. Black grouse are present in small numbers, while other wildlife sighted include otter, pine marten, water vole, adder and a wide range of invertebrates.

This summer, the Forestry Commission approved the Trust's 25-year forest plan, giving the green light to proceed with the removal of planted conifers and transform Glenlude into native woodland using trees grown on site.

And volunteers will be key to making this happen – with Glenlude fortunate to have a particularly loyal core of regulars who like nothing better than rolling their sleeves up and getting stuck in. "There's a core group of Trust members who come again and again and they can really see the progress being made," says Sandy Maxwell, conservation manager for Glenlude.

Having already built a shelter, tool store and composting toilet, volunteers recently completed the construction of a large polytunnel as part of a tree nursery at Glenlude. The focus now is on collecting local seeds and developing propagating know-how. "It will take time, but growing our own seed source is much more satisfying than buying in trees and planting them," says Sandy.

As well as volunteering, Glenlude is a hotbed of educational activity, with many groups carrying out John Muir Award activity on site. In addition to visits by schools, social inclusion plays a significant role, with groups such as Phoenix Futures (addict rehabilitation) and Galashiels Works (part of a national employability charity) regularly bringing groups to work at Glenlude .

And it could be that the effort to transform the landscape at Glenlude is receiving help from another rather unexpected source. It's been noticed that acorns planted in the tree nursery last autumn have been stolen, with seedlings now growing hundreds of metres away, despite there being no other seed source. The culprits are thought to be red squirrels, with evidence of the animals found on feeding stations set up as part of the Trust's involvement in Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels' regular spring surveys.

SCHIEHALLION, PERTHSHIRE

Taking charge of an iconic Highland peak must be something of a daunting task, but it's one that Liz Auty has relished over the past year. The Trust's long-term biodiversity officer, Liz was appointed property manager for Schiehallion in February and has spent much of the year getting better acquainted with her new charge.

"This is the first time that I've had my own 'patch' and I've enjoyed getting to Schiehallion pretty much on a weekly basis," explains Liz. "You see so much


PHOTOGRAPH: LIZ AUTY


PHOTOGRAPH: LIZ AUTY


PHOTOGRAPH: KEITH BRAME

more when you can have that big picture through the seasons."

For a long time, the 'big picture' on Schiehallion was about footpath restoration, but following realignment of the path, the old route to the summit that had become such an ugly scar on the side of this hugely popular Munro is disappearing. Footpath work is an endless task, however, so Schiehallion continues to see plenty of attention, including from regular volunteer work parties. This autumn will also see work by a specialist contractor to consolidate sections of the path to the summit.

With the volunteering and footpath sides so well taken care of by other Trust staff, Liz's time has been freed up for tasks close to her heart – ecological monitoring. As with elsewhere in Highland Perthshire, black grouse are doing well in the area with a large lek on the neighbouring Dun Coillich side of the mountain, which is owned by a community trust. "In April, I camped close to the lek and woke to the sound of warbling grouse," recalls Liz. "There were around 30 birds showing there this year."

Mountain ringlet butterflies are another species that continue to do well, while it seems that water voles have made a welcome return. Volunteers have spotted a network of holes, runs and latrines in the meadow area by the car park. "I've now got a trail camera which I'll set up and hope to get some footage," says Liz.

But one of the biggest joys has been the opportunity for a more seasonal overview of the many wild flowers that appear over the spring and summer months. It's a colourful calendar that begins with the arrival of plants such as wood anemone followed by mountain pansy, yellow mountain saxifrage and then, later, melancholy thistle and the white flowers of grass of parnassus. "Rather than cliffs, we have flushes of limestone here that provide great soils for such plants," comments Liz. "It's because of that you don't have to walk very far to see interesting plants."

It's all part of a wider biodiversity that the Trust would like to make more of, particularly in terms of engaging with the thousands of people who visit Schiehallion each year. "We have a great opportunity to work closely with partners at Dun Coillich, the neighbouring private estate Kynachan and others," explains Liz. "We'd certainly be keen to develop more guided walks, if possible."

For now, however, one priority is to help safeguard embryonic areas of native woodland from the attentions of sheep and deer. A key task this winter will be to create further brash hedges to reduce grazing pressure from sheep coming in from the neighbouring side of the hill. "It's a great job for volunteers," says Liz.

SCONSER, STRATHAIRD AND TORRIN, ISLE OF SKYE

Stretching from the Cuillin Hills to Broadford, the Trust's three adjoining estates in southern Skye between them constitute roughly half of the Trust's entire land ownership. An area of wild land on a grand scale, with jagged hills that rise straight from the sea, patches of native woodland, important areas of peatland and a rich crofting tradition, there are few landscapes like it anywhere in the world.

Such is the scale that forward progress on projects can be hard won, but much is still achieved each year, from ecological monitoring to beach clean-ups, path maintenance and habitat improvement – not least at Strathaird where dense blocks of conifer plantation are gradually being transformed into native broadleaf woodland.

The Trust hopes to step deeper into woodland management with the imminent approval by the Forestry Commission of a forest plan for a stretch of mature conifer woodland that runs along the east coast of the Strathaird peninsula. The plan foresees a phased process of harvesting, replanting and low-impact silvicultural operations that will generate supplies of woodfuel, improve the structure and diversity of the woodland and enhance the landscape character, cultural heritage and habitat mix in the area.

This work includes the realignment of an area of woodland that was planted over the old cleared village of Keppoch – an

→ continued

archaeological site of local interest and importance – so that it is more easily accessible to the public.

Other work includes continuing to improve the ecological and agricultural condition of Strathaird farm. "This year we've planted a wildflower bank and shelterbelts, and repaired and replaced some fences," explains property manager Ally Macaskill. "Alongside this, local crofters have helped by grazing stock in the parks and cropping hay and silage from the fields."

Meanwhile, following a fantastic response to the Trust's Wild Ways path appeal, vital repair work will soon begin on the heavily-eroded footpath up Bla Bheinn, one of the most heavily-visited of the Cuillin hills. From October to Christmas, a specialist contractor will work to repair a 300-metre-long section of path that has become badly gullied. As with similar work elsewhere, the aim will be to naturalise the repairs so that the path blends back into the surrounding landscape as much as possible.

SANDWOOD, SUTHERLAND

Just a few miles from Cape Wrath in the far north-west Highlands, Sandwood Estate is a land of sweeping moorland, fragile machair, extensive dune systems and dramatic coastal scenery. At its heart is breathtaking Sandwood Bay, a sweeping stretch of almost impossibly picturesque beach guarded at its southern end by the landmark sea stack, Am Buachaille.

Mostly under crofting tenure, the area is managed largely by crofters who use the open moorland as common grazing for sheep and cattle. But there is still much for the Trust to do, including regular beach cleans and maintenance of the four-mile path that runs from Blairmore to Sandwood Bay.

Strong currents and an exposed coastline ensure that many an item can be washed up here, including some surprises. In spring, conservation officer Don O'Driscoll discovered a Cuvier's beaked whale – quite a rarity in Scottish waters – on the sands at Sandwood Bay, while previous findings have included a baby minke whale and even a killer whale some years ago.

Although Sandwood Bay itself is usually relatively unaffected, the wider coastline also often sees accumulations of marine waste. This year a party of Venture Scouts was one of the many groups that helped with beach cleans, while a particularly well-subscribed work party in May split themselves into two groups, with one gathering litter from five beaches in the area while the other concentrated on extensive path repairs on a section of track above Loch Meadhonach. Ditches were extended, anchor bars added and ten metres of track resurfaced, raising it above the ditch level. It was a prodigious effort.

Home to a wide range of species, from mountain hare to specialist plants, the peatlands of Sandwood are among the most important habitats in north-west Scotland. Sadly, however, the closely-monitored seabird populations that nest on the sea cliffs are not doing so well (see sidebar, p16).

There are deer here too, although control is less of an issue than on other Trust land. "Although much of the land around Sandwood Bay is unsuitable for most species of trees, there are remnants of woodland clinging to the steep-sided slopes where these ancient trees have escaped browsing animals and muirburn," says Fran Lockhart, property manager. "You have to look closely but there are a surprising number of different species."

Some of the deer culled are left on the moorland to be scavenged by the local eagle population – although other species are also attracted to the carcasses. The use of trip cameras has revealed that blue tits are more than happy to take advantage of the rich pickings.

Here, it is rabbits rather than deer that are considered more of a problem, with Don shooting upwards of 600 a year. "The browsing and burrowing of rabbits leave the sand dunes and machair vulnerable to blow out," explains Fran.

It's just one more slice of life in a landscape that continues to bewitch visitors, causing many to return time and time again.

NEVIS, LOCHABER

Land ownership doesn't come much higher profile than Britain's loftiest peak, with the Trust's Ben Nevis Estate seeing

Estate of mind (clockwise from far left): Sandwood ruins from the main track; picture perfect beach at Sandwood Bay; footpath work high on Ben Nevis

more visitors – roughly 200,000 – than all its other properties put together. It's Scotland's ultimate mountain honey pot, with the sheer amount of footfall bringing both challenges and opportunity.

With Ben Nevis such a magnet for walkers, including high-volume charity events, litter picking and path repairs are usually near the top of the agenda – although the experience of one work party this year suggests that litter is perhaps becoming less of a problem. "The amount of litter was pretty low and chatting to three local guides their view was also that there was less than normal due to guides taking litter down with them each time out," reports Nevis conservation officer, Sarah Lewis.

Footpath maintenance this year has concentrated on repairing sections of path close to the summit as well as tidying up the summit itself. And with the Nevis Landscape Partnership, a Heritage Lottery funded initiative to manage and conserve Ben Nevis and wider Glen Nevis, recently securing nearly £4 million in funding, future projects already earmarked include much-needed restoration of the lower half of the main path to the summit.

Partnership working on Nevis is key with the mountain such a prominent feature for visitors and the businesses in Fort William plus wider Lochaber that rely on them. Whether it's the Fort William Mountain Festival, the annual hill race, or repairs to the highest trig point in Britain, there is never a quiet moment for the Trust team on the Ben.

But although that's where the bulk of visitors head, it's not just about the summit of Ben Nevis; Trust land extends down to and along the Water of Nevis as it roars its way through the Steall Gorge – a wonderfully wild cleft that is cloaked in dense native woodland and remnant Caledonian pine forest.

Accessed from the car park in upper Glen Nevis, the gorge is a gateway to lovely Steall meadow, where a wire bridge crosses the Water of Nevis, enabling walkers to head deep into the Mamores beneath the shadow of An Steall Bàn, Britain's second highest waterfall.

Annual monitoring of the woodland, bog and heath habitats here show signs of ecological improvement as deer numbers are reduced. More recently, monitoring has gone high tech with remote automatic bat detectors and cameras tracking nocturnal wildlife. By recording their calls, the bat detector has confirmed that both species of pipistrelle bat (common and soprano) spend their summer in Steall Gorge, while wildlife cameras have photographed foxes – and will be used over the winter in the hope of recording pine martens and the elusive Scottish wildcat.

QUINAG, SUTHERLAND

"I think Quinag is probably my favourite place in the world," says property manager, Fran Lockhart. And it's easy to see why. A Y-shaped range of hills rather than a single mountain, Quinag's craggy skyline presides over a dramatic landscape of loch and moor, scattered woodland and sheltered corries.

Although they may look uniform from a distance, up close the moorland, grassy slopes and peat bogs are home to a fascinating array of heathers, sundews, liverworts, mosses and lower plants – species that prosper in such nutrient-poor soils. Such ground cover in turn provides a home for ring ouzel, adder, water vole, ptarmigan, slow worm and more, while wild salmon and Arctic char inhabit the depths of Loch Assynt.

Quinag forms part of the Coigach and Assynt Living Landscape (CALL) project, one of the largest and most ambitious initiatives of its kind in Europe. Working with neighbouring land managers, the Trust included, and local people, CALL aims to restore the health of the wider ecosystem by improving and reconnecting habitats – especially native woodland – in such a way that it helps create valuable rural employment and volunteering opportunities.

Woodland has been a particular focus for the Trust at Quinag for some time now, with much-publicised discussions about the best way forward for the scattered Ardvar Woodland – a designated site that is struggling badly due to overgrazing by high numbers of deer.

It's a similar story elsewhere on the estate, says Fran. "There is woodland on

→ continued

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID LINTERN

'We have lots of quite old trees that are less than a foot high'

PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS GOODMAN

PHOTOGRAPH: JAMES BROWNHILL

Wild world (clockwise from left): the wire bridge at Steall meadow; filming at Quinag for the Trust's Wild Ways footpath appeal; completed path at Quinag

the south side of Quinag but again we are talking lots of individual trees but no real canopy. Seedlings are produced but they get grazed out by deer."

Trust staff tag individual seedlings to monitor year on year growth, although the signs are not promising. "We go up every year and might get some seedlings that have grown 2cms, whereas 20cms would be more normal," explains Fran. "We have lots of quite old trees that are less than a foot high."

More positive was the first of two annual work party visits to Quinag in June, with volunteers working together with other partners in the CALL project. The visit began with maintenance work on the path at Quinag, while some 600m of old fencing was dismantled near the southern end of Loch Airigh na Beinne. In what proved to be a productive few days, participants also worked with staff from the Assynt Foundation to carry out repairs on the Suilven track – which included stone breaking and harvesting from nearby rivers – plus a day spent at the Scottish Wildlife Trust's CALL tree nursery.

Earlier in the year, Trust footpath officer Chris Goodman oversaw final repairs on a 600-metre section of the Quinag path just below the main bealach that had started to braid quite badly. "The work involved putting in drainage features to protect the path from surface run-off as well as steps where the gradient steepened," explains Chris.

"Our main aim was to protect the landscape, views and enjoyment of the walk without over engineering the path and detracting from the sense of adventure that you get up there."

Land health check

Biodiversity monitoring is a key part of the management of Trust properties. It provides an indication of the health of the land as well as collecting valuable data for wider programmes.

Annually across the properties, Trust staff, contractors and volunteers monitor 'indicator habitats', such as woodland, to see if our deer management is sufficient to kick-start natural regeneration. We also monitor the condition of protected habitats to meet national and international obligations, while annual monitoring of individual species gives an indication of the overall state of the land, as well as contributing to national monitoring schemes.

In many cases, habitats respond slowly as growth conditions on our wildest land can be harsh and centuries of burning and overgrazing take a long time to repair. There are some encouraging signs, particularly from Glen Nevis and Li and Coire Dhorrcail where marked seedlings are beginning to show positive growth as browsing by deer reduces.

Overall, the protected habitats on Trust properties are in good heart, too. Approximately 56% of Trust land is designated as a site of national (SSSI) or international (SPA, SAC) importance for its habitats and species. On this land there are 76 designated features (i.e. individual species, habitats, or assemblages), of which 84% are in favourable or recovering condition, while the remaining 16% are either features for which there is no management remedy (such as climatic factors), or where a partnership approach over a wider area covered by the feature is needed, with work continuing to achieve this.

Species monitoring tends to focus on rare or declining species. Over recent years, the Trust has monitored populations of water voles, black grouse and mountain ringlet butterflies on its properties. Other, perhaps less glamorous, species such as fulmars at Sandwood provide a barometer of food supplies at sea. The data from Sandwood charts an alarming decline in fulmar numbers which is mirrored in the national picture and is attributed in part to a reduction in fish offal and discards as catches have declined, as well as warming seas, declines in sand eel numbers and fulmars being caught in long line fishing at sea.

Biodiversity monitoring across Trust properties is an essential element of our land management and as such is embedded in our Wild Land Management Standards. Our monitoring, effectively, provides a window into the wild.

Mike Daniels and Liz Auty

MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT

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National perks

Although no two relationships are the same, the John Muir Trust is proud to have a presence in all 15 of the UK's national parks through the John Muir Award – with scope to work even more closely together in the future, writes **Richard Rowe**

"NATIONAL PARKS are some of the most special landscapes in this country and the John Muir Award is a great way to understand more about them." So says Richard Leafe, chief executive of the Lake District National Park, in the opening frame of a new short film jointly produced with the John Muir Trust.

Created to highlight the many ways that people can experience such special places, the film reflects the value that the UK's busiest national park places on using the Award – and the deep relationship forged with the John Muir Trust in recent years.

Recognising the success of a similar long-term partnership in the Cairngorms, the Lake District National Park turned to the Award for its core outreach and education work in April 2011. It was a move that saw the Trust's Graham Watson work alongside park staff, initially on a three-year contract and now on a renewable one-year extension.

"It just made good sense," explains Richard Leafe. "We felt that the Award was broad-based, provided good value, helped target younger members of the community – including the disadvantaged – and was generally more appropriate for us.

"We've got a particular issue here where people who live in the park see it as something that's for visitors rather than for them, so it's a real priority for us to engage with residents. Thanks to the Award, we are making good inroads on that front."

With more than 70 organisations using the Award scheme for around 2,500 people each year within the park, it's a partnership that has been hugely valuable to both parties, says Graham. "It's always satisfying to see the many ways that Award groups can contribute to park aims," he comments.

Through activities such as planting trees, clearing invasive species, litter picking, working on footpath maintenance alongside initiatives such as Fix the Fells and using the scheme across whole year groups in local schools, the Award both assists with park initiatives and helps bring many of its special qualities to life for participants.

NATURAL FIT

But it's not just about the Lake District. From physical activity to conservation, inclusion to encouraging family involvement, the Award's ethos and aims are similar to many of the UK's national parks; the two are natural allies, with Muir's enduring legacy as the founding father of the national park movement only serving to emphasise the fit.

From the Trust side, there is a clear sell: a well-established


PHOTOGRAPH: ROSIE WATSON

PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN MUIR TRUST

Autumn hues: enjoying Derwent Water in the Lake District (main); pupils from Ardfern Learning Centre celebrate achieving their awards in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park

'Our work with national parks is about sharing expertise and resources as part of an investment in common goals'

environmental engagement scheme that helps national parks deliver on a range of statutory aims in a flexible, cost-effective way that is equally suited to schools, youth and community groups, families, outdoor centres, ranger services and others. In turn, the Trust benefits from increased activity and presence throughout the UK, with a golden opportunity to engage with a vast array of people from all walks of life.

"National parks are all about getting visitors and residents to explore and enjoy them, and maybe give something back," says Rob Bushby, John Muir Award manager. "Most don't try to do everything on their own – they actively seek partnerships to work towards mutual aims. Our work with all national parks is about sharing expertise and resources as part of an investment in common goals. It's a classic win-win."

Currently, the various relationships with national parks across the UK are as different as the parks themselves; quirks of timing, opportunity, internal structure and budgets mean that they can be broadly split into four tiers: key partners, such as the Lake District and Cairngorms National Parks, that employ staff with a specific focus on Award delivery; those that make a financial contribution to enable more Award activity within them, such as Loch Lomond & the Trossachs; others that include it within the roles of their existing staff (South Downs); and those that support local providers, but mainly serve as the wild place in which Award activity takes place.

The aim now, says Rob, is to forge more partnerships that are in line with the kind of 'embedded' relationships seen with the Lake District and Cairngorms National Parks. "That's the direction we'd like to go in, but we have to keep working hard so that parks consider us a worthwhile and cost-effective way of contributing to their own aims and priorities."

LONG-TERM LINKS

Given the length of the partnership – 11 years and counting – it is the Trust's relationship with the Cairngorms National Park that provides the most powerful demonstration of what can be achieved. Today, it's a partnership that has everything: long-term relationships with a wide range of groups (60+ providers, 2,000+ Awards each year) that together raise awareness and understanding of the area's special qualities, while also tapping directly into specific park aims – from conserving the area's natural and cultural heritage to simply encouraging people to step outside and get their hands dirty.

It helps of course that the John Muir Award has been built into the DNA of the park, with a formal partnership in place since its inception in 2003. Unlike the set-up within most national parks, the Cairngorms does not operate a ranger service or directly deliver anything like learning and education – so an external partner was needed.

"Use of the Award for outdoor learning was one of the very first decisions made by the Park Authority," explains Al Smith, the park's outdoor learning officer and man on the ground for the Award. "From the beginning, the Award was seen as a way of engaging a lot of people in many different ways and there was little point trying to create something that already existed."

Key to success in the Cairngorms is that great care is taken to understand what the park is trying to achieve and then demonstrate the value of the Award in relation to those aims. Crucially, it's been proven that having one member of staff in place as a catalyst for making Award activity happen is equivalent to having an education team of three or four people delivering park messages and aims. "At a time when all national parks are seeing budgets squeezed, that offers pretty good value," says Al.

→ continued

PHOTOGRAPH: THE BROADS NATIONAL PARK

Building bridges (clockwise from left): Award activity in Thurlton Fen, the Broads; participants from the Sussex Downs College iProject Outdoor Construction Group; pond dipping at Insh Marshes with the RSPB

Today, huge amounts of Award-related activity take place within the park. One initiative has seen the development of a Junior Rangers programme for 11 to 18-year-olds that helped create young 'ambassadors' for the park. Elsewhere, as part of a school curriculum with outdoor learning at its heart, all first and second year pupils at Grantown Grammar undertake their Discovery and Explorer Awards. It's a priceless example of engagement that sees some 600 children throughout the school learn all about Muir, the park and why it is so special.

PARK PROGRESS

For now, relationships with national parks elsewhere remain very much works in progress – albeit with many significant steps forward. In Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, for instance, Trust staff member Bethan Haston is half way through a two-year post that sees her dedicate one day a week to park-related activity. An initiative designed to integrate the Award within the park's education, outreach and volunteering service, it has already met or far exceeded targets in terms of the number and scope of Awards achieved, plus related training for park staff and local organisations.

"It's been a hugely successful first year, with the Award used widely as a tool for engagement and learning by full-time and volunteer rangers, as well as those working in policy, engagement and conservation," explains Bethan.

Elsewhere, with a greater staff presence in England, the Award team has been able to grasp opportunities for developing long-term relationships that were previously out of reach. From Dartmoor and Exmoor to the Broads, Northumberland and Peak District National Parks, all are embracing the Award in various ways.

Perhaps one of the biggest recent success stories has involved the South Downs National Park, says Andy Naylor, the Award manager for England. Around 18 months ago, the park appointed a new learning officer, with delivery of the Award built into the job description. With the appointee already a fan, the result is a huge enthusiasm for growing Award activity within the park, particularly in terms of involving schools and other education groups.

Meanwhile, use of the Award is now referenced in the park's five-year management plan and incorporated into its Learning Zone website. Participants even receive co-branded Award certificates at the end of their endeavours. "It's often the case that we need 'champions' within parks to help generate momentum and that's exactly what has happened within the South Downs National Park," explains Andy.

Elsewhere, the Award manager in Wales, Phil Stubbington, works closely with all three Welsh national parks – with the relationship with the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park the most advanced of the three. "The park directly delivers the Award with a wide variety of groups and has done particularly well supporting it within a lot of inclusion work across Pembrokeshire," he explains. "It's also moved beyond direct delivery to provide training and supported input for other organisations."

The Brecon Beacons is another that has really begun to advocate Award benefits to park users. "It's been really successful in working with youth rangers, using the Award as part of work experience for people between school and college," adds Phil.

While identical approaches are not always possible, the level of engagement seen in the Lake District and Cairngorms provides a useful point of comparison when approaching others. "They are

important relationships that show parks what works elsewhere and what could work for them," says Andy Naylor.

In the case of the Lake District National Park, chief executive Richard Leafe is very clear about how the Award helps feed into park objectives. "The Award is about engagement and learning, but for us the priority is also to talk about our vision for the national park – our contemporary agenda," he says. "As well as landscape and biodiversity, we've taken the Award into other areas ... creating vibrant communities, affordable housing, transport and involving families in physical activity.

"It's a difficult message to get across, but that's one of the advantages of having a member of the Award team here with us. We recognise that it can be a slow burn but we intend to continue with the Award and strengthen our wider relationship with the John Muir Trust."

It's the kind of collaboration that the Trust hopes to emulate with other national parks as a key part of spreading its wider message about the power, value and importance of our wild places.

Further Info
Watch The John Muir Award and National Parks at **www.jmt.org/jmaward-film.asp**

Learn more about the UK's National Parks at **www.nationalparks.gov.uk**

And for much more on the John Muir Award, visit **www.johnmuiraward.org**

About the author
Richard Rowe is editor of the John Muir Trust Journal. He can be contacted at **journal@jmt.org**

Coming soon ...

The John Muir Award appeal

Stuart Brooks introduces the first ever Award appeal, to be launched in November

Since it was established in 1983, the John Muir Trust has always been about wild places and people. Our nature engagement activity came into sharper focus 20 years ago, as we looked to encourage more people – especially the younger generation – to get involved in conservation work. It came with the realisation that this was an essential key route to protecting wild places – because we value them.

Since then, the Trust has become a leading influence in outdoor learning, supporting nature connections with hard-to-reach audiences, and helping people put something back into the natural world. We've actively interpreted John Muir's ethos and kept it inspiring and relevant for today. To protect wild places, we need people to enjoy and make meaningful connections with them; it's been a core part of our work for more than a decade, primarily through our environmental education scheme, the John Muir Award.

Working in partnership with more than 1,200 diverse organisations across the UK each year, we have seen well over 200,000 people of all ages and from all backgrounds participate in Award activity. It's an inspiring and wide-ranging collaboration that generates in excess of £1million of conservation volunteering each year.

Thanks to the generosity of members and friends, we have a tremendous track record with past appeals for property purchases, land management and specific campaigns. As we consolidate our John Muir Award activity in Scotland and Wales, and build our presence in England (with Heritage Lottery Fund support), this autumn we plan to launch the first ever public appeal for this vital aspect of our work – and strengthen our ability to protect wild places for future generations.

Look out for more information from the end of November, as well as at **www.johnmuirtrust.org**

Woodland ways

A recent exchange visit to Romania to share ideas on woodland management left **Chris Goodman**, the Trust's footpath officer, to reflect on what has been lost at home

PHOTOGRAPH: LEAOTA

IN MAY, I travelled to Romania on a week-long exchange trip organised by the Coigach–Assynt Living Landscape (CALL) project. The aim was to share ideas on land management and self-sufficiency, with a particular emphasis on woodlands and woodland produce. As a director of Culag Community Woodland Trust in Lochinver as well as a part-time green wood worker, I was particularly interested in returning with ideas that could be put into practice within the CALL area.

Our small group visited the Apuseni Mountains in the northwest of Romania, a region of forested hills (part of which is a national park) that rise to around 1,800m. At first glance, an area with a continental climate, rich soils, limestone outcrops, plus extensive beech and oak woodland that grows to a natural tree-line at around 1,400m, appears very different to the north-west Highlands, but as we dug deeper we found some striking similarities.

Much like traditional crofting in parts of Scotland, land ownership in Romania generally involves family-owned smallholdings, typically with small fields and a handful of domestic animals that between them provide the bulk of produce needed for the home.

While there is some state-owned land and a handful of larger areas that are privately owned, Romania is predominantly a rural country of small villages and hamlets. And, as in parts of Scotland, there is a steady movement of young people to the cities with all the associated challenges of maintaining the health and viability of rural communities.

WOODLAND FOCUS

Our visit began with a stop at Girbovitsar, the home village of our guide, Monica. A tour of the family's farmyard and outbuildings immediately revealed how fundamental timber is to daily life here. We could see various stacks of brash, chopped firewood and unprocessed timber all working their way towards the house. While timber is widely used for construction purposes, more than half of all wood used by families each year is burnt – either to heat the home, to cook on, or to fire the bread oven.

In addition to vegetable patches and fields of crops, most families also own a small area of woodland which supplies much of the timber used each year. But before a single tree can be felled, permission must be granted from the state forest department, which sends out a local forester to mark the individual trees that can be felled in a given year – much like obtaining a felling licence in Scotland. The aim, of course, is to ensure sustainable levels of felling and protect this crucial resource from being over exploited.

As a country of producers rather than consumers, most people here possess the equipment and know-how to fell, extract and process timber themselves. It was an

‘Although unfenced, the trees that are felled are replaced through regeneration rather than replanting’

eye opener to see how these traditional skills have been retained, while there was an overall sense that people had a clear understanding of where their produce came from and how to manage the resource so that it would last for future generations.

Interestingly, the landscape we saw was virtually all unfenced with crops growing unprotected, as sheep and cattle are herded to their mountain pastures during the summer months. It was the same with the forests; although unfenced, the trees that are felled are replaced through natural regeneration rather than any replanting. In the woods owned by Monica’s family, we could see a carpet of oak seedlings competing for gaps in the canopy – a stark contrast to the lack of woodland regeneration typically found in overgrazed Scotland.

In addition to setting limits on tree felling, the state forest department also decides on deer and boar numbers – two species that can have a very real impact on woodland regeneration. In rural areas where constructing fences to protect crops would be both time-consuming and hugely expensive, ensuring sustainable numbers of such animals is considered essential for this traditional way of life to continue.

It was explained to us how every region has its own hunting and fishing association and that these organisations, funded by membership fees rather than by the state,

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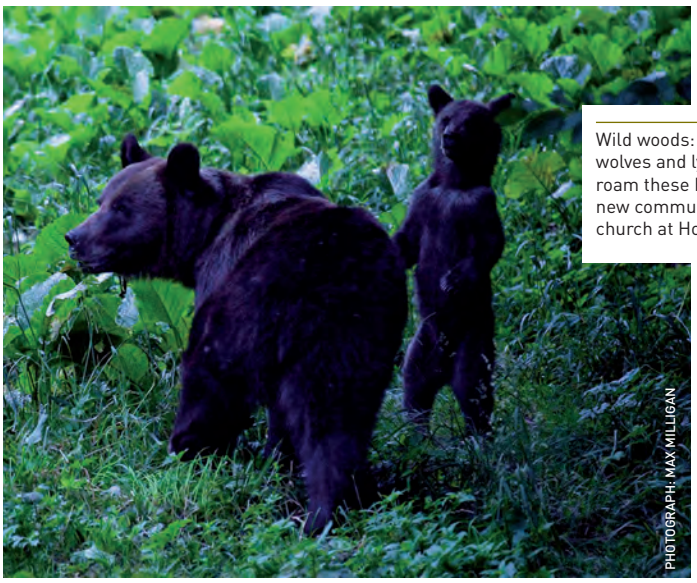
PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS GOODMAN


PHOTOGRAPH: MAX MILLIGAN


PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS GOODMAN

Wild woods: Bears, wolves and lynx all roam these hills; the new community-built church at Horea (right)

are responsible for undertaking counts of game species and maintaining numbers at a sustainable level. The official figure for red deer densities in the region we visited was 0.13 deer/km^2, compared with densities of between 4 and 20/km^2 found in the CALL area.

Perhaps the greatest contrast with Scotland though was not just the density of deer populations, but also public opinion on the issue. While deer management in Scotland is a hugely divisive issue, the impression we got in Romania is that people are largely supportive of such culling – and, if anything, would rather see deer numbers reduced further to protect crops.

Another fundamental difference in policy is that when boar and deer do cause damage to crops or woodland, farmers can apply for compensation from the various hunting and fishing associations. As such, it is the responsibility of the hunting industry in Romania to maintain deer numbers at a level that is consistent with the needs of local communities.

FOREST INDUSTRY

As we travelled higher up in the Apuseni, above 1,400m where Norway spruce grows slowly and is a valuable resource for construction, we were fascinated to discover a thriving forest industry around the village of Horea – a place where 100% of people in the area derive an income from forestry.

Once again our guide for this section of the trip was largely self-sufficient in terms of food, only needing to buy coffee, sugar and cooking oil, he told us. Meanwhile, timber here is felled, milled and extracted by hand, processed in a small-scale sawmill and transported by horse and cart to other parts of the country. Although something of a step back in time, there was a real vibrancy to the community – one that had recently built a new church using its own timber and craftsmen – that we had not seen in other rural areas.

> **'It is the responsibility of the hunting industry to maintain deer numbers at a level that is consistent with the needs of local communities'**

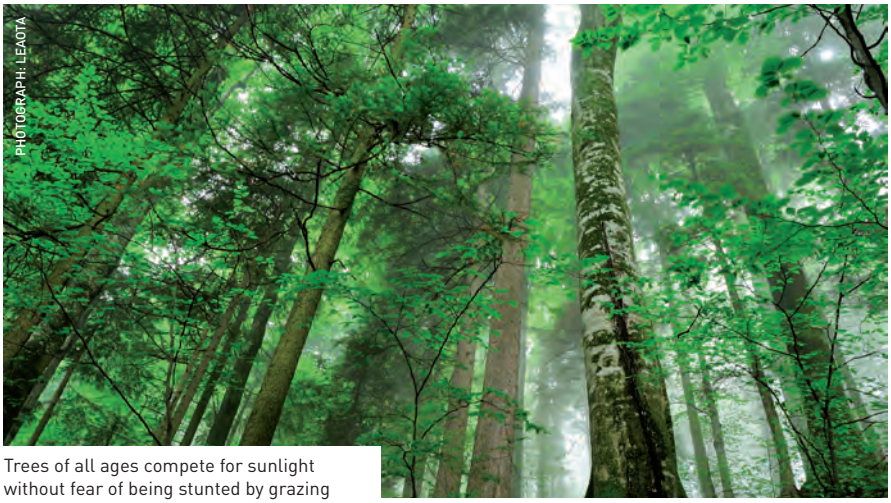
A further highlight of the trip was seeing the many orchards full of apples, pears, cherries and plums – plus sampling some of the resulting preserves and drinks. This included a traditional homemade plum brandy, made from locally-grown fruit and distilled using a still powered by wood fuel. Although homemade plum brandy isn't quite on the agenda just yet, the CALL Partnership is now looking into how orchards could be developed and more of our own fruit produced locally in our corner of the north-west Highlands.

DIFFERENT WORLD

By the end of our visit, it was apparent just how utterly dependent the people of Romania are on woodland – to the point where it was hard to see how rural life in the country could continue without such a resource.

And because Romania has such an expanse of healthy, sustainably-managed woodland, it's full of life too; from the golden oreoles that we heard but unfortunately didn't spot to an abundance of wild flowers and big mammals, including bears, wolves and lynx. All exist in relative abundance, yet we didn't meet one conservationist, ecologist or wildlife enthusiast, and certainly didn't get a sense that local people were particularly interested in wildlife. But such wildlife exists because people depend on healthy woodlands for their day-to-day lives, and have retained the knowledge and tools required to keep them that way.

Sadly, these are values and skills that we have by and large lost and I can't help but wonder if that is one reason why we have so much difficulty in trying to re-establish our native woodlands back home in Scotland.


PHOTOGRAPH: LEAOTA

Trees of all ages compete for sunlight without fear of being stunted by grazing

About the author
Chris Goodman is the Trust's footpath officer. He can be contacted at **chris.goodman@jmt.org**

Safeguarding the wild

Established to help preserve and restore the last remaining wild habitat in Europe, the European Nature Trust is particularly active in Romania's Carpathian Mountains, explains **Emilia Hungerford**

AS WITH MANY such bodies, The European Nature Trust (TENT) foundation has expanded its brief over time. In its formative years, TENT concentrated its energies on restoration and rewilding projects, partly at Alladale Wilderness Reserve in the Scottish Highlands, supported by environmental education programmes and media communications.

However, in 2007, the foundation extended its focus to conservation work in mainland Europe in recognition of the urgent need to protect areas where extensive natural forests and wild landscapes still exist. TENT's projects concentrate on the spectacular Carpathian Mountains in Romania – an area of outstanding natural beauty that supports a wealth of natural diversity, some of Europe's largest populations of brown bear, wolf and lynx and the most extensive remaining tracts of virgin forest.

It is also an area that is increasingly threatened by habitat loss, including heavy logging (much of it illegal), as well as construction of new ski resorts, houses and roads. In response, TENT has partnered with a Romanian conservation charity, Foundation Conservation Carpathia (FCC), run by wildlife biologists Christoph and Barbara Promberger, to work on creating one of Europe's largest protected forest areas, centered on a wilderness reserve covering some 50,000 hectares.

WILDERNESS AWARENESS

In order to achieve long-term success for this initiative, TENT recognised the need to raise awareness of the Carpathians and its spectacular landscapes. As a result, it produced and printed a promotional booklet, Wild Europe: Carpathia, which has played a key role in helping to present the importance of wilderness protection to fundraisers, influencers and other interested parties.

TENT also co-funded Wild Carpathia I, II and III – a documentary film series on Romania's wealth of natural landscapes and cultural richness – designed to raise awareness of the environmental problems facing wilderness areas, highlight their natural beauty, and encourage eco-tourism. The series has been broadcast in over 120 countries and in 12 different languages on Travel Channel and continues to be aired across the world and online, generating well over one million hits on YouTube.

In 2007, the Fagaras Mountains, an important alpine landscape in the Romanian Carpathians (adjacent to FCC's Wilderness Reserve), was designated a Natura 2000 site. However, due to a lack of proper park management, the designation has had no tangible effect on the preservation of these forests, which are still threatened by uncontrolled logging and clear-cutting.

As such, TENT has been involved in seeking to secure the administration of this 200,000-hectare area for FCC, and provided funding for the appointment of a new director and the initiation of an overall management plan. The aim is to develop a model illustrating how protected wilderness areas can provide important benefits (non-extractive) for local communities and landowners through eco-tourism and ecosystem services – a model that could be taken to other wilderness sites across Europe.

MOBILE SCHOOL

Education is another key element of TENT's work. Wild Kingdom, for example, is a mobile school education project – essentially a travelling bus – launched in Bucharest by HRH Prince Charles in Spring 2013. The bus provides children with environmental education, teaching them the value of Romania's incredible landscape.

As in many other countries, environmental education is currently not a standard part of the Romanian school curriculum. In just its first year of operation, the Wild Kingdom bus has visited more than 50 schools and engaged 15,000 children as well as being the focus for other events. Given appropriate funding, it is hoped that a small fleet of such buses can be established.

These are still early days and, looking ahead, TENT intends to have a far greater impact in European wilderness protection – knowing well that much more work is required to help safeguard our continent's wilderness areas before they are lost forever.

About the author
Emilia Hungerford is an associate at The European Nature Trust.
www.theeuropeannaturetrust.com/en

PHOTOGRAPH: LEAOTA

Starting anew

Liz Green's life changed dramatically when she picked up her paint brush again – with her work captivating visitors to the Wild Space gallery this summer, writes **Nicky McClure**

WHEN ILL HEALTH forced plant ecologist and conservationist Liz Green to give up her garden design work four years ago, she returned to an early love – painting. "It's one of the best things that ever happened," she says. "My first large painting in 30 years came out fully formed and it was very liberating – akin to giving birth. Painting is now a passion that has taken over my life."

Inspired by dramatic lighting, patterns, textures, colours and moods, Liz loves the challenge of capturing elemental, dynamic landscapes. She is also fascinated by how everthing fits together to create a pattern that is locally distinctive. "I enjoy working out what the iconic features are and simplifying them, while retaining an identifiable locality," she explains.

As a plant ecologist, Liz is well aware that only a few dynamic areas – such as coastlines, rivers, estuaries and mountain tops – are really 'wild' and in their 'natural' state. However, places where life is sustainable without too much intervention or artifical input provide somewhere to "recharge, feel inspired and energised".

APPROACH WORK

Liz works at home in her studio using acrylic applied using a mixture of brushes, palette knives and fingers, in consistencies ranging from watery to impasto (a particulary thick application of paint). Reference photographs help, but getting the hill outlines and proportions accurate on canvas is still quite a challenge. "There are many folk who know these hills inside out and I fear their scrutiny," admits Liz.

Very little else is marked out in pencil before she starts painting. "I may apply some heavy gesso [a kind of primer] as a textural base for the mountains and rocky, muddy or vegetated foregrounds – perhaps with some grit or sand from the location mixed in to the paint. Towards the end I use a scalpel to scratch back highights and detail, sometimes while the paint is still wet. Being self taught, there are no rules."

However, when it came to creating her exhibition for the Wild Space gallery – In-sight: Horizons that Inspire – Liz set herself some strict parameters. In what was a deliberate decision to break with tradition, most of the paintings are in a square format. "I love the modern, clean symmetry of a square and how pictures can block together on a wall so easily. Squares are like a porthole onto the landscape and force one to distil the essential features into a smaller space. I enjoyed the challenge and design element of framing the compostion in this way."

WILD SPACE

The exhibition at Wild Space is the result of two years work, taking Liz to locations that she would otherwise not have seen. "Each work is a very personal memory of an experience, often shared with my family, so to have them displayed altogether was quite moving."

Despite initial concerns that her work was too disparate in style, Liz was happy that the exhibition worked as a whole. "Together the paintings seemed more than the sum of their parts; there was a cumulative effect where the shapes, colours and textures all complemented one another. The viewing experience was

PHOTOGRAPH: LIZ GREEN

PHOTOGRAPH: NICKY MCCLURE

PHOTOGRAPH: LIZ GREEN

> **'I enjoy working out what the iconic features are and simplifying them, while retaining an identifiable locality'**

one of total immersion which I had not expected."

Liz was also delighted with the Wild Space gallery saying the large windows make it a very public and inviting space that appeals to a wide audience. "Many land management decisions are hidden behind closed doors, so it is refreshing to see an organisation's ethos and vision clearly displayed in public – hopefully a model to others that enables ordinary people to feel less disenfranchised from land ownership and management decisions in Scotland."

Visitors to Wild Space responded enthusiastically to Liz's vibrant acrylic paintings – with many buying her paintings and greetings cards. Likewise, she has come away from the experience with a positive lasting impression: "I learnt a huge amount preparing for the exhibition and each painting sparked more ideas than it laid to rest.

"Following the good feedback I've received, I feel more confident to explore futher and to follow my instincts in interpreting landscape with paint."

Seasonal work

Summer appears strikingly absent in Liz Green's work and it turns out there are both practical and aesthetic reasons for this.

"The dawn light is more readily accessible, the air clear, the weather more often changeable with dramatic lighting, plus a bit of snow makes the hills stand out more," reasons Liz. And there is also a novelty factor, she admits. As a field plant ecologist for many years mapping patterns of vegetation and describing plant communities, the field season ran from May to September, so observing how the landscape changes in other seasons offers something different.

"In autumn and winter I like to visit abandoned settlements both inland and on the coast. At this time of year the bracken has died down and the trees are laid bare, so one can see more clearly the bones of a place. I find it very moving to imagine how families survived in these remote places and am always fascinated to read about the local history of areas that I visit.

"I also like the shelter and security of low-level passes, coastal areas, river walks and woodland in winter. Although competent, I am a slow and cautious winter mountaineer these days and need to be coaxed with patience to get up anything high when there's lots of the white stuff about."

New for 2014: Christmas cards by Liz Green

Further info

Share Liz's passion for wild places – and show your support for our work – by ordering your exclusive Liz Green Christmas cards from us.

Online: www.jmt.org/shop

By phone: 0131 665 1976

The burning issue

Policy makers in England are considering if new measures are necessary to limit burning in the uplands – a hot topic in more senses than one, writes **Stuart Brooks**

THE UPLANDS of England are relatively wild places in our national context. But wild is not necessarily 'natural' and it is perhaps in our uplands where we find this dichotomy most pronounced. A walk in somewhere like the Peak District can at times feel like venturing into an alien landscape, or at least one managed to within a whisker of its true self. Indeed, much of our upland landscape is managed intensively, with fire a significant tool in man's armoury. But is the burning of moorland a damaging practice and what, if anything, should policy makers be doing to mitigate it?

The English uplands are not uniform; their soils, climate and wildlife vary greatly – mostly related to geology and altitude. However, our cool, wet climate has led to peatland formation over much of our upland landscapes. Layers of peat build up over thousands of years from undecomposed plants – typically sphagnum mosses, other lower plants, sedges, heathers and grasses. Latest estimates from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee are that England is home to around 14,000km^2 of peatland, with roughly half of that qualifying as deep peat.

In agricultural terms, peatlands are low grade – places to be 'improved' or converted to productive use such as forestry. Over the last 30 years our understanding of their form and function has helped us better appreciate their role within the ecosystem and even their influence on global climate regulation. We now know that healthy peatlands store carbon as plant material that is locked in beneath high water tables where they don't break down. When we drain and burn peatlands, the carbon that has built up over thousands of years is released into the atmosphere as carbon dioxide; in so doing, a carbon sink becomes a carbon source.

In England, the poor condition of our peatlands means that 350,000 tonnes of CO2 are released into the atmosphere every year – the equivalent of that produced by 140,000 cars annually. To put this into a global context, the International Mire Conservation Group estimates that global emissions from damaged peatlands account for the equivalent of around 10% of all CO2 emissions from fossil fuels.

Carbon management has helped to elevate the status of peatlands, but their role within the upland water catchment is also recognised, notably by the water companies themselves. About 70% of our drinking water comes from upland areas, mostly within peatland catchments. Water companies now invest in landscape-scale conservation initiatives, halting burning and the blocking of ditches, as a cheaper, more effective natural solution to improving water quality. As an alternative to chemical treatments, the spin-off benefits for both wildlife and carbon are significant.

Yet, despite their importance, England's upland peatlands are not in good health at all. In fact, Natural England, the government body responsible for protecting the English countryside, claims that only 4% of the country's peatlands are considered to be in good condition.

MAN-MADE CHANGE

Our uplands have been subject to change for thousands of years, but intensive management associated with sheep grazing and grouse shooting has had a profound influence over the last 200 years. Some of our uplands have also suffered from high levels of atmospheric pollution associated with the industrial revolution (such as nitrogen deposition). So, wild hills and dales, although relatively unpopulated, are none the less heavily influenced by us.

Burning for grouse shooting, in combination with drainage, is practiced largely to manipulate the vegetation, with the aim of creating uneven-aged stands of heather to act as food and shelter for game birds. Other associated management such as the killing of crows, stoats, weasels and foxes has resulted in a much altered state – and on a landscape-scale. And while the industry is quick to denounce illegal persecution of raptors, it is unfortunately still all too common in upland areas.

'Other cases can be made against intensive grouse moor management, but it is the burning issue that is perhaps most pressing'

Other cases can be made against intensive grouse moor management, but it is the burning issue that is perhaps most pressing. Certainly, traditional grouse moor management relies on fire to create the artificial habitat necessary to hold high densities of birds – the now familiar chessboard patches of short heather for feeding, and long heather for cover and nesting. But on upland peatlands at least, there is now a strong argument for calling a halt to burning for reasons of carbon capture, water quality and biodiversity.

Within this debate it is often said that fire is a natural phenomenon and that peatlands have always been burned. It's true, fires do occur naturally on peatlands, but such events are extremely rare. Natural fires start from lightning strikes after hot weather when the vegetation is dry. They also typically only affect the surface, especially when the water table is high (as is the case on undrained peatland).

Studies of the layers of peat show that a natural burning interval on upland peatlands in the UK is between 200 and 300 years. On a typical 'managed' upland, however, the burning cycle tends to be every 15-30 years on individual patches (but annually across the wider area).

It is estimated that where a fire has burnt away all the living sphagnum moss, it takes approximately 50 years for the peatland to recover fully. Although this kind of

→ continued

burning is rarely the intention, fires can get out of control and result in unintended consequences. The worst case scenario is the creation of a bare peat surface, which is then highly prone to erosion and very slow to recolonise with vegetation.

A burning interval of 15-30 years will tend to encourage the growth of heathers, while shorter intervals result in the dominance of tussock forming grasses, such as hare's tail cotton grass and purple moor grass – essentially replacing the mosses, sundews and asphodels usually found on a healthy peatland surface with a much simpler, monotonous sward.

REPAIRING DAMAGE

Projects such as Moors for the Future and the Yorkshire Peat Partnership have demonstrated that restoration is possible and cost effective but requires long-term commitment and funding. Landowners delivering public benefits such as clean water, carbon management and wildlife habitats should be incentivised through public funding support.

The body of scientific evidence now firmly supports the principle that burning on upland peatland, especially deep peat, damages its integrity and function. Natural England and the IUCN UK Peatland Programme have pulled the evidence together to arrive at this consensus view. In areas such as the Peak District, burning on peatland should simply be stopped, and I hope Natural England is minded to bring forward new policies and mechanisms to ensure that happens.

Our understanding of peatlands and the 'ecosystem services' they provide have begun to change the way the uplands of Britain are managed, with the water industry in the vanguard. For decades, many conservation bodies (ourselves included) and some private landowners have managed upland peatlands without resorting to the use of fire. I sincerely hope this 'tradition' is evolving and that the burning of our upland peatlands will soon be consigned to the history books under a chapter headed 'Past follies'.

About the author
Stuart Brooks is chief executive of the John Muir Trust. He can be contacted at **stuart.brooks@jmt.org**


PHOTOGRAPH: NORTH YORK MOORS NATIONAL PARK


PHOTOGRAPH: PATRICK CAMBLIN/2020VISION


PHOTOGRAPH: PETER CAIRNS/2020VISION

Fanning the flames (clockwise from above): the familiar chessboard pattern seen on moorland managed for grouse; burning has long been a tool in man's armoury; the sundew is just one of many plants found in healthy areas of peatland

Microadventures by Alastair Humphreys

Rob Bushby is inspired by a book that reminds us of the power of adventure – even if just for the weekend

Microadventure: a simple expedition and challenge that is close to home, affordable and easy to organise

IF YOU'VE seen or heard Alastair Humphreys or viewed his bountiful blogs you'll know that he's an enthusiast. His mission in Microadventures is to not only share the benefits and enjoyment he derives from adventures and time in the wild but to get as many people as possible out there doing it for themselves.

The USP of his concept is that a microadventure takes place close to home, is cheap, simple and short – yet 'still captures the essence of big adventures, the challenge, the fun, the escapism, the learning experiences and the excitement.'

He sets about convincing us that an Adventurer and a Normal Person aren't mutually exclusive by packaging nearly 40 of his close-to-home anecdotes along with guidance on 'How to have your own Microadventures.' A (young) lifetime of adventuring philosophy and wisdom is compressed within 250 pages of an attractive, quirky tome that brims with inspiration, ideas and insights. These are accessible, transferable, and apply as much (if not more) to urbanites as to rural dwellers.

With the author for company, we journey from source to sea, swim in a river, compare 9 to 5 with 5 to 9, travel coast to coast, cook outdoors, circumnavigate the M25, and bivi out (a lot!). It's idiosyncratic – in a good way – with character radiating from the narrative and imagery.

Besides the content you might expect in the 'How to…' section (fires, maps, stars etc), there's an Anti-Kit List that accompanies the Basic Kit List, and a section on Excuse-Busting. It's a book that can be dipped into or read cover to cover and is supplemented by more than 30 online videos and photo essays.

As 'a refresh button for busy lives', it's the sort of gift that would be well received by couch potato or outdoor enthusiast alike.

Price £16.99,
www.alastairhumphreys.com/books/microadventures

The reviewer
Rob Bushby is the John Muir Award manager at the John Muir Trust. He can be contacted at **rob@johnmuiraward.org**

PHOTOGRAPHY: ALASTAIR HUMPHREYS

Dirty Teaching, A Beginner's Guide to Learning Outdoors by Juliet Robertson

Clear and accessible, this is a guide that will help teachers, carers, parents and other educators embrace outdoor learning with confidence and enthusiasm, says **Toby Clark**

WHETHER HIGH on an airy mountain, enclosed by hushed trees or immersed in a magical garden, most of us can recall powerful moments that marked a personal connection with nature. And it can be the same for children too. A few simple lines in Juliet Robertson's excellent book sum up the benefits of taking learning outdoors: 'So that's how we came to be writing poetry and listening to the sounds of silence. In the woodland, each child found a place where they could sit ... calm descended. The special nature of the outdoors had finally captured this class.'

Today, we are being told that people are less connected to nature than before. Recent high-profile campaigns such as 'Project Wild Thing' claim that time playing outdoors has halved in a generation, and that more kids can recognise a dalek than identify a magpie.

Increasingly however, educators now champion the benefits of outdoor learning. Taking learning outside can increase attainment, improve communication skills, encourage health and well-being, and help develop responsibility for, and an appreciation of, nature.

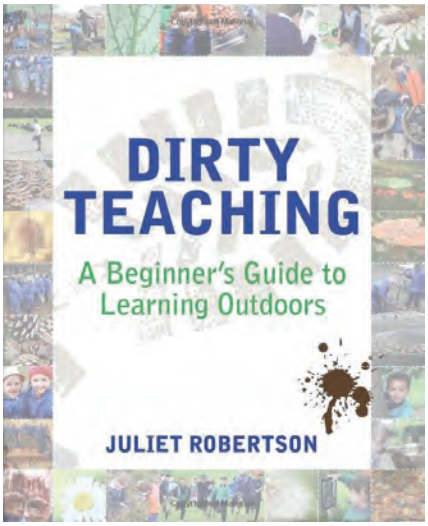
In Dirty Teaching, former head teacher and now education consultant Juliet Robertson offers a guide for primary and student teachers to help them overcome perceived barriers and develop confident outdoor practice. The author looks to support teachers who are beginning to appreciate the potential for learning outdoors by simply encouraging them to take their existing skills and enthusiasm outside.

The content activities are doable and involve minimal planning and resources. They can be undertaken within school grounds or places close by. Practical issues are tackled head-on, but theory and research are also well referenced. Subject chapters that include 'Golden Principles of Teaching Outdoors', 'Before You Go Outside', 'Caring for Nature', and 'Nagging Doubts, Fears and Worries', encourage readers to either dip in and out of the pages, or follow a clear cover-to-cover path.

The accessibility of Dirty Teaching makes it of interest to all those keen on using the outdoors as an approach to learning. Youth workers, community educators, parents and carers as well as teachers will all find it hugely valuable.

Price £16.99
www.independentthinkingpress.com

The reviewer
Toby Clark is the Trust's John Muir Award Scotland manager. He can be contacted at
toby@johnmuiraward.org



No need for expensive tools or complicated technologies, just a coat and a passion for learning ...

PHOTOGRAPHY: JANE HEWITT


PHOTOGRAPHY: NINIAN STUART

Cabin fever: Ninian Stuart's delightful hut built in the woods at Falkland

Friends of the forest

Alan McCombes spoke with Reforesting Scotland's Piers Voysey to learn more about the organisation's vision for people and woodlands in Scotland

Why does Reforesting Scotland exist?
There was a gap for an organisation that could represent a radical vision for the role of trees and woodlands in the Scottish landscape and wider society. We provide a forum for many people who might otherwise feel excluded from the mainstream debate about where forestry is heading in Scotland, or who are looking for something a bit different; for example, covering ecological restoration, building with wood, and land ownership. As a result, we bring together a broad network of individuals: foresters and foragers, architects and artists, landowners and land reformers, writers, ecologists, chefs, diggers, dreamers and ordinary people with a love of trees.

Any plans for actual land ownership to help further your message?
We do not own or manage land, but encourage our members to seek opportunities in volunteering with other organisations, the John Muir Trust included. Land ownership is not an option that we would rule out, if we could find a place that would serve as a demonstration site for the implementation of our values. For the moment we need to be light of foot and not tied down by location or any one project.

What emphasis do you place on restoring and expanding native woodlands?
We'd like to see high emphasis on native woodlands and native species, but commercial plantations have a role too. In our ideal world, commercial plantations would be planted to meet the needs of local communities and they might be managed on a smaller scale or to provide the maximum number of jobs and still cover the costs of establishment. Forest crofts or woodlots are management models that need further research and application.

Where do you get your inspiration?
Norway is still an ecological and social model that we reference: geologically and climatically similar to Scotland, but with smaller land ownerships and a forest and hunting culture that favours a more ecologically-balanced landscape. We also draw inspiration from people past and present: ecologists such as Frank Fraser Darling; doers like Ron Greer; and people who challenge our established paradigms, such as Andy Wightman in his writing about land reform.

What's your position on deer management in Scotland?
In the absence of any higher predators, deer numbers need to be managed by people. We believe that the health and quality of natural habitats is still being undermined by high deer numbers which prevent regeneration of tree species. We'd like to see more people involved in deer management; that deer become part of our relationship with the land and the trees; and that we bring deer numbers down to levels that are more ecologically sustainable. We are also sympathetic to the Trees For Life vision of lynx and, perhaps, wolves being part of our ecology again.

Tell us how your Thousand Huts campaign came about?
Timber-building from the forest is a natural strand of forest culture, with living in the forest a somewhat lost aspect of our evolution as a species. The spark for the campaign came in 2010 when Ninian Stuart, a then new director of Reforesting Scotland, built a hut in the woods at Falkland – and suggested at our Annual Gathering that we launch a campaign to make huts more accessible for all. The spark quickly took hold amongst our members who understood the potential of huts to give ordinary people a place to dwell for a while on the land. The campaign was promptly supported by a range of people such as land reformer Alastair Mcintosh and broadcaster Lesley Riddoch, while a broad-based grouping of enthusiasts has emerged and given the campaign great energy and direction. The idea of people having a small hut in the woods, hills or coastlines of Scotland is such a simple, beautiful and low-impact concept.

Finally, you are a membership organisation – why should someone sign up?
To be part of a vision to build a stronger woodland culture in Scotland; to be inspired by like-minded people and by people with radical ideas on land ownership, building with wood or woodland management; and to engage in the wider debate about the place of woodlands and forest culture in Scotland.

Further info
For more on the work of Reforesting Scotland, including its Thousand Huts campaign, visit **www.reforestingscotland.org**

About the author
Alan McCombes is the Trust's acting head of communications. He can be contacted at **alan.mccombes@jmt.org**

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