

FOR MEMBERS OF THE JOHN MUIR TRUST

MEMBERS' NEWS

SUMMER 2012



Chairman's welcome

Much has happened at the Trust since the last Members' News, not least our AGM and Members' Gathering at Ardlui on Loch Lomond. Initial feedback has confirmed that the location and venue were excellent, with members enjoying the opportunity to explore an area that they often only pass through. Starting on the Friday evening proved popular and I was certainly pleased with the resulting opportunity for more debate following the AGM. Next year's event will be held in the Pitlochry area while, in 2014, we will be in Dunbar to mark the centenary of Muir's death.

We are justifiably proud of the John Muir Award and, in June, I had the enjoyable job of presenting Discovery certificates to eager young faces at my local school in Banavie. Earlier that month, we received confirmation from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) of a grant of £364,000 that will allow significant expansion and consolidation of the Award in England. Trustees have been determined to see this expansion for some time and allowed a sum in the budget, anticipating the HLF decision. We are delighted with this progress and appreciate the staff perseverance that has brought it to fruition.

In other developments, the latter part of 2012 will see final design work and construction begin on site for our new street-level exhibition at Tower House, Pitlochry. Thanks to a substantial private donation, we will be able to promote the aims of the Trust in a strong and imaginative way in what is a very busy part of the town.

Outwith the Trust, I have been involved in a working group that is assisting in bringing forward a Rural Parliament for Scotland. These bodies, which are more of a community engagement process than a gathering, have existed in many European countries for several years and seem to enjoy public support.

Proposals will become clearer in the coming months but, given that this is a manifesto commitment of the Scottish Government, something is very likely to develop which should give another opportunity for us to join the rural voice in a more formal way that will be obliged to interact with Holyrood and Westminster.

This issue of Members' News also reports on the appointment of Sheila Wren as the Trust's new advocacy officer, employed to work at Westminster. Again, this represents the successful achievement of another ambition and I wish Sheila well in this valuable work.

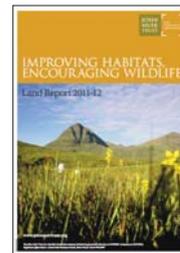
Finally, a plea to consider how you receive communications from us. Recently I received an electronic copy of Scottish Mountaineer, an 82-page journal, by email and found how easy it was to read online. We, too, are keen to reduce production and postage costs and would encourage you to consider opting for electronic versions of our publications. Simply email membership@jmt.org to request this.

Thank you again for the strong support given to this wonderful organisation, which I am privileged to Chair.

John Hutchison
Chairman



NEW TRUST REPORT FOCUSES ON CONSERVATION WORK



The cover of our first ever land management report

The Trust has just produced its first land management report – Improving Habitats, Encouraging Wildlife.

The 20-page booklet highlights the work of our staff and volunteers on the 24,500 hectares (60,500 acres) of land that we manage – from habitat monitoring and deer culling to path maintenance, litter clearance and educational activities.

The information in the report was compiled by the Trust's biodiversity officer, Liz Auty, with contributions from all our property managers and conservation officers and delivers an essential read whether you want to discover the average growth of tree seedlings on Nevis, how a boat is transforming our work in Knoydart, or simply what's washed up on the beach at Sandwood.

To reduce costs and environmental impact, we've made the report available for download as a PDF from the Trust's website at www.jmt.org/publications.asp. We've also done a small print run for distribution to key partners and contacts. Members without access to the internet can request a copy from Trust administrator Natalie Kremeyer on 01796 470080.

Summer will also bring new A5 guide leaflets to six of our properties designed to tell people more about our properties and their surrounding locations. They will be available in leaflet dispensers at some of our properties, and distributed at events we attend throughout the year.

Buzzing weekend on the bonnie banks

This year's AGM and Members' Gathering was another roaring success



PHOTOGRAPHER: ROGER SMITH

Attendees enjoy a guided walk and talk at Rowardennan

Over three days in early May, more than 160 members, staff, and guests enjoyed the excellent hospitality of the Loch Lomond Outdoor Centre at Ardlui during the Trust's AGM & Members' Gathering. This year, proceedings were launched on the Friday evening with an informal dinner and presentation on the 2020VISION project (www.2020v.org) from nature photographer Peter Cairns. The audience was awed by the photography generated by the project and wholeheartedly supported its message that healthy eco-systems are not just for wildlife, but are fundamental to us all.

The following morning, staff provided an update on the Trust's work, including progress in land management and communications. A presentation of £1,344 was made to Iain Grieve from the Friends of the Craiggallian Fire to enable the group's planned memorial project to go ahead (see page 20 of the Spring Journal).

The AGM saw members approve changes to the Trust's articles of association, while a later open forum generated informed discussion on topics such as the Trust's policies on land acquisition and renewables.

Stuart Brooks, the Trust's chief executive, said of the event: "I thought this year's AGM and members' meeting had a really good buzz – it was a very positive meeting. Being on the banks of Loch Lomond in the spring sunshine certainly helped but we had some great stories to tell. We are achieving much and gaining support and it was heartening to receive such positive feedback from members."

Once the formal proceedings had been concluded, members were able to enjoy a variety of excursions, including a visit to the nearby Glenfalloch Estate; a policy discussion based on the Cononish Gold Mine planning application; and ferry trips to the eastern shore of the loch where attendees joined guided walks and talks at the RSPB's Inversnaid reserve and the National Trust for Scotland's Rowardennan property.

In the evening, attendees relaxed with a barbecue before listening to this year's Spirit of Wild Places lecture given by Simon Yates, entitled 'The Wild Within'. A mountaineer and wild land ambassador for the Trust, Simon shared the drama and humour so often involved in modern exploratory mountaineering. The lecture was sponsored by Ben Nevis Distillery, a corporate member of the John Muir Trust.

On Sunday, more than 60 attendees remained to enjoy another range of activities, including a canoe session at the north end of Loch Lomond, walks up The Cobbler and through the Coille Coire Chuilc pine woods, plus a conservation work party at Aberfoyle.

The Trust would like to thank all members and their guests for joining us at the Gathering and for once again making this such an enjoyable and successful event.

Maggie Briggs

EXCITING PLANS FOR TOWER HOUSE

As previously reported in Members' News, we plan to open a visitor centre, complete with exhibition, gallery and retail space below our office-headquarters on the high street in Pitlochry – a development we hope will significantly raise the Trust's profile.

The Tower House redevelopment is currently on schedule and on budget, with the centre due to open in early 2013. However, the next stage presents some major challenges. In recent months, we have managed to increase the available budget for the project, securing £100,000 from the People's Postcode Lottery, through the Dream Fund and the Postcode Green Trust, and a £50,000 grant from the Gannochy Trust. Such extra resources have made it possible to increase the specification of the building, including a lift to improve disabled access, adding extra insulation and replacement timber-framed double-glazed windows to improve the building's energy efficiency, and enhanced signage to create a stronger on-street presence.

Building works, overseen by Ben Tindall Architects, are due to start at the end of July. The existing staff offices upstairs will also be upgraded as part of the refurbishment. This means that all Pitlochry-based staff have relocated to temporary offices in Perth for the duration of the redevelopment.

The Trust is also well advanced with plans for the public exhibition, working with Campbell & Co interpretative designers on imaginative ways to engage the public. This will include film, interactive exhibits and use of images and text to bring our story to life. We plan to open to the public in March next year, with a formal opening in April. We hope that we will welcome lots of existing members to our new 'home on the high street'. Exciting times ahead.

SPECIAL MEMBERS' OFFERS

Corporate members and supporters continue to provide a range of special offers for members to enjoy

The Great Outdoors (TGO) – an annual subscription (13 issues) for just £44.95 (normally £51.35) with £10 from every order going to the Trust. Order at www.tgomagazine.co.uk/subscribe and enter promo code TGOJMT12, or call 01371 851867 and quote the same code.

Montagne Sports – 15% discount on all products, with 5% of the ex-VAT value of all purchases going to the Trust. Order at www.montagnesports.com and use the promotional code JMTMS15DISC at checkout. (Please note that p&p will be charged afterwards and that the discount is not available on products bought from external websites.)

Scottish Field – a subscription rate of £32.00 (normally £43.20), with £10 from every order going to the Trust. Call 01631 568000 and quote JMT1.

Northshots Photography – a 5% discount on its Ultimate Autumn Gold landscape photography tour in 2012, plus a 5% donation to the Trust on all bookings made. Book at www.northshots.com/photo_tours.asp using promotional code NS-3087-JMT.

Highland Explorer Tours – a 10% discount on all tours in 2012 (tour-price only). Book at www.highlandexplorertours.com and use promotional code johnmuir, or call 0131 558 3738 and quote the same code. Highland Explorer Tours will also make a 5% donation to the Trust based on the total revenue from all tours booked by members in 2012.

Tiso – continues to donate 2% of the ex-VAT value of all purchases made using the John Muir Trust Outdoor Experience card in 2012 to the Trust.

Please keep an eye on www.jmt.org for additional offers throughout the year.

Award expansion in England

Confirmation of Heritage Lottery Fund support enables the John Muir Award to expand in England

Following initial support previously highlighted in Members' News, the Trust has received a grant of £364,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to expand the John Muir Award in England. Matched by our own backing, this project aims to support 90,000 Award participants in England over five years.

The John Muir Award has operated successfully at a national level in Scotland and Wales for the past decade, but this funding now enables the Trust to employ three new staff in England. It is a move that will significantly increase opportunities to participate in the Award, generate new partnerships, and create a UK-wide presence for the Award.

"We are delighted that so many more people will benefit from a new connection to nature and will be doing their part as active conservationists for wild places in England," commented Trust chairman, John Hutchison.

Jo Reilly, HLF Head of Participation and Learning, said: "We are proud to be supporting a fantastic initiative that will help inspire thousands of people, especially young people, to protect their local wild places and equip them with conservation and team-building skills."

→ www.jmt.org/jmaward-home.asp



Youngsters take a break during Award work in the Cheviots

PHOTOGRAPHER: ROTHBURN AND COQUETDALE YOUTH PROJECT

CONSERVER AWARD FOR YOUNG CHAMPION



PHOTOGRAPHER: KATRINA MARTIN

Attendees at this year's AGM and Gathering will have seen 2020VISION Young Champion Katrina Martin being presented with her John Muir Conserver Award – the top level Award, with only 36 achieved across the UK in 2011 out of a total of more than 23,000.

A UK-wide photography-based conservation initiative, 2020VISION aims to reconnect people with wild places. To help communicate its messages, a number of young adults such as Katrina have been recruited to work alongside professional photographers and act as 'Young Champions' for the initiative.

Katrina has been busy capturing interactions between people and nature in and around her local area of Cumbernauld, North Lanarkshire, and completed the Award as part of her 2020VISION assignment. Katrina's achievements include setting up her own 2020VISION photographic exhibition; using her images to celebrate the Scottish Wildlife Trust Living Landscapes project; presenting her own experiences to youth workers and teachers at a John Muir Award networking event; and running local photography workshops.

Simple pleasures at the Scottish Wildlife Trust's Luggiebank Wood Reserve, North Lanarkshire

WELL DONE TO DEL DAVIES

Congratulations to Del Davies, a Trust member who has inspired future generations of environmentalists through the John Muir Award. Del recently completed his Conserver level Award, based at his five-acre woodland plot 'Wyddfid' near Betws-y-Coed, Snowdonia. Many groups have visited the site in recent years and thoroughly enjoyed getting to know this special wild place.



PHOTOGRAPHER: KEITH BRANE

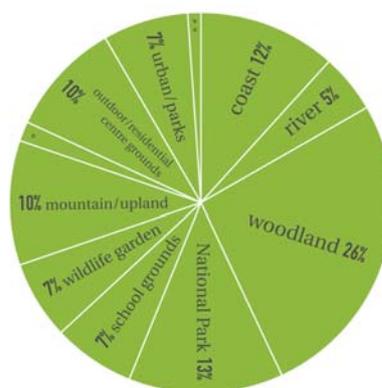
Del Davies has been an inspiration to many

POSITIVE IMPACT OF AWARD CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Throughout 2011, information was captured on how people make a difference to wild places while achieving their John Muir Awards, with a total of 749 groups (representing 81% of Award activity) sharing information for the Conserve Challenge audit.

The audit confirmed some impressive numbers, not least that 24,432 days of dedicated conservation work were completed during the year – at a value of just under £1 million based on Heritage Lottery Fund figures. Participants can look back on a year that saw them, among many other things, clear invasive species from an area equivalent to the size of 100 football pitches, create 2,462 homes for wildlife and maintain more than 32,000 metres of footpaths.

Completing the Conserve audit has not only accumulated impressive evidence of the impact of the Award on wild places, but also shown that people of all ages and backgrounds value exploring their relationship with wild places by, quite literally, getting their hands dirty. As one recent Award participant commented: "Hopefully I've done enough to gain old Mr Muir's respect".



Award activity in 2011 covered a broad range of habitats across the UK, with woodland a particular favourite

A fundraising thank you

Members and supporters continue to provide fantastic backing for the Trust's work

Earlier this year, outstanding support from members and supporters enabled the Trust to bid for the Talla and Gameshope estate, an area of wild land in the Scottish Borders. Although the bid was ultimately unsuccessful, we are thrilled that so many people who initially pledged their support have translated this into an actual donation to the Trust's Land Fund.

This fund has been established to give the Trust the means and confidence to bid for a particular piece of land that fulfils our aim of protecting and enhancing wild land. More details about this, and how you can contribute, can be found at www.jmt.org/land-fund.asp (or contact the fundraising team on 0131 554 0114).

In other news, a variety of people have helped raise more than £10,000 for the Trust through their own personal challenges and events. Congratulations to our six Virgin London Marathon runners who have to date raised more than £4,500 for the Trust. If inspired to take part yourself, we do have marathon places available for 2013, so please get in touch with Maggie on 0131 554 0114, or maggie.briggs@jmt.org

A huge thank you, and much respect, to Andrew Doggett and his friends for completing an epic Munro journey – covering 12 Munros, 56km and some 5,000 metres of ascent – on one of the hottest weekends of the year. Well done also to Alan Gilchrist and Stewart McIlwham who both completed this year's Etape Caledonia in particularly challenging conditions. Stewart continues to fundraise in memory of his brother Cameron.

The Trust plans to provide additional support for all future fundraisers with a new 'Fundraising A-Z' pack that lists ideas and inspiration to find new ways of raising money, as well as tried and tested ones.

Finally, online shoppers can raise money for the Trust by shopping through Give as you live – a campaign that sees thousands of leading stores donate a percentage of orders to the Trust at no extra cost to you. For more, visit www.giveasyoulive.com/johnmuirtrust

Kate Barclay

CARDS FOR GOOD CAUSES

To help boost our Christmas card sales this year, we're hoping to sell our merchandise through the Cards for Good Causes shops in Edinburgh and Pitlochry. These are pop-up shops which are open for six to eight weeks in the run-up to Christmas and rely on volunteer support to operate. Our participation in this scheme is dependent on being able to provide a minimum of one volunteer, for a morning or afternoon per week, for each shop in which our cards are being sold. Each volunteer should be available for a minimum of four weeks in each shop. Training is given by the company for all those taking part. If interested in helping out either in Edinburgh or Pitlochry, please contact Maggie at maggie.briggs@jmt.org, or call 0131 554 0114.

SIX HARBOUR WALK

On 6 May, more than 500 walkers set off on the Rotary Club of Buckie's annual Six Harbour walk – a coastal ramble starting in the picturesque village of Portsoy before meandering through Sandend, Cullen, Portknockie, Findochty and finishing at Buckie.

Over the 14 years of its existence, the walk has been blessed with good weather and excellent support, with the John Muir Trust one of the key beneficiaries of proceeds from this year's walk.

→ www.rotary-ribi.org/clubs/homepage.php



Regular walker Gordon Laing with Sandend Bay behind

PROACTIVE APPROACH TO FOOTPATH MAINTENANCE

The Trust's new footpath project has been forging ahead since it started in March with the appointment of part-time footpath project officer Chris Goodman. Our aim is for a step change in the way footpaths on Trust properties are managed, with a move away from expensive, intrusive and reactive path repairs towards more sustainable and sensitive preventative work.

Considerable funding is required for the footpath project to be successful, and it's thanks to the great generosity of members in response to the Sandwood footpath appeal in 2010 that the project has been given life at all. Surplus from that appeal has provided the seed money for this project, and has been subsequently built on with significant support from the Scottish Mountaineering Trust, a grant-giving body formed by the Scottish Mountaineering Club in 1962.

The first big challenge of the footpath project is to undertake urgent repair work on the Steall Gorge path in Glen Nevis. The popularity of this wild and rocky route, combined with exposure to the elements, has brought pressure on several sections that require immediate work.

Thanks to the 3,949 people who cast their votes for the Steall path project as part of the European Outdoor Conservation Association competition (earning us 48% of the total votes cast), we've been awarded €30,000 (£24,000) for the Steall path project. Combined with the Brown Forbes Memorial Fund's generous grant of £40,000, we have raised half the funding needed to make the necessary repairs.

We've now launched an appeal to raise the additional £60,000 required. You can find more details in the enclosed appeal leaflet, which has a tear-off donation slip. You can also read about the project, and make a donation, on our website at www.jmt.org/appeal

There'll be more about our footpath project in the autumn Journal. In the meantime, thank you for your help and support for this vital work in our beautiful wild places.

Mike Daniels

PHOTOGRAPHER: SUSAN WRIGHT



Walkers enjoy the built path at the base of Quinag

Committed to the cause

Local groups have been as busy as ever with a programme of talks, walks and work parties across the UK

In February, the Forestry Commission's head of policy, David Henderson-Howat, was invited to give a talk to the Scottish Borders Group in Selkirk. During what was a lively event (see article opposite), clarification was given on the commitment by the SNP administration at Holyrood to increase forest cover in Scotland.

Meanwhile, in March, a start-up meeting was held for a Mid & South Wales group in Crickhowell. Geoffrey Vaughan-Williams, who is coordinating this group, would love to hear from any members in Wales who'd like to be involved. See page eight for his contact details.

Elsewhere, the newly reconvened North East of Scotland group has been busy with conservation work parties held at Glen Tanar on the third weekend of each month. In April, members from the group also helped out at a beach clean at Forvie Sands National Nature Reserve on the Aberdeenshire coast.

Both the North East of Scotland and Glasgow & West local groups have enjoyed talks from Ribbon of Wildness author and walker, Peter Wright. Peter entertained the groups with tales of his travels and inspiring photographs from his walk along Scotland's 'watershed'.

Finally, the South West of England group enjoyed several walks throughout the spring, visiting the Chartist Cave, Llangynidr; Sapperton Tunnel in Daneway; Whittington Woods; and Undercliffs Natural Nature Reserve.



North East of Scotland group members enjoying one of the monthly Glen Tanar work parties

NEW TOOLS FOR GLEN TANAR

The North East of Scotland's April work party had a little more sparkle than usual, with participants brandishing new tools thanks to the collection and donation of money from one of the regular Glen Tanar volunteers. The new tools included mattocks (useful for breaking up well-weeded ground), work gloves, pruning saws, fencing pliers, club hammers, axes, a mell and stanley knives.

James Brownhill

FORESTRY POLICY – ACTION NOT WORDS

Plans for forestry expansion in Scotland came up for lively discussion in Selkirk in February when more than 60 people attended a talk by David Henderson-Howat, head of policy at the Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS).

Organised by the Borders Group, the talk saw current forestry policy set in its historical context going right back to John Muir. As the speaker outlined, FCS policy is not just about producing timber, but also non-timber related businesses, including mountain biking, community development and responding to the challenges of climate change. In fact, some 18,000 people are now employed in the non-timber related activities in Scotland compared with 13,000 in timber production and associated activities.

Mr Henderson-Howat also clarified the supposed commitment by the SNP administration at Holyrood to increase forest cover in Scotland from 18% to 25%. Not so, we were told: this is more an aspiration than a target. Instead, the key target is an annual increase in forest and woodland cover of 10,000 hectares per year Scotland-wide.

Focusing on landscape and conservation, the speaker explained how FCS is encouraging joint working between landowners across boundaries to enable ecological restoration on a landscape scale; mapping where corridors can be established linking wildlife habitats to make them more sustainable; and taking more account of the impact of forestry on water quality and other ecosystem services. Overall, it wants to encourage the development of a landscape that has a mosaic of forests, fields and hills.

The audience expressed concern about the impact on small communities, especially in the Ettrick valley, of clear felling, timber extraction and the loss of more farms to commercial forestry. In reply, it was explained that FCS was considering a recent request from Scottish Borders Council for the parishes of Ettrick and Kirkhope to be treated as 'sensitive' in the Commission's mapping of the area for woodland expansion. Also, timber lorries were being routed along forest roads wherever possible and away from public roads.

Concerns were also voiced about the future of grants for native woodland planting. It was confirmed that while woodland grants were likely to continue, it was anticipated that a greater proportion of them would, under a revised regime, be awarded for commercial evergreens than has been the case over the past ten years. The debate continued over refreshments long after the talk had finished.

John Thomas

GIGHA CALLING

In 2010, Lukas Lehmann, Manager of the Gigha Heritage Trust, came to Glasgow to take part in a John Muir Trust debate on community buyouts. In return, the group helped out on Gigha with some conservation work. We enjoyed the island and experience so much that we returned in 2011 and again this year in May.

Locals joined us for dry stone dyking, beach cleaning and tree planting. The highlight was a barbecue on a silver strand at the north end of the island with spectacular views of Jura in the background. Some of our activities were filmed by the BBC as part of a new series on the Hebrides to be featured next spring. We hope to return next May.

Heather Willimott



Not a bad spot for a barbecue – relaxing on a beach at the north end of Gigha

Wild days out

The 2012 programme of Wild Days is proving extremely popular

We have seen excellent attendance at the four days held to date at Glenlude, Nevis and, most recently, Knoydart and Skye. Wild Days are a chance for members and a guest to spend a day of discovery and exploration on each of the Trust properties.

Our recent Nevis Wild Day saw conservation officer Sarah Lewis lead a group through the Steall Gorge and up into the glen using an old stalker's path. The group included a ranger from Mull, a head gardener and keen naturalists. All heard from Sarah about the variety of work performed by the land team, ranging from deer control, species and transect monitoring to working with local schools and path repair.

A variety of worts, primroses and bugles were in evidence, while willow warblers sang from the woodland canopy and sand martins could be seen hunting along the Nevis water. Early signs of heathland wildflowers suggested perfect butterfly habitat for later in the season. As ever, the day was a great opportunity to learn about the delicate balance of access and conservation in this very popular area, and also to meet like-minded people and share ideas about future plans for protection and enhancement.

There are still places available on the following Wild Days:

12 August Schiehallion

Learn about local wildlife and how we plan to balance access and habitat management

14 September Quinag

With a focus on ring ouzels, water voles and other wildlife

15 September Sandwood

Learn how the 2010 path appeal has led to a Trust-wide approach to path management

To reserve a place, contact David Lintern at david.lintern@jmt.org, or call 0131 554 0114



Nevis Wild Day participants get up close with local flora in Steall Gorge



Peter Burgess with his latest creation

PLANNING FOR WESTMINSTER RECEPTION

The Trust is making arrangements for a reception of MPs, Peers and other key contacts at Westminster in the autumn. The event is kindly being sponsored by Trust supporter the Rt Hon Lord Smith of Finsbury, Chairman of the Environment Agency.

This event will be a valuable step forward in raising the profile of the Trust outside Scotland and the campaign for better protection for wild land throughout the UK. Alongside the Trust's attendance at the autumn party political conferences and the presence of Sheila Wren, our new advocacy officer in London, the event should make a significant contribution to raising awareness of the Trust's work at a UK-level and the urgent need to address the threats to wild land.

CELEBRATING A HALF-CENTURY OF OUTDOOR PROJECTS

The John Muir Trust would like to congratulate George Watson's College, Edinburgh, for its 50 years of running outdoor projects with third-year pupils. When it all began in 1962, it was considered an innovative idea to include a two-week residential experience in the 'great outdoors' for all third years as part of the official school curriculum. Half a century later, it has become a strong tradition for the school, inspiring many students – including plenty of Trust members – to a lifelong devotion to the outdoors.

The Trust has been part of this story since 2003 when the John Muir Award was integrated into expeditions and visits, with pupils having the opportunity to work towards a Discovery level Award. A number of the school's projects visit Trust properties each year and help care for these wild places.

This year has seen the highest ever number of projects working towards a John Muir Award at the school and will culminate in a presentation and ceremony by adventurer Alastair Humphreys on 11 September. For more, contact rebecca@johnmuiraward.org

TAKE THE MUNROVERGROUND

An innovative new map provides a different take on Scotland's Munros

Scotland's highest mountains can now be viewed in a very different way following the launch of the MunrOverground map – a unique take on the country's 283 Munros and other wild places inspired by Harry Beck's iconic mapping of the London Underground.

Created by Peter Burgess, a former geography teacher from London, the map groups the mountains into several 'lines', including the Skye Line, the Knoydart, Skye and Affric Line and the Southern Hills. Each line is then blended with the national rail network and long-distance trails such as the Sutherland Trail and West Highland Way.

The map was created following the success of an earlier project, Tubular Fells, a topological map of the Lakeland fells. "Like Tubular Fells, it's certainly a little out of the ordinary, but I hope it shows the relationships within the Scottish landscape in an enlightening and eccentric way," said Peter.

The MunrOverground map is available as an A1 poster priced at £10.99 plus p&p, with £1.50 from each sale shared between the John Muir Trust and Scottish Mountain Rescue.

www.tubularfells.com

SILVER FOX COMES TO KNOYDART

The Trust recently purchased a boat to help carry out its work at Li and Coire Dhorrcail, Knoydart. Renamed the Silver Fox, in deference to its aluminium hull, and to the importance of the fox's place in the ecology of the estate, the purchase of a boat became necessary when rising fuel prices forced the shutdown of the Arnisdale ferry service.

Already a familiar sight on Loch Hourn, the Silver Fox can carry six people plus over a tonne of cargo. The main and continuing work undertaken on the estate for which she was purchased includes deer culling, monitoring, redundant fence removal and path maintenance work. We now have much greater operational flexibility and can expect many years' reliable service from this very worthwhile investment.

All go at Glenlude

Early 2012 has been a very busy time at the Trust's newest property

The Trust was joined at the end of February by Karen Purvis, who has taken up a new post as part-time conservation ranger at our latest property, Glenlude in the Scottish Borders. Karen previously worked as a forester with the Knoydart Forest Trust, so was already familiar to many Trust volunteers who have helped out at Inverie. She was brought up in the Borders and has recently completed an HNC in Countryside Management with the Scottish Agricultural College.

One of the first projects that Karen has been involved with at Glenlude was the construction of a composting toilet and installation of a secure tools store – important work that was made possible thanks to the support of the Glenlude appeal. Such facilities greatly improve our ability to welcome and cater for the large number of volunteers and John Muir Award participants that have already come to the site.

We now have a very useful complex around the volunteers' shelter with car parking, tool store, toilet and a linking path built by volunteers. Elsewhere, there is a wild camping spot for groups nearby in an old stell (round sheep fank) in the forest, while work has also just started on building a tree nursery close to the shelter.

Our first Award participants were a group of S1 students from Wellington School in Ayr. In two visits, groups of 11 to 12-year-olds camped for a night, built two new brush hedges to keep deer off the tree saplings and also collected hundreds of redundant tree tubes and stakes across the estate.

A first draft of the management plan for Glenlude can be found online (www.jmt.org). The document includes a deer management plan and the first concept plan for the restructuring of the woodland. For those keen to learn more about the property, it includes a range of information on the biodiversity of the estate and even its geomorphology (courtesy of one of our members!).

All are welcome on the Trust's volunteer work parties and, of course, to visit Glenlude if you are in the area.

→ www.jmt.org/activities-conservation-work-parties.asp

Sandy Maxwell



Glenlude conservation manager Sandy Maxwell explains a point to some of the attendees of the recent Wild Day, including Caroline Harrison whose own account of the day can be read opposite

EVENT VOLUNTEERING – HELP US RAISE AWARENESS

Trust staff will attend a number of events over the coming months as we look to raise awareness of our work and recruit new members. If you would like to help at any of the following events, please contact Maggie Briggs at maggie.briggs@jmt.org, or call 0131 554 0114

15–19 August	Fair Trade on the Fringe, Castle Street, Edinburgh
25 August	Birnam Highland Games, Birnam
20–21 October	Scottish Outdoor Show, SECC, Glasgow
26–28 October	Edinburgh Mountain Film Festival, George Square Lecture Theatre, Edinburgh
27–28 October	Scotland's Canoe & Kayak Show, Perth
15–18 November	Kendal Mountain Film Festival, Brewery Arts Centre, Kendal
22–25 November	Country Living Christmas Fair, SECC, Glasgow
23–24 November	Dundee Mountain Film Festival, Dundee
8–16 December	Edinburgh Ethical Christmas Fair, Castle Street, Edinburgh

GLENLUDE: A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

Trust member Caroline Harrison recently spent a memorable Wild Day at Glenlude. Here are her thoughts on the day

Although I have been a Trust member for a few years now, I have never taken part in a members' event. So, it was with interest and a little trepidation that my husband and I signed up for the Glenlude Wild Day in April. It seemed like a good opportunity to visit our nearest Trust property and to learn, from the horse's mouth, about the plans for the latest acquisition.

When we arrived at Glenlude itself, we were greeted with coffee and chocolate cake (always an excellent start) before an introductory talk provided some background on the property and the vision of Sheila Bell, the previous owner, to take the land back to the wild. We were sad to learn that Sheila had died before her plans were fully enacted.

Sheila was laid to rest at Glenlude and we stopped by her graveside as we headed out. After paying our respects, we continued on and were almost immediately met by a bank of forestry plantation from the estate's Forestry Commission days. I was interested to hear that the pine trees wouldn't simply be stripped out, but would instead be allowed to mature and then be sympathetically harvested. The rationale, we were told, was firstly to generate a substantial income from the timber sale – revenue that would be reinvested into the property – and, secondly, to prevent large scar areas of deforested land being opened up on the estate.

For me, the other interesting aspect of the Trust's plan was the work to remove fencing and attempt to manage deer populations, rather than simply eradicating them from the land. I had envisaged a need for large-scale deer fencing to protect young saplings, but instead learnt how brush fencing is far cheaper, better for the environment, very effective and more aesthetically pleasing than modern fencing. It certainly looked good to me.

It was also great to hear of plans for the wild campsite and trips by school children, and of potential corporate team building and volunteering days on the property.

I came away from the day confident that our membership money was being very well spent and with a genuine buzz of excitement for the reclamation of wild land in the heart of Scotland's farmland.

If you get the chance to join a members' event, be it a Wild Day or volunteering on a work party, I would encourage you to go for it. They are very informative and you get to meet other lovely Trust members and staff. They even give you free cake. What more could you want?

Caroline L. Harrison

Caroline is a children's storyteller, writer and blogger. Find her at <http://goodbye-maggie.blogspot.co.uk>

Forthcoming events

Local Members' Groups

Yorkshire

Conservation work party

When: 18–19 August

Where: Upper Wensleydale

The Yorkshire Local group will hold a weekend of conservation activities in Wensleydale in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Accommodation will be provided at Harris House bunkhouse in Hardraw (north of Hawes) for the nights of 17 and 18 August. Participants will need suitable footwear and clothing and should provide their own lunches. Hot drinks, biscuits and tools will be provided. Any help is welcome – whole weekend, either day, or just part of either day. Anyone interested should contact John Page on 01904 425175, or john.page31@btinternet.com

North East of Scotland

Beach Clean at Forvie Sands Natural Nature Reserve

When: Sunday, 16 September

Where: Meet at Waterside Car park, one mile north of Newburgh just over the bridge on the A975.

Refreshments provided, but bring your own packed lunch. For more information, contact Rohan Beyts at r.beyts@btinternet.com

South West England

A long walk in the mountains of Macedonia, with Elizabeth Radford

When: Thursday, 27 September, 7.30pm

Where: TBC, Salisbury city centre

Elizabeth Radford will describe her encounters with snarling dogs, surprised locals and superb landscapes on her 290km hike through the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Free to Trust members, non-members £3.00. If you would like to attend, please email elizabeth_radford@yahoo.com

Edinburgh

Trust talk on Glenlude

When: Saturday, 17 November, 2.30–5pm

Where: Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh

Hear Sandy Maxwell, conservation manager at Glenlude, detail how the Trust's plans are progressing and learn more about what volunteers have achieved at Glenlude this year. There will also be a general update on the Trust's work over the past year. Tickets: £3.00 per person. Numbers are limited, so please book in advance by contacting Richard Ellis on 0131 447 4124, or rellis.consultancy@virgin.net

Southern Members' Gathering

When: 17–18 November

Where: The Bristol Hotel, Bristol

Cost: £20.00 (not including pub supper and excursions).

Join us for presentations from Stuart Brooks, chief executive; Rob Bushby, John Muir Award manager; and Bertie Gregory, 2020VISION Champion for Bristol. Keynote speaker TBC. A buffet lunch will be provided and there will be an open space over lunchtime in which to engage with a range of environmental organisations. An informal pub supper will follow in the evening and there will be a local excursion on the Sunday. To book, contact Dave Stewart at dave@curious-coaching.com, or call 07776 153 428.

Other Local Group Contacts

Please get in touch if you would like to be involved in any other local groups:

Scottish Borders

John Thomas, j.p.r.t@btinternet.com

Glasgow & West

Moya Taylor, moyamtaylor@aol.com

North East of Scotland

Rohan Beyts (events and talks), r.beyts@btinternet.com

James Brownhill (work parties), james@brownhill.us

Mid & South Wales

Geoffrey Vaughan-Williams, gvaughan.will@virgin.net, 01558 822960

COMINGS AND GOINGS

The Trust has seen a variety of recent staff changes:

Sheila Wren, Advocacy officer

This is a new role, based in London, where Sheila will work to establish a Trust policy presence, presenting our arguments and ambitions to politicians at Westminster, as well as policy advisors and the media. Sheila brings extensive experience of working with parliamentary, civil service and media contacts. This is an exciting and significant step forward in our goal of securing better protection for wild land throughout the UK.

Fraser Wallace, Policy officer

Our policy officer Steven Turnbull recently moved to a new post elsewhere having made a huge contribution to the Trust's policy work over the three years he was in post. In his place, we are delighted to welcome Fraser Wallace. Fraser has qualifications in sustainable development and rural planning and has been working for an MSP, so brings a range of relevant experience, along with a love of wild land.

Alan McCombes, Communications editor

The Trust's press and communications officer, Rory Syme has left for pastures new after three years of working for the Trust. Rory did a grand job getting our stories into the press and establishing a presence on Facebook and Twitter. We refocused this role and recruited for the post of communications editor. Alan McCombes will be taking up this position in early July, bringing with him many years' writing, editing and journalism experience.

Phil Stubbington, Award manager for Wales

After nine years at the helm of the John Muir Award in Wales, we were sorry to lose Hugo Iffla earlier this year. Phil Stubbington has now settled in as the new Award manager (part-time, three days per week) with a new office base in Langollen.

ISLE OF HARRIS MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL

The second Harris Mountain Festival – organised by the North Harris Trust and sponsored by the John Muir Trust – is scheduled for the week starting 15 September, with an excellent programme already confirmed. For much more, visit www.harrismountainfestival.com



PHOTOGRAPH: MICK BLUNT

TELL US YOUR NEWS

What have John Muir Trust members been up to? We'd love to find out. Share your news and stories with us and we'll publish a selection in the next Members' News. We'd particularly like to hear from any group members and their projects. Let Maggie know on 0131 554 0114 or email maggie.briggs@jmt.org
Thank you

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