

JOHN MUIR TRUST

JOURNAL

64 SPRING 2018

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Seasick

The peril of plastic waste

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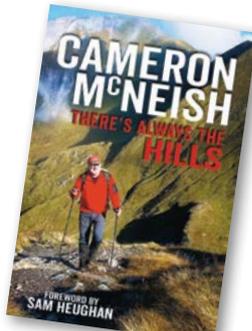
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COVER: A TANGLE OF PLASTIC ROPES WASHED UP ON THE BEACH AT SANDWOOD BAY. PHOTOGRAPH: KEVIN LELLAND

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From the Chief Executive

AS WINTER gives way to spring, we can reflect on those bright, cold days on the hills and look forward first to seeing ravens and eagles displaying, and then beyond to the long summer days when the plants of the high tops put on their subtle displays.

In this edition of the *Journal* (see p16), you can read about some of the places in Wales, and elsewhere in the UK, where these fascinating arctic-alpine plants can be found, plus some of the threats they face.

In the grand scheme of things, these increasingly rare plants may not appear to be vital parts of the picture. However, far from being isolated oddities, arctic-alpine plants are survivors of colder conditions and a time when our mountains were less heavily grazed by livestock. Securing their place in the wild is just one of the many reasons why we continue to promote protection and sound management of our mountain landscapes.

Climbers and walkers can help by avoiding areas where these plants are found, or at those times when the surrounding ground is fragile. The recently installed weather monitoring station on Helvellyn provides data that informs climbers when the ground above Red Tarn – a haven both for arctic-alpines and winter climbers – is frozen. When ‘in condition,’ ice axes and crampons are far less likely to dislodge or cause serious damage to the plants. At other times, we ask that people avoid the Red Tarn face, and other places where these plants manage to cling on.

If, like me, you have followed the growing conversation around *The Lost Words* (see p20) – a new literary and nature resource guide authored and illustrated by Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris – you may have reflected on why it is that words about nature have been lost from the language of children, and just why that should matter when promoting the protection of wild places.



To my mind, anything that disconnects people from nature lessens the value that nature has for them. The flip side to that, of course, is that when people are connected with nature, they are more inclined to stand up for the wild. Our long-running Keep it Wild campaign sees us argue against badly designed or inappropriate developments, and champion the case for nature, native woodlands and peatlands in wild areas.

Crucially, when local voices are on our side, the message is even more likely to be heard. And as it is often those who listen who call the shots, the more we talk about why wild places and nature matter, the less we are likely to lose.

Our ambition to protect and enhance wild places often leads to questions about how to define wildness and the truth is that we all experience the land and our landscapes differently. This year sees the 21st anniversary of the John Muir Award, through which more than 300,000 people have found something that is wild to them (see p24). The journey from that very first experience to standing above the clouds on a great mountain summit is one John Muir would surely have approved of.

Marine pollution has hit the news in a big way in recent months. It's a problem we have tried to address on our properties for some time, and we are delighted to have recruited Julien Moreau, an expert in the field, to work on our Coastal Communities project at Sandwood. You can find out more about the scourge of marine pollution, and what we can do to reduce it, in our lead feature on p10.

Finally, please use your vote in the election of Trustees. We are immensely grateful that members are willing to volunteer their time to help the Trust in so many ways, and few contribute more time than our Trustees.

Andrew Bachell

Keeping you informed while protecting your data

ON 25 May this year, the 1998 Data Protection Act will be replaced by the General Data Protection Regulations which, among other updates to data processing procedures, reinforces to organisations the importance of compliance with Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations.

The changes reflect the fact that people are becoming more active online – which, if not handled correctly (and in line with the above Regulations) can make it easier for organisations to exploit and share personal data. This is not a practice that the Trust has ever – or would ever – engage in.

Contact with our members and supporters will always be an extremely important way for us to keep you fully

informed of our activities, initiatives, events and campaigns. In addition to the four members' mailings we send out each year, we have in recent years moved towards increased email communications, with all the associated benefits of speed, flexibility, reduced waste and cost cutting.

At the same time, we take data protection seriously, and want to make sure that any interaction we have with you is transparent and with purpose – and, most importantly, respects your individual preferences.

We will be sending an email to everyone who currently receives our email communications (other than membership mailings by email) to

confirm your preferences and make sure that you are happy for us to keep in touch with you in this way. (Please note that Trust members who choose to opt out of additional electronic communications will still receive the essential membership information in line with their mailing preferences).

We can also report that at their most recent quarterly meeting (26 March) the Trustees held a full discussion on the new General Data Protection Regulations, to ensure that we are fully compliant with every aspect of this complex and detailed piece of legislation. You can read more about the new regulations on our website:

johnmuirtrust.org/gdpr

Signed and sealed: Helen Lancaster (far left) and Mark Hoggar (far right) from the Lake District National Park Authority with the Trust's Peter Pearson and Mike Daniels in front of a snowy Helvellyn



PHOTOGRAPH: KEVIN LELLAND

Trust signs Glenridding Common lease

AT the end of 2017, the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) signed an agreement to transfer the management of Glenridding Common – which includes England's third highest mountain, Helvellyn – to the John Muir Trust on a three-year lease.

The Trust has a long-standing relationship with the LDNPA, having supported its delivery of more than 18,000 John Muir Awards in Cumbria, connecting thousands of young people with wild spaces across the National Park.

Andrew Bachell, Trust Chief Executive, commented: "We're here to work with the local community and take seriously the responsibility of managing this special landscape and respecting its cultural traditions."

Richard Leafe, LDNPA Chief Executive, added: "We are confident that the Trust's management plan and aspirations will enhance and improve the quality of the land, creating long-term benefits for everyone who farms and enjoys the common."

The Trust has secured funding to underpin its management for the period of the lease, thanks to a £286,000 grant from the Patsy Wood Trust. This funding will be used to employ staff on the ground and for conservation management around Helvellyn that will enable wildlife to thrive and also continue to ensure high quality access within the traditionally managed landscape of the Lakes. We still have funds to find. Please support our work by donating to our Helvellyn Appeal. Find out more at johnmuirtrust.org/glenridding-common

This work will be coordinated by Pete Barron from the Trust's Lake District Land Team, who has worked in the area as a ranger with LDNPA for more than 20 years.

Since taking up his post, Pete has worked with the local community to develop a land management plan for the area, and is already making a difference. Together with partners, the Trust has installed an air and ground temperature system high on Helvellyn to identify when the ground is in condition and so help winter climbers avoid popular climbing areas when there is risk of damaging important flora on the crags (see feature on arctic-alpine plants, p16).

In addition, Pete and a small volunteer work party have planted 200 trees to replace dead ones in the exclosures on Helvellyn; agreed a working arrangement with Fix the Fells and contracted locals to do minor maintenance on footpaths that will complement the drain runs undertaken by Fix the Fells volunteers; and put a system in place to enable event access and filming requests on Glenridding Common.

After a challenging winter with plenty of snow cover, Pete is now looking forward to the snow retreating so that the Trust can begin detailed planning for survey and monitoring work on the ground. And with survey work on arctic-alpines, plus continued efforts to boost populations of downy willow and other vulnerable species, the Trust is actively seeking a green-fingered local who may have the skills and interest to help develop this work further.

To find out more, email pete.barron@johnmuirtrust.org

Keep it Wild campaign

THE Trust's Keep it Wild campaign has reached a key stage now that MSPs on the Local Government & Communities Committee are taking evidence from stakeholders as the Planning (Scotland) Bill progresses.

Efforts continue to build support for amendments which would improve protection for Scotland's wild land and the Trust is delighted to now have the support of a number of influential organisations, including Mountaineering Scotland and Ramblers' Scotland.

The Trust has also been working with the campaign group Planning Democracy to argue for the planning system to be rebalanced so that communities and environmental organisations have the same rights as developers when it comes to challenging decisions.

To find out more about how you can support the campaign, visit our website or contact Mel Nicoll, Campaigns Coordinator on 01796 484938 or mel.nicoll@johnmuirtrust.org



Keep it Wild

Inquiry into proposed windfarms in West Caithness

IN late February/early March, the Trust gave evidence at a joint Public Local Inquiry (PLI) into two major windfarm applications – Limekiln and Drum Hollistan, both near Reay – and called for the environmental, social and economic value of Wild Land Area 39: East Halladale Flows to be recognised.

Other objectors included Reay Area Windfarm Opposition Group, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Highland Council. A previous application at Limekiln was rejected by the Scottish Government Minister following a PLI in 2014.

The Trust was represented at the PLI by Chief Executive Andrew Bachell, Head of Policy Helen McDade and Policy Officer John Low, and also benefited from input by Dr Steve Carver at the University of Leeds Wild Land Research Institute.

Trust to explore attitudes to nature as part of backing Scotland's Year of Young People 2018

AS Scotland celebrates the talents and achievements of young people through a dedicated themed year, the John Muir Trust will be listening to their ideas, attitudes and ambitions, and exploring additional ways of bringing a new generation closer to wild nature.

The Trust oversees the John Muir Award scheme, which has introduced hundreds of thousands of young people – as well as adults and families – to the outdoor world, encouraging the younger generation to gain hands-on experience of nature and conservation.

The overall plan for 2018, includes:

- creating job opportunities for young people on Trust properties
- hosting workshops to obtain a deeper understanding of the relationship between young people and wild places – and how that can be strengthened
- co-designing with young people ways to

share a more constructive message of their outdoor experiences, and inspire others across Scotland to get more involved

- working with writers to explore connections between nature and literacy
- working with partner organisations such as Cairngorms National Park, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, Scottish Natural Heritage, Young Scot Awards Network, East Ayrshire Council, YouthLink, #iwill and TCV to help put nature at the heart of youth work

approaches

- meeting members of the Scottish Youth Parliament and young MPs and MSPs to look at ways to raise the understanding among young people of Scotland's natural environment.

Toby Clark, John Muir Award Scotland Manager, commented: "The Year of Young People offers a wonderful opportunity to strengthen the crucial connections between young people and nature."



Zeki Basan, recipient of the Young Scot of the Year Environment Award 2017, backs the Trust's involvement with Year of Young People

Obituary – Richard Gilbert

Richard, pictured, was born on 17 November 1937 in the Lancaster Royal Infirmary to Ruth née Ainsworth and Frank Gilbert. He died on 16 January 2018, aged 80. He was educated at St George's School Harpendon and at Worcester College, Oxford, where he read chemistry. In between school and university came National Service. He married Trisha Roberts, raising a family of four children: Tim, Emily, Lucy and William.

Richard's professional career was as a chemistry teacher at Ampleforth College for some decades. His other great role as a schoolmaster was instructing boys to rock climb on local crags and leading frequent trips to Scotland, which resulted in five overseas mountaineering expeditions – Iceland in 1968 and 1972, Morocco (1970), Arctic Norway (1974) and the Himalaya (1977).



His love of the Scottish hills, together with the needs and concerns of a young growing family, diverted him away from rock climbing and Alpinism and onto hill walking, concentrating on the Scottish Munros. In 1971, he completed them all, becoming the 101st Munroist.

Richard was also a prolific writer; as well as occasional articles published in *The Alpine Journal*, he was a regular columnist for *High* magazine, in which he

often defended wild spaces from assault. In addition to magazine articles, he also authored a range of mountaineering and hill walking books, including *The Big Walks*, *Classic Walks*, *Wild Walks* and *Exploring the Far North-West of Scotland*.

Richard was an active campaigner for outdoor access, for the natural environment and wild spaces, and a long-standing member and supporter of the John Muir Trust and the Scottish Wild Land Group. He had a love of wild places in general, especially the Scottish Islands and North-West. What he termed "vandalism" of wild places, such as hydro-electric schemes flooding valleys and pylons marching across wilderness, angered him immensely.

Brian Needham

In brief

Thirlmere zip wire application

The Thirlmere zip wire planning application in the Lake District has been withdrawn. The Trust, which recently took over the management of neighbouring Glenridding Common, was one of a number of outdoor and nature conservation organisations to object to the scheme due to the impact of the proposed installation of 1,200-metre-long zip wires on a celebrated local landscape that will be familiar to many.

Kings House Hotel extension

Highland Council has granted permission for a major extension to the renowned Kings House Hotel in Glencoe. The Trust had objected in autumn 2017, given the proposal's potential impact on the surrounding National Scenic Area and the qualities of wildness of the nearby Wild Land Areas.

Cononish gold mine go-ahead

The Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Authority has given the green light to an application by SGZ Cononish for a gold mine at Cononish. Although the Trust did not lodge an objection to an earlier application in 2011, we did object to this latest proposal, which amounts to a 38 per cent tonnage increase compared to the earlier plan, and an increased impact on the Ben Lui Wild Land Area.

Scotland's ranger petition

In November, the Trust encouraged supporters to sign a petition calling on the Scottish Government to recognise the value of countryside rangers who look after Scotland's natural and cultural heritage, and to protect jobs and services threatened by budget cuts. The petition is currently being considered by the Scottish Parliament's Public Petitions Committee.

Planning in the Cairngorms

The Trust has submitted a response to the Cairngorms National Park Main Issues Report, stressing the importance of the Local Development Plan and explicitly referencing the importance of protecting and enhancing Wild Land Areas. The Trust also supported the Park's proposal that it could provide more clarity on the issue of hill tracks by amending an existing policy to reflect the National Park Partnership Plan's specific presumption against new tracks in areas of open moorland.



Glen Affric
in all its wild
glory

PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL WEBSTER

Scotland at its most spectacular

THE TEN winning images chosen as part of the Scottish Landscape Photographer of the Year John Muir Trust Living Landscape Prize 2018 were selected by staff and trustees from an impressive shortlist.

Congratulations to all the winners, including Paul Webster from Scotland's leading walking website Walkhighlands who won the overall accolade of Scottish Landscape Photographer of the Year for his portfolio, which included Wild Glen Affric (pictured).

"The native Caledonian pinewoods have helped Affric secure its reputation as Scotland's most beautiful glen," said Paul, describing the image. "Here, the An Tudar ridge rises above the still waters of Loch Affric on a cold day at the start of winter."

All ten winning images will be displayed later this year in the Alan Reece Gallery at the Trust's Wild Space visitor centre in Pitlochry. But if you can't wait until then, this fabulous selection of images can already be enjoyed online within the 'Latest' section of our website.

The Lost Words exhibition comes to Edinburgh

FROM mid-May, visitors to the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) will be able to enjoy *The Lost Words* exhibition – showcasing artwork from Jackie Morris and 'spells' by the writer Robert Macfarlane from their award-winning book of the same name.

RBGE described the book as a "great new rallying cry for reverence of Britain's flora and fauna", and has timed the opening of the show to coincide with Connect with Nature – a weekend of nature writing, reading, music and illustration reflecting the underlying theme of the exhibition. Participating authors and illustrators include Mark Cocker, Esther Woolfson, Jim Crumley, Chitra Ramaswamy, Samuel Tongue, Malachy Tallack, Darren Woodhead and Jackie Morris.

Connect with Nature is supported by the John Muir Trust, Scottish Book Trust and Scottish Poetry Library, and will incorporate an outdoor trail, school and community group visits, plus training for educators.

Dr Ian Edwards, RBGE head of events and exhibitions, commented: "There is an unprecedented level of engagement and community participation planned."

John Muir Award Manager Rob Bushby, who has championed the Trust's involvement with the book, added: "We are pleased to be working closely with RBGE to share the messages at the heart of *The Lost Words* with as many people as possible."

For more on *The Lost Words*, see p20.



PHOTOGRAPH: JAMIE WOODLEY

The Lost Words
exhibition at
Compton Verney,
Stratford upon Avon

Heart of Scotland Forest partners

We continue a look at our Heart of Scotland Forest partners, finding out why Kynachan Estate and Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust strongly believe in the project

KYNACHAN, part of the wider Dalchosnie and Kynachan Estate, covers a little over 3,000 acres of wild land in Highland Perthshire. It's run agriculturally, with 300 Scottish blackface sheep and a newly-introduced fold of pedigree highland cattle, plus as a sporting enterprise.

The estate is currently applying for a grant to plant forestry including in the area that is the focus of the Heart of Scotland Forest Partnership.

"We've had a partnership with the Trust since 2011, which largely focuses on deer management at Kynachan and East Schiehallion, although my connection predates that as my grandmother sold part of East Schiehallion to the Trust in 2000," explains owner Jez Robinson. "My grandparents had a lifelong interest in the mountain and I feel that it's hugely important that I continue to be involved."

The Heart of Scotland Forest serves as the next step in that relationship. "A collaboration like this on such a broad scale - from private individuals, to government organisations such as Forest Enterprise Scotland, through to NGOs and community land trusts - delivers a balanced approach that sees the land managed in the best interests of all parties," adds Jez.

It's also what people expect to happen now, he believes. "Hopefully not only will the project serve a purpose on the ground, but it will also offer an example of what can be achieved when people with differing management objectives come together for the common good."

It is the common good that also drives much of the work at Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust (HPCLT) - another key partner in the project. Much smaller, it comprises around 400 hectares of hill land bordering Trust ground at East Schiehallion



Heather Hamilton at Dùn Coilich and Jez Robinson at Kynachan (below)

PHOTOGRAPH: DAISY CLARK



PHOTOGRAPH: LIZ AUTY

and Forest Enterprise woodland at the Braes of Foss. Previously managed as a deer farm, the land at Dùn Coilich was purchased by HPCLT in 2002, since then more than 200,000 native broadleaves and Scots pines have been planted and regenerated across half of the site.

In 2016, HPCLT appointed project officer Heather Hamilton to coordinate the training of young locals in rural skills, and to run weekly volunteer days. The HPCLT Rural Skills Training Programme is designed to provide enhanced employment opportunities through certificated training in drystone dyking, chainsaw use, scrub

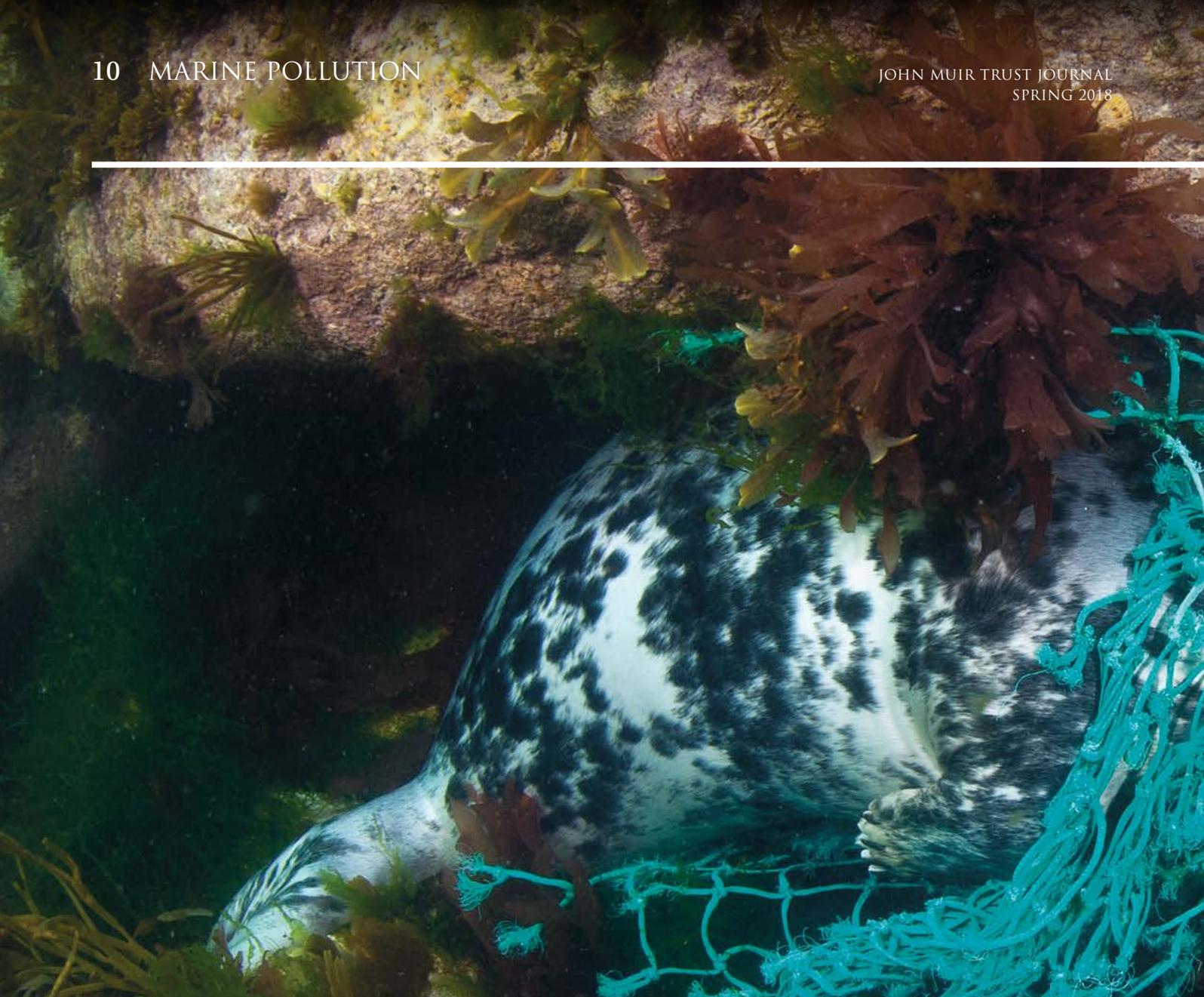
cutting and vegetation management.

As Heather explains, the Heart of Scotland Forest is an ideal way to spread the word about what HPCLT is doing at Dùn Coilich: "The collective is so much greater than the individual parts: we are a community land trust with limited resources and, through the Heart of Scotland Forest Partnership, we can reach a wider audience than we would otherwise do."

Already, the connections run deep with the Trust. In addition HPCLT trainees have carried out drystone walling together with Jez at Kynachan; spent time with Forest Enterprise Scotland site teams and planted trees together with Woodland Trust Scotland. Volunteer rangers from the Scottish Wildlife Trust's nearby reserve at Loch of the Lowes are often invited up the hill to help.

"It's so much easier to make things happen when working in partnership," says Heather. □

Following an earlier profile of Forest Enterprise Scotland in our last edition of the *Journal*, our next two Heart of Scotland Forest partners - Woodland Trust Scotland and Scottish Wildlife Trust - will be profiled in our autumn 2018 edition



Plastic peril

The problem of plastic waste in our seas has never been more acute although, thankfully, so too is public awareness of this modern-day scourge. **Julien Moreau** and **Sarah Lewis** explore the extent of the issue around the Trust's Skye and Sandwood properties

THERE WAS A TIME when much of what came from the sea could be reused. Beachcombing was a fruitful exercise, turning up everything from exotic curios to valuable resources that could be recycled in one way or another.

This is no better reflected than at Camasunarie House, a centuries-old property that overlooks remote Camasunary Bay on Skye's Strathaird peninsula. Some of the house's roof timbers are made from driftwood that originated far away. Look closely and it is possible to spot the bore holes made by shipworms. More recently, a freighter passing through the Minch must have lost a load of timber. In true beachcombing tradition, the lengths that came up at Camasunary were collected and now form part of the roof in the newer north end of

the house.

"I have been coming here for more than 60 years, so I am beginning to gain some perspective on what blows up on the shore of this lovely bay," comments Alan Johnson, whose family has owned the land around Camasunary since 1916. "It faces due south, so welcomes whatever blows in from the Atlantic and Gulf Stream."

This part of Skye is particularly wild. Hemmed in by the brooding mass of the Cuillin Ridge, and with views out to jagged Rum and neighbouring islands, Camasunary and wider Strathaird is a land of seabirds, seals and red deer. But you don't have to look far to see that this wildness is compromised with almost every turning of the tide.

Today, the flotsam that lines the beach is far more likely to include a proliferation of

plastic bottles, fishing paraphernalia, strapping tape and other detritus of modern-day living than anything worth salvaging for re-use. Such a depressing tideline is a stark indicator not just of the sheer amount of plastic in our day-to-day lives, but also how we allow so much of it to end up in our seas.

"The revolution in polymer science has given us a huge range of cheap, durable materials with a fantastic range of physical characteristics," comments Alan. "It's a technological miracle which has transformed how we live. But, as with all such revolutionary developments, there is a downside. And that is what you see on the shore at Camasunary."

Not all of what washes up is rubbish. Alan has plastic milk crates "from Newfoundland to Florida" that have proved useful, as well



as miles of rope of varying thicknesses. “But much of what blows up here is not reusable,” he says. “Broken or designed for single use, it has been dumped, chucked or abandoned, and wind and weather have done their bit to transport it to remote places like this where it becomes very difficult to reuse or recycle.”

PERVASIVE PLASTICS

Plastic washed up on the shoreline offends our sensibilities – it’s unsightly and particularly jars when found in places of great natural beauty – but of far more importance is the threat it poses both to marine and terrestrial life.

The most visible danger is entanglement, with the plastic nets, ropes and fibres that find their way into the sea responsible for the deaths of vast numbers of marine animals. The consequences can be extreme: North Atlantic right whales are thought to be on the brink of extinction, with more than 90 per cent of deaths caused by entanglement in fishing gear.

But entanglement is only one part of the picture. Plastics are also ingested by organisms up and down the food chain. Corals, copepods (zooplankton), shrimps, mussels, fish, birds, turtles, marine mammals and even cows and deer that feed along shorelines have been found with digestive track occlusions, often leading to death through starvation.

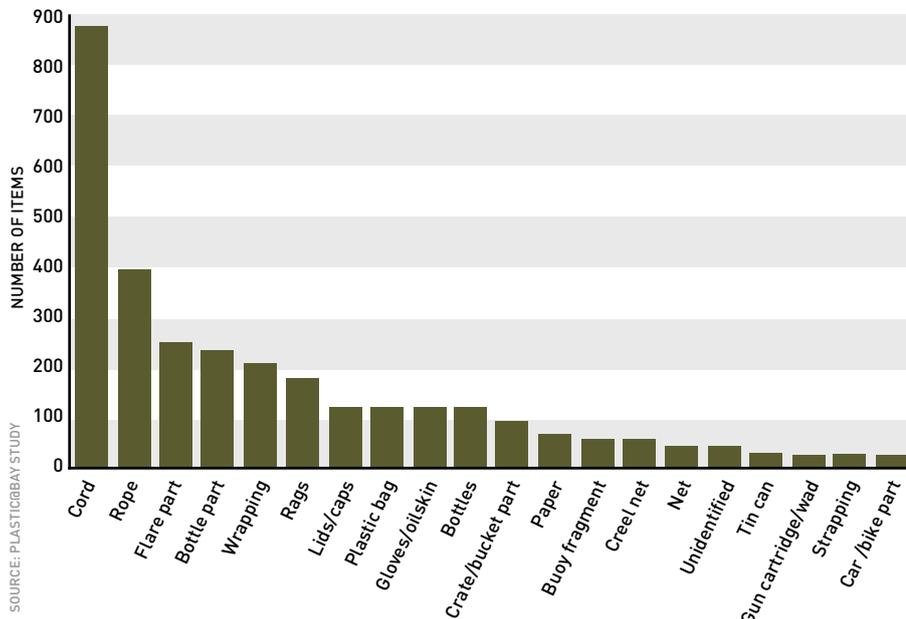
There are countless studies that highlight examples of highly contaminated animals. In the case of langoustines, one of the most important sources of income in northwest Scotland, 83 per cent of sampled animals contained plastics in their guts, while a recent European Commission report highlighted how at least a third of all seabirds now have plastics in their bodies.

Following high-profile programmes such as *Blue Planet II*, one positive is that there has been a leap in public awareness of the problems caused by plastic in our seas. As David Attenborough reflected in an interview with *The Guardian* last year,

“I remember being told as a boy how wonderful plastic was because it didn’t decay. Now, we dump thousands of tonnes of it, every year, into the sea, and it has catastrophic effects”.

The situation is so dire that it’s believed that items of plastic in the oceans will soon outnumber fish. No wonder the United Nations recently spoke of marine life facing “irreparable damage” from the millions of tonnes of plastic waste that ends up in the oceans each year.

And it’s not just marine life that is under threat. When manufactured properly, plastics are not necessarily dangerous on their own. However, during their lengthy ‘lifespan’, plastics attract toxic molecules which, being hydrophobic, are only too happy to ‘stick’ (or sorb) to any plastics floating past. Some of these toxins are particularly unpleasant – not least highly carcinogenic Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons that are released through the burning of wood, coal, oil and gasoline.

Table one: 20 most common items found at Balnakeil Beach, 5 April to 26 July 2017

“It’s really down to all of us. The average Briton produces around half a tonne of rubbish a year, with much of it plastic”

Plastics also attract dioxins, flame retardants and Polychlorinated biphenol (PCB) – with the latter loving fat even more than it loves plastic. As a result, when PCB-contaminated plastic is ingested, the toxins leave the plastic and enter the animal’s fatty tissue.

This explains why cetaceans and seals, which have a lot of fatty tissue, often contain large amounts of these toxins. In January 2016, when an orca was discovered washed up on a beach on Tiree, it was found to contain the highest level of PCB ever recorded in a living organism.

More concerning still, PCBs and other toxins are recognised endocrine disruptors. The endocrine system controls hormone production, with normal endocrine function essential for survival and fertility in mammals, ourselves included.

TRUST PROPERTIES

At Trust properties on Skye and further along the northwest coast of Scotland, the prevailing wind ensures that plastic pollution intrudes far beyond just the shoreline. Head inland from the beach at Camasunary to the boggy ground and old ditches and further up the hill and there are plastic bags, detergent bottles and other items, all half-buried and covered in moss.

It’s a similar story further north, where Don O’Driscoll, the Trust’s Property Manager for Sandwood and Quinag, has given up being surprised at what washes

ashore. “As someone who spends a lot of time on the coastline of northwest Scotland, I have noticed a definite increase in the volume of marine pollution,” he comments. “While the bulkier items are obvious, a closer look reveals an increasing amount of small pieces as the larger stuff previously dumped breaks down.

“This is indicative of a worrying trend as these in turn break down into micro-plastics that are much more difficult to perceive, and are now to be found throughout marine ecosystems.”

The sheer scale of the problem was highlighted by a beach clean in April last year at Balnakeil beach near Durness, which recovered around 500kg of plastic pollution. The following day saw a further 350kg collected from Oldshoremore beach just to the south of Sandwood. At both sites – which, given the prevailing winds and currents are exposed to exactly the same rubbish – the beaches were littered again by the next tide.

Prompted by Sandy Maxwell, the Trust’s volunteer work coordinator, who suggested the only way to get a true sense of what washes up on these shores was to collect data, local community interest company Plastic@Bay recently did just that. A bin (actually an old fish bin found washed ashore) was placed on Balnakeil beach, with a record made of every item that went into it from 5 April to 26 July last year.

During the three-and-a-half month

All at sea (clockwise from main): death by entanglement; Camasunary House; rope netting at Sandwood; what happens when such items enter our seas



PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL BURNHAM

period of the study, the ‘Balnakeil Bin’ was filled with a staggering 3,577 items, ranging from bits of cord and rope to flare parts, wrapping, plastic bags, nets and strapping (see Table one).

Since May 2017, the study has continued to also analyse the rate and cumulative weight of marine plastics found at Balnakeil beach – with regular ‘rubbish’ updates posted online and through social media.

Interestingly, one key point is that pollution is mostly generated locally. Further studies show that only 5-10 per cent of the rubbish that washes up on our beaches follows the Gulf Stream or crosses the Atlantic with the wind. And when rubbish does come from further away, it’s usually apparent from the item itself, the wear from time spent in the water, or the presence of warmer sea species such as goose barnacles.

As for what washes up at Balnakeil – and the same very much applies at Sandwood – more than two-thirds of all items come from the marine industry. Discarded nets and ropes used to mend nets, plastic gloves, oil tanks and other industrial waste are the norm. This is different to many other parts of the UK where litter tends to dominate.

In terms of weight, it’s also possible to identify two defined periods in the year: a relatively ‘quiet’ one when only around 3kg of plastic comes ashore per day and a much busier one when 10-20kg of plastic



PHOTOGRAPH: ALAN JOHNSON



PHOTOGRAPH: NEIL INSH

comes ashore each day as winter sets in. A major storm can easily bring a tonne or more of plastic to a particular spot. Last December, Storm Caroline brought hundreds of kilos of plastics ashore at Balnakeil in just three days. And when such storms subside, the sand returns and buries all the pollution.

TURNING IT AROUND

The Trust organises regular volunteer work parties that carry out essential beach cleans at its properties at Strathaird, Sandwood and elsewhere. It has also been involved from the very beginning in helping set up a marine litter sub group within the Highland Environment Forum – a group that involves a wide spectrum of interests and organisations from the political, aquaculture, fishing, tourism and conservation sectors. All are committed to tackling the problem.

And there are plenty of others involved on a community level, too. On Skye, the local community associations of Elgol and Torrin, as well as children from Elgol Primary School, organise regular beach cleans, and also participate in the annual Great British Beach Clean, organised by the Marine Conservation Society.

But collection is really only just one part of the picture. The next step is the often difficult extraction of many tonnes of rubbish from locations which either require a boat or multiple ATV trips over



PHOTOGRAPH: ALEX MUSTARD

Plastics by numbers

- 90 per cent of seabirds found dead contain plastic in their digestive tracks
- 83 per cent of langoustines from the Minch have plastic in their guts
- Most mussels in the world have been found with plastic particles in them
- Every minute, a truck load of plastic enters the ocean
- Plastic is broken up by natural light but stays in the environment for centuries
- Only 2 per cent of plastic is recycled (reused for the same quality)
- 94 per cent of plastic sinks in the ocean, 1 per cent stays at the surface, and 5 per cent is found on beaches
- It is estimated that 6,300 megatonnes of plastics are in the environment today (including landfills)

“Last December, Storm Caroline brought hundreds of kilos of plastics ashore at Balnakeil in just three days. And when such storms subside, the sand returns and buries all the pollution”

sensitive habitat. The amount of manpower, time and energy used to transport all this unwanted rubbish to be recycled, re-used or just taken to landfill only serves to emphasise that the best clean-up act of all would be for us not to use so much plastic in the first place.

Fortunately, we are seeing many steps in the right direction, both on a local and national scale. A good example is the Pick Up Three Pieces campaign, which began at a school in Orkney and encourages everyone who visits the shoreline to pick up a few items of marine litter.

Others are now launching their own initiatives. Ullapool in Wester Ross recently generated national headlines when the village went plastic straw-free thanks to a campaign initiated by Ullapool Primary School pupils. The campaign followed a visit by pupils from Glasgow’s Sunnyside Primary who joined local pupils on a trip to Isle Martin in nearby Loch Broom, where they were shocked to find thousands of plastic straws washed up on the shoreline.

Elsewhere in Scotland and southwest England, KIMO’s Fishing for Litter project is designed to reduce the amount of marine litter in our seas by physically removing it. Participating fishing vessels are supplied with hard wearing bags to collect marine litter that is caught in nets during normal fishing activities. Filled bags are then deposited on the quayside in participating harbours where they are moved by harbour staff to a dedicated skip or bin for disposal.

Around the UK, there is also the ongoing work of influential organisations such as Surfers Against Sewage, while the Marine Conservation Society is pushing hard with its Stop the Plastic Tide campaign.

Overall, what’s clear is that while there is no quick fix solution given how dependent we have become on plastics, such actions are bringing gradual change – including influencing government and corporate policy on plastics use.

But ultimately, it’s really down to all of us. With the average Briton producing around half a tonne of rubbish a year, much of it plastic, we can all most definitely make a difference.

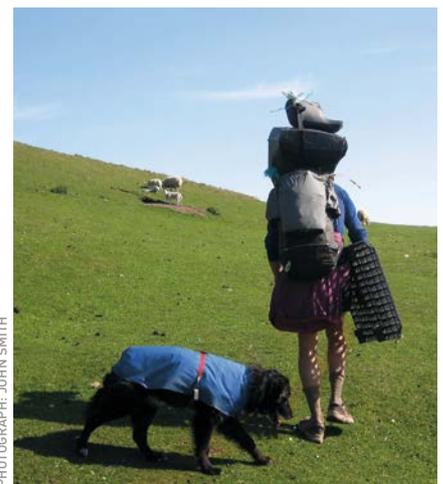
“Perhaps the Camasunary high tide line can prompt us to shop wisely, avoid



PHOTOGRAPH: SANDY MAXWELL



PHOTOGRAPH: JAMES BROWNHILL



PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN SMITH

Unwelcome finds (clockwise from top): a length of fish farm tubing washed ashore; carrying litter off site; a television and other items found in the dunes at Sandwood Bay; volunteer James Brownhill with a length of ship’s rope

buying items in plastic containers where possible, reduce waste, lobby for legislation to reduce waste going into the oceans, and vote for politicians who are concerned about such issues,” comments Alan Johnson.

“The more people who are prompted to act as a result of seeing the mass of waste that lands on this wild shoreline, the more chance there is that we can change our throwaway culture and clean up our seas and oceans.” □

About the authors

An expert in the field of marine pollution, Julien Moreau is the Trust’s Communities Engagement Officer at Sandwood, while Sarah Lewis is the Trust’s Skye Conservation Officer



PHOTOGRAPH: JO MCSWEENEY



Tiso and the Trust

Adam Pinder explores a relationship that has shaped the Trust for almost 25 years

IT'S FAIR TO SAY that Tiso, the Scottish outdoor equipment retailer, and the John Muir Trust have a close bond. Graham Tiso, co-founder of the company alongside his wife Maude, served as a voluntary Trustee during the Trust's very earliest years – invaluable involvement that saw the board benefit from his business knowledge, as well as outdoor skills, and that set in train a relationship that remains as close as ever to this day.

A mountaineer of distinction, Graham met Maude, a true kindred spirit, in 1961 after she had returned from working and climbing in Norway. Both were acutely aware of the lack of good outdoor equipment and clothing available in Scotland at the time, and so decided to open their own outdoor shop.

In 1962, the pair began trading from the back room of a boat shop in Edinburgh's Canonmills, before opening their first standalone store on Rodney Street in the autumn of that year. The shop was stocked with products transported from the continent in the family campervan – a wonderfully humble start for a company that subsequently grew to become one of Scotland's outdoor retailing giants.

Sadly, Graham died in a sailing-related accident in 1992, and so was not able to witness this growth. But the story of Tiso and the John Muir Trust very much continued. Following Graham's death, Maude too became a voluntary Trustee, beginning her own long association with the Trust. Like Graham before her, Maude was a hugely enthusiastic member of the board, contributing greatly as the Trust developed into the highly respected conservation organisation it is today.

As well as serving on the board, imparting sound advice and encouragement during an early period when boldness was required, Graham (then Maude and the wider Tiso family and business) provided exceptional assistance to the Trust.

In 1990, Bill Wallace, a respected mountaineer, and financial manager of the Tiso business, was seconded to act as treasurer and secretary to the Trust, providing critical financial and administrative know-how to the team of volunteers who ran the Trust at the time. Such expertise provided security and

“Without this unwavering support, the Trust would simply not be the organisation it is today”



PHOTOGRAPH: ROB BUSHBY

credibility, enabling the Trust to raise funds to purchase and manage its first properties, and employ its first full-time members of staff.

This association led to a further extraordinary demonstration of support when Tiso provided the Trust with much-needed office space, meeting all the associated running costs. Initially, the office was at Wellington Place in Edinburgh, but when Tiso moved to a new headquarters at Commercial Street in Leith, a significant amount of office space was made available to the Trust, again without charge.

From here, the Trust was able to develop its work around fundraising, promotion, education, human resource management and wider support to field staff. With this office space now having been provided to the Trust for more than 20 years without any cost, it is surely one of the most exceptional examples of support given to a charity to be found anywhere in the conservation sector.

And the commitment did not end there. Maude and the wider Tiso business also played a major role in promoting the Trust's work at the company's stores throughout Scotland. With information about the Trust made available to an enthusiastic outdoor audience, it proved of huge benefit in terms of membership recruitment and raising funds to support the work of the Trust.

This close association with the Tiso family, including with current Chief Executive Chris Tiso – son of Graham and Maude – also aided the Trust's general corporate, commercial and personal fundraising activities by highlighting an ability to retain the confidence of a significant corporate sponsor.

It's a corporate link that has been fundamental to the development of the Trust for almost 25 years. Without this unwavering support, the Trust would simply not be the organisation that it is today. □

About the author
Adam Pinder is the Trust's
Head of Fundraising

Life on the edge

Squeezed into ever smaller pockets of habitat, arctic-alpine plants are among the UK's most rare and vulnerable flora. However, a conservation programme established in Wales demonstrates how these delightful plants could yet make a comeback, explains **Barbara Jones**

IT MAY SEEM a little strange to write about arctic-alpine habitats in Wales when the John Muir Trust has properties in Scotland with a much greater diversity of these species. However, with the Trust having recently moved into managing land in the Lake District, and hoping to become involved in land management in Wales in the future, it seems timely to paint a picture of how arctic-alpine species are faring in these more southerly climes.

As their name suggests, arctic-alpine plants come from the cold arctic lands, or high mountains of the world. Usually, they form low-growing mats or cushions to hold in heat and minimise exposure to the cold and biting winds. So, how come they are growing in Wales, and other parts of the UK, where we have a mild, damp climate that is so different to their usual environment?

To answer that, we must go back to 12,000 years ago and the end of the last glaciation in Britain. As the ice began to retreat, it left behind an arctic environment which would have been colonised by these plants as they followed the retreating glaciers northwards. The plants would have thrived in this landscape until conditions warmed and plants more suited to the changing conditions began to dominate.

This meant that, especially in more southerly areas such as Wales, the arctic-alpines were forced to retreat to the higher, colder mountains where they were free from competition, where particular rock types provided them with the nutrients required, and where the climate suited them better.

“Arctic-alpines cannot tolerate grazing, so with the dominance of sheep in the Welsh hills, they have been forced to retreat even further to the most inaccessible cliffs”



MULTIPLE CHALLENGES

They are still there today where they are quite happy growing on north-facing cliffs – or at least were until they had to face several more recent challenges. In the Victorian era, plant collectors were insatiable and collected many rarities, particularly ferns such as *Oblong woodsia* which is now reduced to just a dozen tiny plants in the whole of Wales. Local mountain guides would take visitors to rare plant localities or collect rarities and sell them to make a living. Although collecting is seldom undertaken now, its legacy remains.

Arctic-alpines also cannot tolerate grazing, so with the dominance of sheep grazing in the Welsh hills, they have been forced to retreat even further to the most inaccessible cliffs, so reducing their numbers to small, isolated groups of plants.

Meanwhile, climate change in the present day may yet have a severe impact. Already right on the edge of their range, it could be that these plants will simply not be able to cope with the associated higher temperatures, increased rainfall, or competition from more vigorous plants moving into their habitats.

Such factors have resulted in one of the



PHOTOGRAPH: TOM DODD

main problems for arctic-alpine plants in the UK today: numbers of individual plants in each species are so small, and their populations so isolated from each other, that they are in danger of being lost completely.

Consider the tufted saxifrage (*Saxifraga cespitosa*) which has declined to just a few plants on a couple of boulders in Cwm Idwal, northern Snowdonia. It grows nowhere else in Wales, or England, and so a misplaced foot or wandering sheep could result in its extinction here.

Such tiny populations are also in



PHOTOGRAPH: BARBARA JONES



Flower power (clockwise from main): *Sedum rosea*; *Saxifraga oppositifolia*; *Saxifraga hypnoides*; rope access survey of Snowdon lily; heath regeneration in Cwm Idwal

danger of losing the genetic diversity required to survive in a changing world; they need larger populations which can cross fertilise with each other to increase their diversity and potential adaptability. To help this process, we need to keep the plants as healthy as possible and provide opportunities for them to increase in number to allow for more gene exchange between populations.

CONCERTED EFFORTS

In North Wales, we have established a long-term programme to monitor six alpine species at 40 sites in Snowdonia so we can catch any trends related to climate change as early as possible. The key then is what management is needed if changes are found.

Some people might think the loss of these arctic-alpine plants in Wales is unimportant, especially if they are not rare in other parts of the world. However, plants right on the edge of their range will be slightly different and adapted to different conditions to those in the centre of their range. Such differences, however small, are the stuff on which evolution depends to produce new forms and eventually species. The loss of these 'edge' populations can be likened to 'death by a 1,000 cuts'; the loss of one or two is perhaps acceptable, but if everyone has that approach, then losses soon add up, leaving just the core of a species range, with reduced possibility of expansion or evolution.



PHOTOGRAPH: TOM DODD

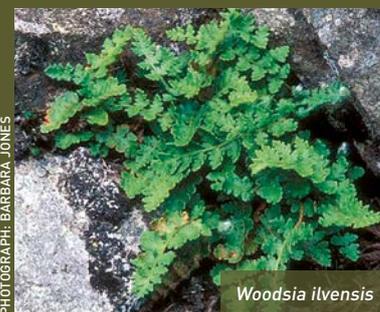


PHOTOGRAPH: TOM DODD



PHOTOGRAPH: BARBARA JONES

The view from Helvellyn



PHOTOGRAPH: BARBARA JONES

Woodsia ilvensis

The crags of Helvellyn are perhaps the most important place in England for arctic-alpine flora – a significant reason for the designation of Helvellyn and Fairfield as both Sites of Scientific Interest and Special Areas of Conservation.

Being the third highest mountain in England, and with an easterly Lakeland location, the fell attracts and holds winter conditions more so than other fells. Allied with the main crags having a north to north-easterly aspect, it may be no surprise that these remnant flora still survive here, albeit often in precarious numbers.

To help these vulnerable populations, Natural England has led an initiative along with the Lake District National Park Authority and the Trust to increase numbers of several important species. Downy willow had been reduced to a handful of shrubs just a decade ago, but through propagation and greater understanding, the 1,000th downy willow cutting was planted on the crag in late 2017, and signs of possible self-seeding have become evident.

Other practical examples of work to increase or return species to a previous area include the planting in 2011 of 60 *Woodsia ilvensis* (commonly known as *oblong woodsia*), grown by Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. A survey in 2016 highlighted good survival rates. Work is also now underway to increase the very small population of Alpine saxifrage, with the previously two very vulnerable plants now having tripled in number!

We hope to seek local support for future propagation ... perhaps a green-fingered individual who might like to work with us on increasing the populations of other species, with the exciting prospect of future work on Mountain avens or Alpine cinquefoil.

Pete Barron, Land Team, Lake District



PHOTOGRAPH: TOM DODD



PHOTOGRAPH: BARBARA JONES

Cwm Idwal
(main); the
delicate Snowdon
lily (left)

So, what can be done to help these plants survive and brighten up the Welsh hillsides for centuries to come? Really, all we need to do is to give them room. They won't grow on gentle, grassy slopes as they can't compete with the grasses and heaths already there. Conditions would also be too wet for them. However, they can grow on broken, rocky ground and in scree slopes below their cliff sites, if protected.

We must also ensure that they are not damaged by recreational activities. Through exchange of information, people are becoming more aware of the need to protect these species and are encouraged to enjoy themselves in the outdoors

without damaging the rare flora.

And as for the grazing, the obvious solution would be to reduce or remove grazing animals, but that is not an easy option. Apart from the political and social pressures to retain sheep farming as an upland enterprise, most mountain land is unfenced and so a reduction of animal numbers in one place can often just draw in sheep from adjoining land. Fencing is expensive and most people don't like extra fencing in the mountains.

However, we are not asking for sheep to be removed from all the mountains of Wales. These plants only grow in certain climatic conditions and on certain rock types. We know where these are and, with

a little planning, could protect these sites from too much grazing. It could be a big win for relatively little grazing loss.

In fact, this has already been done in one of the most important sites for arctic-alpines in Wales. Cwm Idwal National Nature Reserve supports many of these species on its cliffs but was heavily grazed until around 20 years ago when grazing was removed from this one small site to give the flora a chance to move off the cliffs and onto the surrounding rocky ground.

POSITIVE SIGNS

Change is slow in the UK uplands, and we can't expect flora to recover overnight, but we are already seeing some spectacular results, with drifts of mossy saxifrage along the back of the cwm in summer. Other species which reproduce and spread in a less flamboyant manner will take longer to benefit from the relaxation of grazing, but there are already positive signs of recovery. As an added benefit of this change in land management, the heather is regenerating and the bog asphodel looks wonderful in July.

Education and inspiration also play an important role. If people don't know about these species and the issues affecting them, then they won't support or be sympathetic to attempts to conserve them. With this in mind, the UK plant conservation body Plantlife recently produced six short films highlighting the distinct flora of Wales, with one looking specifically at arctic-alpine conservation.

As a means of helping connect people with particular species and making conservation matter to them, the films are a powerful tool. The hope is that audiences will gain a new-found appreciation of these wonderful plants, and do their own bit to allow them to survive and prosper. □

About the author

Barbara Jones is an ecologist specialising in upland habitats. She is also a climber and a member of the John Muir Trust Wales Working Group

Further info

Plantlife's film about arctic-alpine conservation can be watched here, <http://bit.ly/2HNIYj0>

The view from Nevis

The north face of Ben Nevis is a refuge for many arctic-alpine plant species. Prior to 2015, all records were noted by adventurous botanists descending into gullies or scrambling along the shattered scree slopes below the face. As there were only a few recorded locations for some nationally rare and nationally scarce species it looked like they were in great danger of being damaged by walkers and climbers.

However, our understanding of the plants has taken a step change thanks to the Nevis Landscape Partnership which, for the past three years, has brought together botanists and mountaineering instructors to carry out week-long surveys of new and often difficult to access areas. The results have proved astonishing. We went from a small number of recorded populations near the tops of gullies to records of sizeable populations in areas that, due to their inaccessibility, are expected to remain free from any human trampling.

It turns out that we have good

populations of Creeping sibbaldia (*Sibbaldia procumbens*), Alpine speedwell (*Veronica alpine*) and Arctic mouse-ear (*Cerastium nigrescens*), while we also have healthy populations of tufted, drooping, and Highland saxifrages (*Saxifraga cespitosa*, *S. cernua* and *S. rivularis*). We even found record of a new species for the north face of the Ben: Alpine saxifrage (*S. nivalis*).

On the summit plateau itself, there are fewer real rarities but we do have pockets of moss and fern and patches of lichen heath – 'snow bed' populations that are protected from plunging temperatures and drying winds by late-lying snow. When they emerge, their short growing season supports montane insect life which in turn sustains a very small breeding population of snow bunting on the summit of the Ben.

Sadly, however, climate change and its potential impact on the amount, timing and length of snow lie could easily see a disintegration of this delicate interaction between plant and animal species.

Alison Austin, Nevis Property Manager

Rope access
work on Nevis

PHOTOGRAPH: ALISON AUSTIN



PHOTOGRAPH: MARK HAMBLEN

Woodland in Glenfeshie (main); delegates at the ILCN Global Congress (below)

Mike Daniels had much to ponder following his attendance at the International Land Conservation Network's recent global congress in Santiago, Chile

ACROSS THE WORLD, as government resources for protected areas are squeezed, and funding and public sector staff cut, the role of private, NGO and community landowners in protecting wild land is becoming increasingly important.

Over recent years, different models of privately protected areas have emerged, adding significantly to the areas of land under conservation management globally. In Chile, the recent announcement of a donation to the government of nearly half a million hectares of land by the Tompkins Foundation – created by Kris Tompkins, former CEO of Patagonia, and Doug Tompkins, founder of North Face and Esprit – came 25 years after the two philanthropists first started buying land in Patagonia to protect it.

In the intervening years, as well as acquiring land, the foundation invested heavily in developing the support of local communities, and ultimately the government, in using the land to create vast new national parks.

Meanwhile, another model, the use of conservation 'easements', has also increased greatly, especially in the US, Canada, Australia and Central America. A legal mechanism that allows a private landowner to voluntarily put a permanent conservation restriction on their land title in exchange for land and income tax breaks, the model sees independent 'land trusts' take on the easements, monitoring compliance with restrictions and enforcing any infringements through the courts.

As easements are perpetual, remaining in place regardless of changes in ownership, so they create long-term protected areas. Globally, conservation easements now cover more than 20 million hectares, with more and more regions and countries developing legislation to enable easements to be created – the most recent being in Catalonia and Chile.

The use of easements can have significant and tangible effects. In Costa Rica, for example, private landowner easements have seen forest cover increase from a nadir of 21 per cent in 1987 to over 55 per cent today.

Meanwhile, in Scotland, a growing number of private, NGO

and community landowners are also interested in managing the land for conservation. The private owners of Glenfeshie and Corrour estates, plus the community owners of North Harris Trust and Dùn Coilich have all stated a desire to manage land for conservation.

The Trust too is involved in several landscape-scale conservation partnerships, including the Coigach Assynt Living Landscape Project, the Nevis Landscape Partnership Project and the more recent Heart of Scotland Forest Partnership, which aims to create an unbroken woodland corridor in Highland Perthshire (see news item on p9).

However, several questions remain for conservation on non-public land in Scotland. Buying and managing land for NGOs and communities is an expensive commitment which explains why, despite ongoing land reform policies and targets, less than 4 per cent of Scotland is under such ownership. Realistically, can significantly more areas of land be protected by such ownership?

By contrast, 80 per cent of land is under private ownership. While increasing numbers of private owners are interested in managing primarily for conservation (as opposed to hunting), is their management secure in perpetuity, or could they just sell at a whim? Perhaps it is time to develop easement-type legislation in the UK as well?

Scotland actually has conservation covenant legislation which allows burdens to be placed on land titles in the names of NGOs (including the Trust). However, as they stand, these burdens are relatively uncommon, weak and time bound, and generally not conducive to protecting large areas for the future. This in turn points to an age-old question: should Scotland have more national parks and, if so, what kind of parks should they be?

Looking ahead, the recent establishment of the Scottish Land Commission, and debates around subsidies for private land post-Brexit, perhaps provide a golden opportunity to consider the real future potential for community, private and NGO land conservation in Scotland. We can but hope. □



PHOTOGRAPH: ILCN

About the author

Mike Daniels is the Trust's Head of Land Management. He was invited to attend the ILCN's Global Congress in Chile in January, joining 160 other delegates from 24 countries around the world. The congress was addressed by environment ministers from Australia, Canada and Chile, as well as the EU Head of Environment DG Natural Capital, and Dr Jane Goodall

Lost and found

Since its publication last year, *The Lost Words*, a new book by Robert Macfarlane and artist Jackie Morris, has not only become a publishing phenomenon, but also captured the public's imagination in a way rarely seen before. **Rob Bushby** catches up with Robert Macfarlane, and (overleaf) outlines some of the Trust's links with the initiative

There are many nature writers around today, but one thing that sets you apart is your exploration of the symbolism and language of nature. Where does this passion come from?

I guess I'd first of all push back a little against the term 'nature writer', which has become unhelpfully branded these past 10 years or so as the market and the genre have boomed in Britain. The best of this writing is probably better described as, well, just 'writing'. It engages with the complex questions of our relationships with the more-than-human world of weather, climate, land and creaturely life. Love, fear, hope, loss, belonging, de-racination, identification, alienation, care, naming, state power, childhood, conservatism, radicalism, the Anthropocene ... The subjects of the best of what we can rather blandly call 'nature writing' are hugely various, often political, and very contemporary – though the roots of this new literature reach all the way back to Celtic Christian 'green' poetry of the 6th-9th centuries.

But to answer the question about passion, well, books and mountains, simply put. A childhood spent in mountains around Britain, above all the Cairngorms, about which range I've gone on to write extensively. And finding my way into the literature of mountaineering, polar exploration, wilderness and nature, from George Mallory on Everest through to Dorothy Wordsworth, Nan Shepherd and JA Baker, as well as – in terms of poetry – the three Hs (Seamus Heaney, Ted Hughes and Gerard Manley Hopkins). My life has involved the criss-crossing of language and landscape ever since: currently as a writer, walker and teacher in Cambridge (a landscape where we're not, I must say, over-endowed with mountains).

This new book builds on a theme you've been developing for some time. Does the diminishing vocabulary of nature reflect a disconnect from the natural world, or just a standardisation of language?

In the case of the 'lost words', it's unmistakably symptomatic of a dwindling

engagement with nature, up and down the ages. A 2017 RSPB Birdwatch survey, assessing nature knowledge in parents rather than children, found that of 2,000 adults, half couldn't identify a house sparrow, a quarter didn't know a blue tit or a starling, and a fifth thought a red kite wasn't a bird – but nine out of 10 said they wanted children to learn about common British wildlife.

The hunger is there, but the knowledge is not. This isn't the 'fault' of children, of course; it's a function of massive changes to the ways we have organised society and place in this country and beyond. But if we are unable to see, know or name even in a basic way the creatures and plants with which we share our everyday lives and landscapes, why (and how) on earth would we work for their good, even when their good is also our good?

People talk about a disconnect between young people and nature, yet in schools there seems to be more involvement with the outdoors than ever before, while nature programmes have become as popular as soaps on TV. Isn't the future looking a little more optimistic?

You're right to sound hopeful. And I am hopeful, too. The work of organisations like the John Muir Trust, or Action For Conservation (a charity of which I'm a founding trustee), or countless other charities or grassroots work, the rise of Forest Schools, the presence of inspiring young people like @naturalistdara, the incredible success and reach of the John Muir Award – these are all grounds for great optimism. As, in fact, is the overwhelming response to *The Lost Words*: an expression, to me, of the mixture of passion, hope and anxiety that characterises our relations with the natural world at present.

I've been especially heartened by what has happened to *The Lost Words*, and by the extraordinary legislative and institutional changes around plastic that have been triggered by Attenborough's *Blue Planet II*. From the Queen to Ryanair to the European Commission to Iceland supermarkets to Michael Gove; all manner of unlikely



PHOTOGRAPH: JACKIE MORRIS

people and organisations have declared their intent to change. We're at a tipping point with plastics, and I think this is a crisis we can beat – and that culture and art have vital roles to play in that battle.

In the past you've made the interesting point that, for many, the word 'blackberry' conjures up the image of a gadget rather than a forest fruit. Technology has certainly become a more central part of our lives, but can it not also give as well as take ... particularly in terms of social media helping spread the language and imagery of nature?

Ha! Yes, I'm always keen to decouple the old oppositions when I meet them, especially the oppositions of tech vs nature, and country vs city. We need to understand 'nature' as a complex category, constantly shifting in its aspects and its geographies, messy in the politics and behaviour it produces.

I'm thrilled by the recent declaration of London as a National Park City, led by Dan

Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris enjoying some wild time together



Wild words and images – Jackie Morris

“The Lost Words is not only a book. The work is a praise-song, in word and in image, to the natural world. Both Robert and myself have a deep love for the non-human world. As a result of a partnership with Compton Verney Art Gallery & Park, it is also a touring exhibition of word and image. (And Eva John’s Explorer’s Guide, hosted by the John Muir Trust, is inspiring families and educators to bring the words to life in natural settings around the world.)

The Lost Words is about language, the naming of things, the wild words. Our book, and the exhibition, are both aimed at a re-focusing, a movement towards rewilding, not just children, but adults also. Robert has written spells, words that almost demand to be read out loud, shared, and in the ways of magic and by ‘sleight-of-word’ rather than ‘sleight-of-hand’, we are trying to divert the eye away from the human, the urban, and into the nearby wild. For we live surrounded by the wild, even in cities. To name our creatures, trees, birds, to know our stories, is to understand our place in the wild wide world.”

For more information, including a free Explorer’s Guide and poster downloads, visit johnmuirtrust.org/thelostwords



PHOTOGRAPH: NICKY MCGUIRE

“Much of this basic naming and knowledge of nearby nature is disappearing because nearby nature itself is vanishing”

Raven-Ellison’s vision, a campaign I’ve supported: a reminder that our cities can be landscapes of exceptional biodiversity and natural energy.

I recently marked the end of my first year on Twitter: with 90,000 followers, and 10-20 million tweet impressions each month, I’ve found it an extraordinarily powerful way of communicating ideas, campaigns and passions to huge audiences. I start each day with posting a landscape, nature or place ‘word of the day’ plus definition at 7am: some are archaic but beautiful (‘holloway’, ‘gill’, ‘bealach’), others modern and grim (‘microplastics’, ‘ghost-nets’); all start long threads of discussion and sharing.

Some people might see this is an exercise in nostalgia, and say we just have to accept change and go with the flow?
These days I confess I’m tired of the

‘nostalgia’ objection to ‘nature’, as if the living world is somehow a middle-class luxury rather than a vital necessity. Cultures are defined by what they save as well as what they destroy, and we need now more than ever to take and support strong value-decisions about how we live with the more-than-human world – the wild world, if we want to call it that.

Much of this basic naming and knowledge of nearby nature is disappearing because nearby nature itself is vanishing. Of the names in the book, starlings are down 70 per cent since the 1970s, skylarks are going, newts are going.

To keep the names alive, and the creatures and plants to which they correspond in the minds and stories of children, seems to me urgent work. We will not save what we do not love, and we rarely love what we cannot name or see. □

Under the spell

From Lochinver to Llandudno, groups using the John Muir Award have been reading, writing, drawing and discussing – with *The Lost Words* a key source of inspiration

LOCHINVER PRIMARY SCHOOL, SUTHERLAND

“This morning we hunkered down in a tent in Culag Woods, with the rain drumming everywhere, and explored the concept of *The Lost Words*. Initially matching up names to pictures, we questioned what they all had in common, generating a variety of answers: ‘They all live in Britain.’ ‘They are all living things.’ ‘You can find them outdoors.’

When the answer was revealed, a discussion ensued on why they had been removed from the *Oxford Illustrated Junior Dictionary*. We realised we are lucky in our remote part of the UK. We do use many of these words and refer to these creatures and plants regularly.

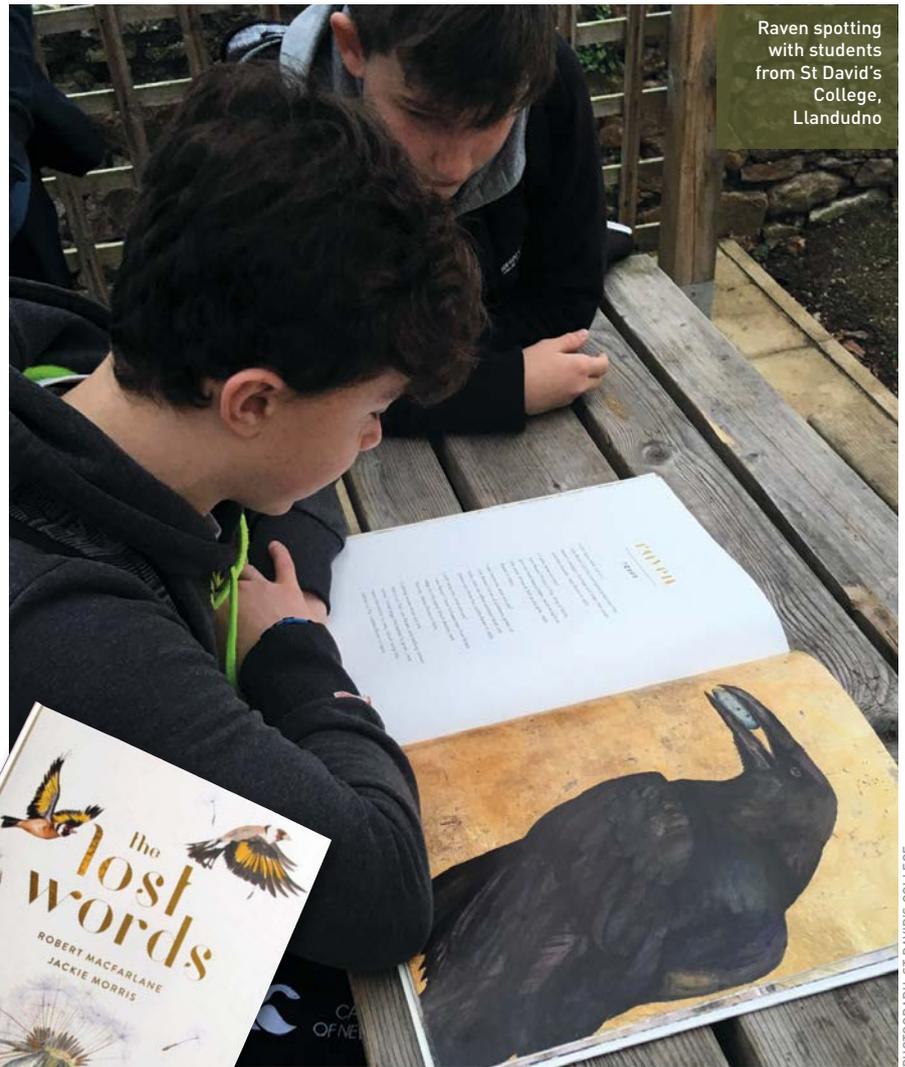
We talked about urbanisation and how that has maybe affected the removal of natural words and led to an increased number of technology-based and more modern words.

This led to talking about how more access to outdoor spaces is needed and that interaction with animals and plants is a good thing to encourage. The consensus was that while it is important to include new and updated words, the natural words should remain too.

The Lost Words book was introduced as a response to the issue, and the introduction read aloud: ‘Once upon a time, words began to vanish from the language of children ...’

By the time the last syllable of the closing sentence was uttered, the group was held in spellbound silence. When asked whether anyone wanted to conjure back one of the lost words with a spell from the book, all were eager. We took it in turns to choose one and read it out loud. It was magical, with the beating of the rain offering a dramatic rhythm to the spoken word.”

Katrina Martin,
Education Manager,
Coigach & Assynt Living Landscape



Raven spotting
with students
from St David's
College,
Llandudno

PHOTOGRAPH: ST DAVID'S COLLEGE

ST DAVID'S COLLEGE, LLANDUDNO

“Through the Outdoor Learning team, St David's College, Llandudno has integrated

The Lost Words into the group kit list for every Outdoor Learning session. It is as valuable to our students, and as necessary, as a map and compass.”

St David's College instructor

CARDONALD PRIMARY SCHOOL, GLASGOW

“Pupils and staff at Cardonald Primary School were so inspired by *The Lost Words* that we planned our whole John Muir Award around its words and artwork. The pupils – identified for particular social, emotional and health and wellbeing needs – used a greenspace opposite the school grounds, and close to where they live, to familiarise themselves with five of the featured words: magpie, raven, heather, ivy and acorn.

Teaching staff used the ‘spells’ as a focus for their art, literacy, numeracy, ICT, science and history lessons. An increase in self-confidence and engagement in other

“We took it in turns to choose one and read it out loud. It was magical, with the beating of the rain offering a dramatic rhythm to the spoken word”

classes has been evident, particularly in reading and ability to speak openly in a class setting.”

**Mrs Hunter, Teacher,
Cardonald Primary School**

MORE LOST WORDS CHAMPIONS

And it's not just John Muir Award Providers that have been moved by the magic of *The Lost Words*. Following a successful crowdfunding campaign by Jane Beaton – a school bus driver and travel consultant from Stirling – to place a copy in every school in Scotland, there are now similar campaigns in Wales, Norfolk, Suffolk, Gloucestershire and Cornwall. It's inspirational stuff – and also likely to be just the beginning. □

About the author
Rob Bushby is the Trust's
John Muir Award Manager

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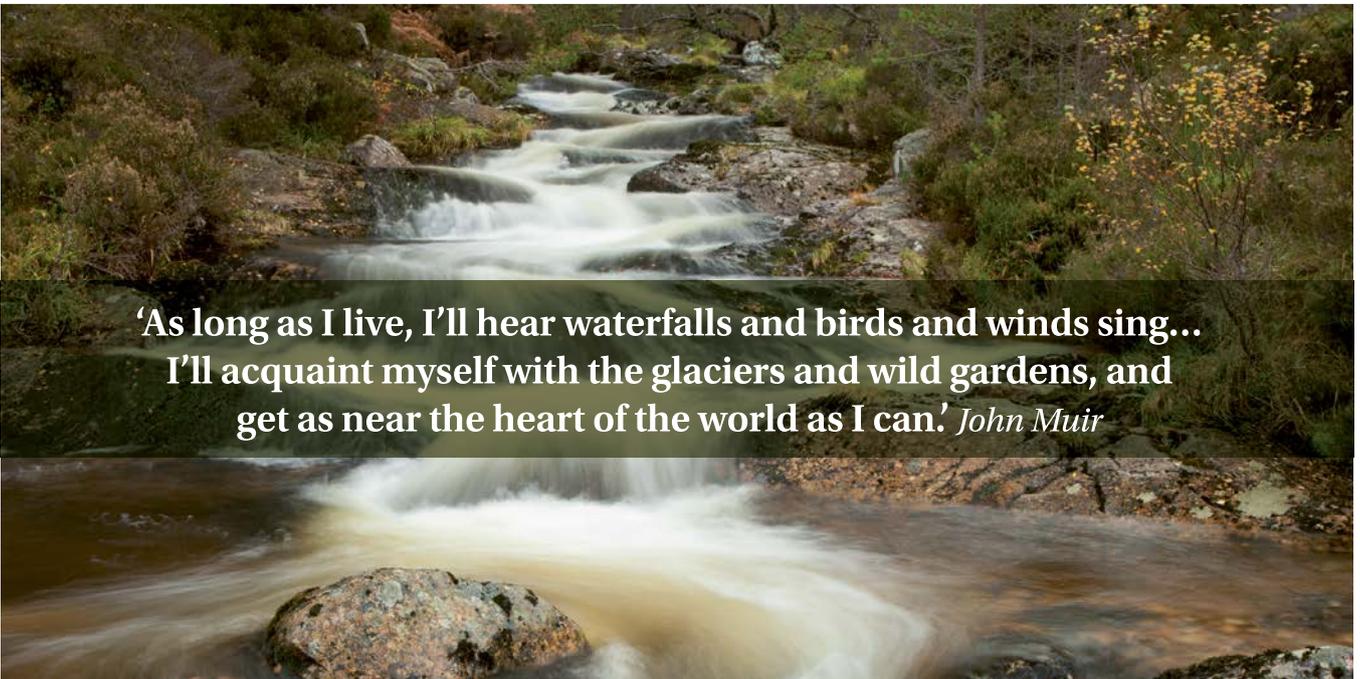
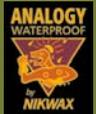
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PHOTOGRAPHS: JOHN MUIR TRUST

Coming of age

As the John Muir Award celebrates its 21st anniversary with a lively event in Dunbar, **Rob Bushby** reflects on an environmental scheme that has touched hundreds of thousands of people since it first began

IT WAS quite a gathering. On 26 February 2018, more than 100 people from across the UK came together in Dunbar to celebrate the 21st anniversary of the formal launch of the Trust's main engagement initiative, the John Muir Award.

With beach activities and litter picks, tours of John Muir's birthplace, exhibitions and archive displays, the event captured many elements of the evolution of the John Muir Award from a small project, launched on 26 February 1997, to becoming a core part of the Trust's work.

Having been the venue for the official launch ceremony in 1997, Dunbar Leisure Centre again hosted the celebration. And with many of the day's guests – including former staff and Trustees, early Award recipients, funders and supporters – having attended the launch 21 years ago, the sports hall resonated to the sound of their reminiscences.

Local schoolchildren from The Compass Primary School braved the arctic chill and explored the beach that John Muir played on as a boy – albeit finding many more plastic nurdles than Muir might have encountered 170 years ago.

There was even a video link with Lord Lindsay, who in office had overseen the official launch all those years ago. "Of the many events I attended as the then Scottish Office Environment Minister, the trip to Dunbar in 1997 remains a vivid memory," he commented.

"I ended up exploring rockpools and the seashore with a bucket and a bunch of happy school kids. They were thrilled not to be in class, and I was thrilled not to be in the office. Now, 21 years later, many more people, of all ages, are involved in conservation than was the case. Congratulations to all who have made the John Muir Award such an enduring success."

Delightfully, four of those Dunbar Primary School children referenced by Lord Lindsay – Victoria, Sharon, Lisa and Nadia – heard about the event, and came along to be part of the celebration, while local MSP Iain Gray also lent his support, along with John Muir's Birthplace Trustees.

One man who was particularly moved by the event was David Picken, who carried out the feasibility study and piloted the John Muir Award while working for the Trust from 1995. "I'm proud to see the Award grow and develop from its humble origins, offering support to ever more people to get out and enjoy wild places," he said. "I'm sure the John Muir Trust will continue to see its value as a means of keeping Muir's messages alive and relevant."

Other key figures from the Trust's history were also able to reflect on the achievements of the past 21 years. "The John Muir Award certainly has stood the test of time and I am sure that it will do so well into the future ... it has truly been part of the beating heart of the John Muir Trust," commented Nigel Hawkins, co-founder and former Trustee and Chief Executive of the Trust.

"It has played a crucial role in taking John Muir's message out to people of all ages and backgrounds in a way which Muir himself could hardly have imagined. We retrace his footsteps in his home town of Dunbar with humility, but at the same time we can be sure he would be proud of what everyone involved in the Award has achieved in his name. Changing lives for the better and encouraging love for our natural world are mighty ideals of the highest human aspiration. And that is exactly what the John Muir Award has achieved."



Jumping for joy (clockwise from main): primary school pupils on Dunbar beach; attendees at the celebratory event; the Dunbar 'girls' 21 years on ... and pictured in a press cutting with Lord Lindsay in 1997



It's a pride that is certainly felt by current Chair Peter Pearson, who highlighted how more than a third of a million people from all backgrounds have now been involved in the John Muir Award. "As well as something that our Trustees and members can take great pride in, this also reflects how timely and vital the vision of our Trustees was in the 1990s in coming up with the concept, and the extent to which so many organisations – large and small – that share our values have collaborated to make it so successful."

LOOKING BACK

It's fair to say that the John Muir Award looked rather different 21 years ago. A very early edition of what was then the Trust's *Journal & News*, published in January 1997, referred to the John Muir Award initiative, informing Trust members that it's "now coming to fruition and will become an important aspect of the Trust's work". Little did they know at the time just how important.

Looking to Muir's strategies for protecting wild places, the article went on to highlight how "he soon realised that mass education and awareness raising was the only way in which conservation could be kept high on the national agenda. Muir used the Sierra Club plus his own writings and lectures to educate the public and gain support for conservation. In a similar vein, the John Muir Trust has created the John Muir Award as a vehicle for involving many more people in our work."

Today, the numbers are quite something: more than 333,000 people of all ages and backgrounds have achieved a John Muir Award. And in as much as Muir's approach to experiencing wild

"The John Muir Award has certainly stood the test of time, and I am sure that it will continue to do so well into the future"

places is captured in the four Challenges at its heart – Discover a wild place, Explore it, Conserve it, Share what you do – it could be argued that each and every one of them has followed in Muir's footsteps to some degree.

Many have been local to his birthplace. Dunbar Primary School helped pilot the Award pre-launch and was among the first to present certificates in 1996. Meanwhile, Dunbar Grammar School and East Lothian Countryside Ranger Service are without doubt

in the 'stalwarts' category, having encouraged thousands of pupils to get out into the wild nature of East Lothian, whether school grounds, woods and moorlands, or the area's famous coastline.

Meanwhile, links with John Muir's Birthplace have also been mutually beneficial. Local Award participants take pride in the global impact of one of their own, as we found when making *John Muir – Back to the Future*, a short film about what young people think of Muir in 2014. "It's Dunbar's claim to fame," said one. "He was a really important man, and very inspirational."

One thing is for sure, the John Muir Award's journey from initial idea to something that has touched the lives of many thousands of people is a moving and powerful one. And there's much, much more to come. □

Further info

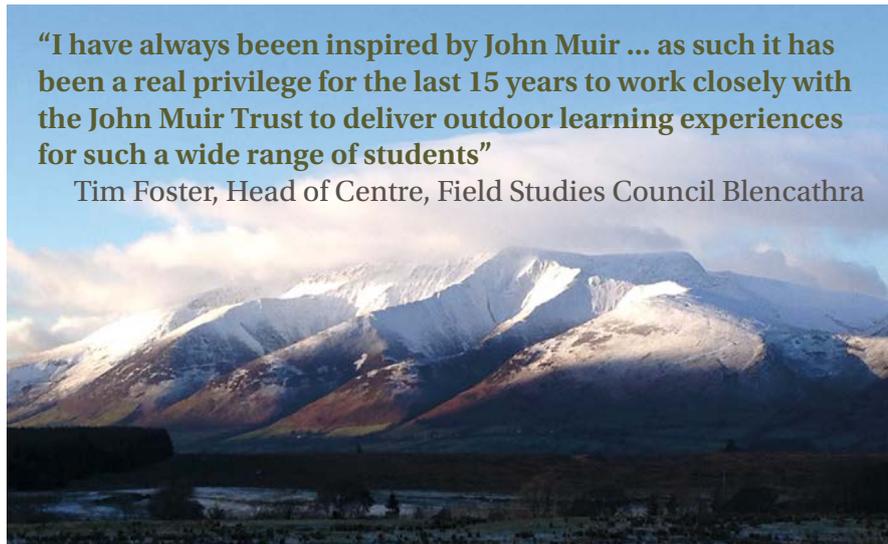
Find out more about the origins of the John Muir Award at johnmuirtrust.org/Award21

About the author

Rob Bushby is the Trust's John Muir Award Manager

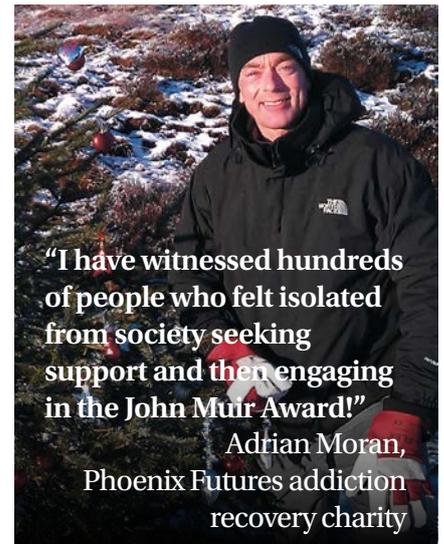
Touching lives

As part of our birthday celebrations, we are capturing and sharing a growing catalogue of personal reflections from John Muir Award Providers and supporters – some excerpts below. See over 30 (and counting) online at johnmuirtrust.org/award21



“I have always been inspired by John Muir ... as such it has been a real privilege for the last 15 years to work closely with the John Muir Trust to deliver outdoor learning experiences for such a wide range of students”

Tim Foster, Head of Centre, Field Studies Council Blencathra



“I have witnessed hundreds of people who felt isolated from society seeking support and then engaging in the John Muir Award!”

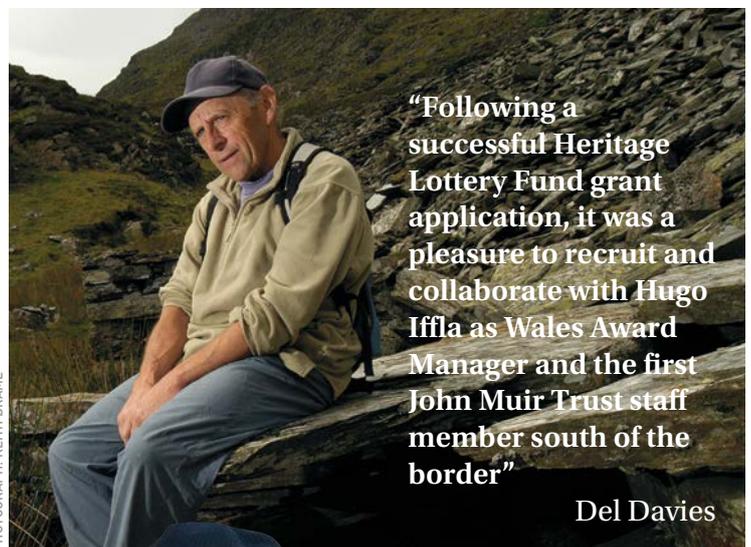
Adrian Moran,
Phoenix Futures addiction recovery charity



PHOTOGRAPH: KEITH BRAME

“I have chosen a picture of the first refugee and asylum group I worked with ... it was a joy to work with a group of people who were deeply engaged in the process and eager to learn”

Nathalie Moriarty, Branching Out Manager, Forestry Commission Scotland



“Following a successful Heritage Lottery Fund grant application, it was a pleasure to recruit and collaborate with Hugo Iffla as Wales Award Manager and the first John Muir Trust staff member south of the border”

Del Davies



“I was behind a proposal in 2002 to use the John Muir Award as our main approach to young people/outdoor education

in the Cairngorms National Park”

Murray Ferguson,
Director of Planning and Rural Development, Cairngorms National Park

The author on the summit of Braid Hills, with Arthur's Seat in the background



PHOTOGRAPH: DUNCAN MACNIVEN

Summits and the city

Trustee and keen hill walker **Duncan Macniven** finds wildness in the heart of the city on an overdue first ascent of the most southernmost of Edinburgh's many hills

EDINBURGH is a great place for wild moments. There are not many cities in the UK that have seven hills within their boundaries – all with impressive views either along the Firth of Forth, or out to the long ridge line of the nearby Pentland Hills.

Arthur's Seat, which rises to a height of 251m in the centre of Holyrood Park, is perhaps the best known of Edinburgh's hills, but there are other places in this urban setting where it is possible to escape the sights and sounds of the city.

I've lived in Edinburgh for over 60 years. In 1883, my great-grandfather moved to a house within a 15-minute walk of Braid Hills – at 213m, Edinburgh's second highest hill. His son, grandson and great-grandson (me!) spent most of their lives in much the same area. But I had never been to its summit.

This wasn't out of lack of interest. Blackford Hill, though only 164m, was closer to my boyhood (and, later, adult) home, and I have been to the summit countless times. With hill walking my

main hobby, I'm extremely familiar with the Pentland Hills, while I also climbed all the Munros between 1966 and 1983.

As a boy, I often went sledging on Braid Hills, and had walked or run around them many times, but it was only recently that the sad fact dawned on me that I had never experienced the summit. So, on a splendid winter's afternoon, my wife and I set out on our long overdue first ascent. Readers of magazines such as *The Great Outdoors* might have found it all a little tame.

We began at a pleasant pub – undistracted by its pleasures, this time at least. Farm tracks led us to the foot of the East Ridge. Despite the icy weather, we concluded that a rope and crampons were unnecessary. There were none of what WA Poucher would have called "mural precipices".

There was also no need for a map, as we were beside a golf course where my wife has often played. But as the path followed a fold in the ground, fringed by gorse bushes and passing a frozen lochan, there was a sense that while we

were in the city, we were no longer of the city.

And we were not alone. The fine weather had tempted others from their firesides. One of them, making his way unaided to the summit, was about five years old. This was not an extreme climb, but even the five-year-old was having a great time – and all right on his doorstep.

Soon, the ridge broadened and the view lengthened. The city was at our feet – quiet, cold, snow-flecked and surprisingly green. Further afield lay the blue of the Firth of Forth, and the white of the distant (and to me, more familiar!) Pentlands, Ochils and Perthshire hills.

Half an hour later we were back home. I love new experiences, and here was one that I had neglected for so many years. It's one that I now value greatly, and will never forget. □

Further info
Find out how to share your wild moments with us and read other contributions at johnmuirtrust.org/wild-moments

Joining the dots

Helen McDade explains why we need more joined-up thinking on planning and land use across the UK

ACROSS the constituent countries of the UK, there is a strange disconnect between words and actions when it comes to land use and planning.

On the one hand, we have encouraging statements from governments and ministers highlighting the importance of the natural environment. Michael Gove, the new UK Environment Minister, recently stated: “I want to ensure that we build natural capital thinking into our approach towards land use and management so we develop a truly sustainable future for our countryside ... we will also make additional money available for those who wish to collaborate to secure environmental improvements collectively at landscape scale.”

Meanwhile, the Scottish Government Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement “promotes and supports a human rights approach to land and will contribute to securing rights, equality and wellbeing by balancing public and private interests”. And a recent Welsh Government consultation stated: “Nature-based solutions are one means of addressing issues at a particular scale (which can be any scale from local water supply to landscape).”

All of this is welcome. These high-level aspirations reinforce the need for the Trust to engage with and influence policy-making at national level. But while our politicians may make the right noises about valuing wild land and natural landscapes, they are under intense pressure to abandon some of our current

protections in order to facilitate rapid development. As a result, changes in the planning system seem designed to thwart the laudable environmental goals of our governments.

The Scottish Government says that “the purpose of planning is to guide how land should be used to meet the needs of society”. But the reality in Scotland, and across the UK, is that the actual trend of planning policy is increasingly biased in favour of development over environmental protection, driven by the triple demands of a genuine need for more housing, the pressure to deliver economic growth, plus intense lobbying by major businesses.

HUGE IMPACT

Our planning systems may be flawed but they have a huge impact on almost all our lives, and on the environment around us. The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England believes that current housing plans would, over 25 years, lead to three to four per cent of England’s remaining undeveloped land becoming urbanised. Meanwhile, in Scotland and Wales, swathes of our most remote areas continue to be under pressure from industrial energy development planning applications.

Consequently, in pursuit of the Trust’s vision of protecting and enhancing wild places, we do find ourselves having to step up and object to individual applications that have the potential to adversely affect our wild land and natural landscapes.



PHOTOGRAPH: NIALL BENNIE

Messy or not, engaging in the planning process is critical. And as an organisation operating at national level, part of the Trust’s role is to influence planning policies, so that the right decisions are far more likely to be made in the future.

Currently, the Trust is using the passage through the Scottish Parliament of the Planning (Scotland) Bill to press for better protection for nature and wild land. We are concerned at two points in particular: one, that the measures as currently framed do not sufficiently improve the rights of communities – both geographical communities and ‘communities of interest’ – to become involved in the planning process. And secondly, and worryingly, there is almost no mention of environmental protection in the draft Bill. Many other organisations and individuals have raised similar points, so we hope the government will listen to these arguments.

More specifically, the Trust is seeking:

- an overarching ‘Purpose of Planning Statement’. This is one way in which environmental and social aims could be brought into the Bill

- explicit reference to how protection and enhancement of the natural and cultural environment will be ensured
- reference in the Bill to give Wild Land



PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN MUIR TRUST



Striking the balance: a place for wildness (main); Keep it Wild campaigners at Holyrood (right and below)



PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN MUIR TRUST

Areas the same protection as National Parks and National Scenic Areas

- Equal Rights of Appeal to give communities a genuine opportunity to challenge poor decisions. This would go a long way to increasing public trust in the planning and political system.

We may not get all our points picked up during the process of the Bill but this is not a zero-sum game. By raising these now, we may be in a stronger position to positively influence the next National Planning Framework and Scottish Planning Policy, both of which are due to be reviewed soon.

WIDER VISION

We also want to look beyond planning policy towards a wider and clearer vision for land use in rural areas. While urban and suburban land is generally zoned within the planning system, that is not the case for rural land use, much of which is beyond the remit of planning, and tends to be governed by specific agricultural, forestry, water, or sport shooting regulations.

But rural land use affects everyone and is too important to be left entirely to private choices. We all need water, food, timber, energy and the other material benefits we derive from rural land. And

we need the carbon sequestration properties provided by peatlands, woodlands and the sediment in our rivers.

Then there are the cultural benefits we derive from the land, from recreational activities to aesthetic and even spiritual experiences. As John Muir himself put it, “we all need beauty as well as bread”.

So, surely, what is required is a holistic overview of land use, including planning policy, which does not artificially divide issues of public interest into those that are deemed as planning matters with others segregated into individual sectors such as agriculture, forestry, deer management, grouse shooting or whatever. Ultimately, we need innovative ways of considering planning and other land uses together.

The Scottish Government has already committed to a Land Use Strategy and Action Plan which covers those areas and those types of development which do not fall within the planning process. This commitment to an annual Action Plan

“Rural land use affects everyone and is too important to be left entirely to private choices”

was part of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, and puts Scotland ahead of the rest of the UK in taking an overview of land use not already governed by the planning system. Many environmental organisations are keen to see this replicated in England and Wales.

However, even in Scotland, following two trial Land Use Strategy projects, the process of developing a strategic overview of land use seems to have stalled. There was no Action Plan update produced in 2017.

So, wherever we look in the UK, we are a long way from having a seamless, joined-up system. A robust strategy for land use would start off by working out what we want our land to look like, how we intend to protect its biodiversity, and what ecosystem services we need it to provide us with.

Such a vision could be produced within each of the component parts of the UK – all of which have their own specific geographical conditions – backed up with an overarching strategy to enable a degree of consistency across the whole of the island of Britain. □

About the author
Helen McDade is the
Trust’s Head of Policy



PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN MUIR TRUST

All go at Glenlude

The Trust's property at Glenlude in the Scottish Borders continues to develop apace, with a huge amount achieved over the past year. **Rich Rowe** pays a visit

KAREN PURVIS, the Trust's Glenlude property manager, is beaming. It's easy to see why. This is my first visit to Glenlude for several years, and I can't believe the progress that has been made. From the infrastructure and facilities to what is happening out on the hill, Glenlude is a place transformed.

It's a snowy January day, but even with just the two of us on site, I can feel the energy and momentum that exists here. Inside the tree nursery – a huge polytunnel erected by volunteers in 2014 – the work benches are lined with seed trays. Scanning the labels, I spot common alder, hazel, downy birch and rowan. These seeds, which have been collected on site and locally, are destined to become the forest of the future at Glenlude.

This cycle of planting trees grown from seeds collected locally is further illustrated outside the nursery where pot after pot of tree seedlings sit hardening off ahead of being planted out this spring.

Back inside the visitor shelter – like the nearby composting toilet and tool store, also built by volunteers – Karen lobs another log into the open mouth of the nearby wood-burner and reflects with pride on the year just passed. Appropriately enough, as we begin to appreciate the warmth of the stove, last year began with a major step forward in plans to process and sell firewood.

Following a successful bid to The People's Postcode Lottery, the Trust was able to purchase a mobile firewood processor – a big, red beast of a thing – and install secure storage on site in the shape of a 20ft shipping container. This led to construction of an adjacent firewood store made using timber felled on site. Both structures were then topped off with turf for camouflage, with all the work finally completed in June.

Having built up stocks of processed firewood over the summer months, Karen and her team started selling logs in October 2017 – with all monies fed back into the wider project. "Sales are rising steadily, with most of our customers based locally," she explains.

PEOPLE AND PLACE

Perhaps more than any other Trust property, Glenlude is as much about the people who come here as the place itself. Easily accessible from major population centres, the site continues to receive fantastic support from regular volunteers who turn up for weekly work parties, which run from February to late November.

And as regulars volunteers will testify, no two days are the same, with tasks ranging from processing firewood and surveying to nursery work, building maintenance, fence and dyke repairs, felling, digging ditches, weeding tree tubes and more.

Last year, large quantities of logs were moved and stacked on the hill using a new 'iron horse' made by one of the volunteers. It has proved to be a handy piece of kit as some of the logs were just too large to move by hand.

Karen also held a series of four-day work parties throughout the year – extended periods of intense activity that proved hugely valuable. "Many trees above the orchard and along the main ride had their mesh removed as they are now beyond the reach of browsing deer," she outlines. "This mesh has now been reused for newly-planted trees."

Actual tree-planting was put largely on hold with the volunteer team first tied up with building the firewood processor and log stores early in the year, before – and this doesn't happen very often – the conditions then proving too dry to plant trees in the spring.

There was, however, one notable exception: Phoenix Futures' annual tree-planting day in April. Together with visiting MSP Rachel Hamilton, Phoenix service users planted around 250 trees in what is known as Phoenix Forest – an area at Glenlude that the Glasgow-based rehabilitation charity has taken ownership of.

It's a forest in which every tree tells a personal story. "Every Phoenix service user who successfully completes their programme has a tree planted in their honour," says Karen. "To



PHOTOGRAPH: KAREN PURVIS



PHOTOGRAPH: KAREN PURVIS



PHOTOGRAPH: KAREN PURVIS

All hands on deck (clockwise from main): Pupils from All Saints Primary removing fencing; the new mobile firewood processor and store; Phoenix Futures with Karen and Trust Chief Executive Andrew Bachell; inside the tree nursery; planting alongside Glenlude Burn; a happy Karen Purvis



PHOTOGRAPH: RICH ROWE

date, we have planted almost 2,000 trees and groups from Phoenix visit monthly throughout the year to take care of their patch.”

Elsewhere, and rather later in the year than usual, volunteers at a four-day work party in June planted 175 trees alongside the Glenlude Burn, including crab apple, downy birch and rowan grown from seed in the on-site tree nursery. The planting marked another milestone as it was the first time that trees grown from seed collected on site were planted out.

The area was revisited in November, with a further 250 trees, from home-grown sessile oak and dog rose to hazel, hawthorn and downy birch, all planted around the higher reaches of the burn.

As well as producing a steady supply of tree seedlings to plant out, the nursery was also greatly improved in 2017. It now has a new level floor, after the original one had settled quite a bit and developed puddles; two new sinks that provide proper facilities for processing seeds; and a split-level potting bench that makes general nursery work much easier.

Meanwhile, Alba Trees in East Lothian donated a wrapping station and rolls of film, allowing volunteers to pack and transport their own cell grown trees around the property much more efficiently.

“Following repeated flooding, we also installed a new irrigation system in April,” says a much relieved Karen. “This has proved its weight in gold when it comes to reliability and water efficiency.”

GROUP VISITS

John Muir Award groups remain the life blood of Glenlude, not least schools. A regular fixture at Glenlude throughout the year, Edinburgh’s George Watson’s College brought a number of groups to undertake conservation work as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Following the success of these visits, the school has booked

groups in for the first half of 2018, and also taken ownership of the ongoing deer monitoring survey at Glenlude.

Another regular, All Saints Primary School from Airdrie, returned in June for their fourth annual camping weekend, with around 70 people camping on site – all fed from a mobile pizza oven owned by two of the parents. In what was a monumental effort, the group removed about 700m of redundant fencing from the hill.

Cartmel Priory School from Cumbria also returned for a second year and assisted in various tasks, including relocating usable fencing materials down the hill and brashing. And in August, the Trust welcomed a group of 18 students from Spain and Germany as well as Scotland, who spent a week rebuilding the old sheep stell alongside the site’s wild camping area.

“Looking back, it was an eventful and productive year, with a huge amount of effort put in by an army of volunteers from many different walks of life,” reflects Karen. “It’s such a joy to see the habitats and woodlands develop along with the benefits that Glenlude gives to people.

“Having now recharged our batteries, we are looking forward to an equally exciting and productive 2018.” □



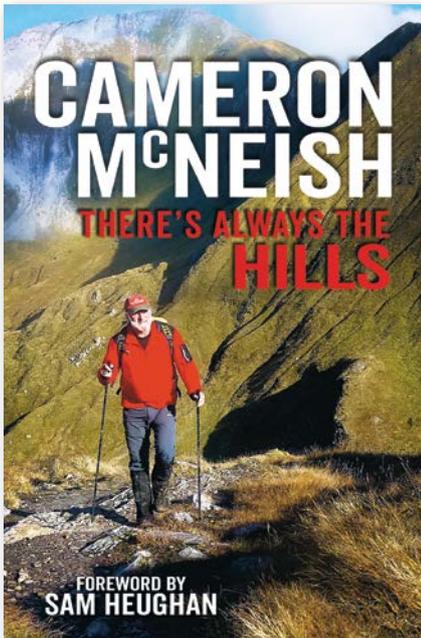
PHOTOGRAPH: RICH ROWE

Further info

Why not come and experience Glenlude for yourself? For full details of volunteer work party opportunities in 2018, see johnmuirtrust.org/workparties2018

About the author

Rich Rowe is contributing editor on the *Journal*



There's Always the Hills
by Cameron McNeish

Chris Townsend is thoroughly entertained by a very personal new book from an outdoors writer and broadcaster whom he has known and worked with for several decades

CAMERON McNEISH has been one of the best known voices in the hill walking and mountaineering world for many decades through his books, articles and TV programmes. In this 'autobiography of sorts' he tells the story of how his outdoor life came to be.

I've known Cameron for nearly 40 years and worked for him when he edited outdoor magazines as well as enjoying trips in the mountains with him, most notably the GR20 in Corsica, the story of which he recounts here (I get other mentions in the book too – this isn't an unbiased review!).

However, I still didn't know that much about his early life in Glasgow, or his days as a promising athlete and the succession of short-lived jobs he had before taking the plunge and becoming a Youth Hostel warden in Aberdeen. All this is told in his usual easy-to-read, easy-going style – one that I suspect softens some of the tough times and setbacks.

This is a positive book that glows with good humour, well-being and joy. There are tales of accidents and the fairly recent foot problem that almost ended his hill walking, but nowhere do these come

across in a negative way. The overall feel is of a life full and well-lived.

Interspersed with the fascinating story of how his writing and broadcasting career developed, there are passionate descriptions of favourite walks and hills, and the book really shows how these have been crucial to his happiness and outlook on life.

Once he was established as a writer and editor his television career began to develop and the last part of the book describes this, especially his partnership with Richard and Meg Else and the programmes they made together from *The Edge – One Hundred Years of Scottish Mountaineering* through the *Wilderness Walks* series to his current Christmas shows.

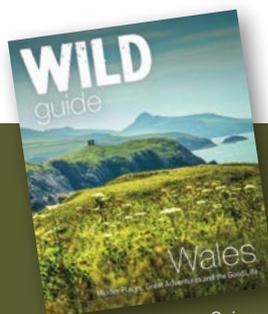
Whilst the book isn't polemical or political, Cameron does discuss issues such as access, risk, renewable energy, and especially conservation on which he issues a call to arms: 'We badly need more hill walkers and mountaineers to stand up to politicians and be counted. We urgently need thousands of voices raised in protest at developments on our wild land.'

This is a very worthwhile read for anyone interested in the Scottish hills and Scottish outdoor world. Cameron McNeish has been at the heart of these for so long that his story and theirs is very much intertwined. □

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sandstonepress.com

The reviewer
Chris Townsend is a Trustee and outdoors writer and campaigner

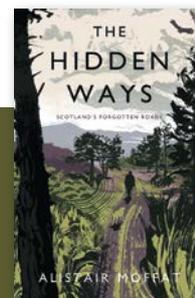
PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD ELSE



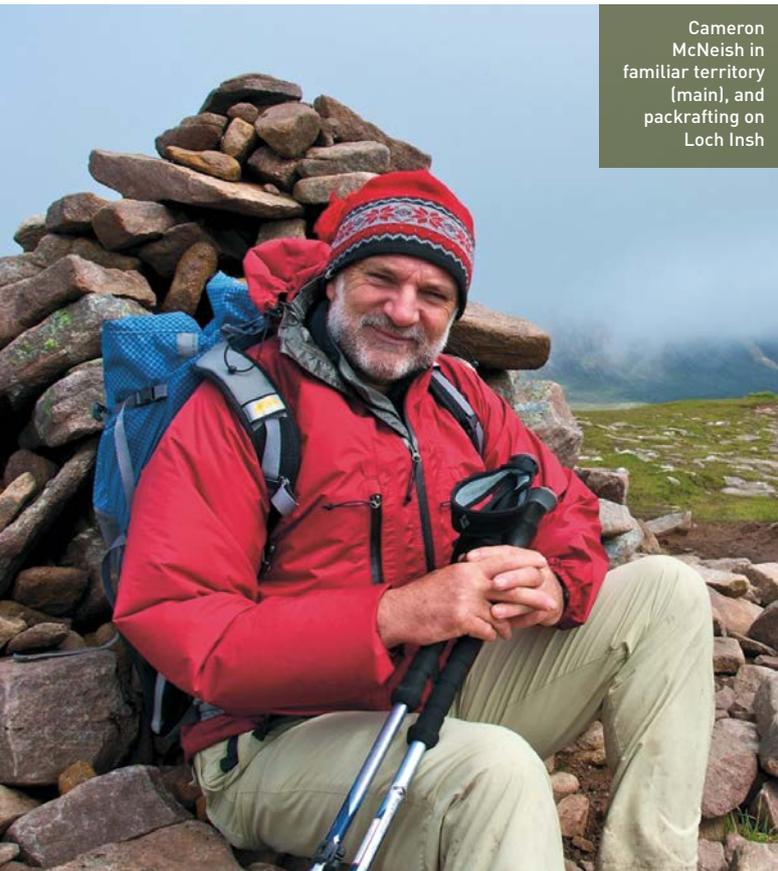
Others we like

Wild Guide Wales, Daniel Start and Tania Pascoe
We've had a sneaky peek at this brand new guide to some of the most stunning wild locations in Wales and the Marches. Scheduled for publication in May, this latest book in the award-winning *Wild Guide* series packs in 600 adventures covering hidden beaches, wild swims and waterfalls, lost ruins, caves and caverns, sacred places, ancient forests and much more. £16.99
wildthingspublishing.com

Cairngorm Ranger, Nic Bullivant
Having worked as Head Ranger on Cairn Gorm from 1997 to 2017, Nic Bullivant knows a thing or two about what is the most visited mountain in the Cairngorms National Park. This beautifully-crafted book offers a highly personal portrait of the mountain, its wildlife, visitors and various (often controversial) developments over the past two decades. Told with great candour, it's a little like having your own personal guide to the mountain. £20.00
troubador.co.uk



The Hidden Ways: Scotland's Forgotten Roads, Alistair Moffat
In this fascinating new book – with echoes of Robert Macfarlane's *The Old Ways* – the author travels along a collection of hidden routes to reveal not only the great physical beauty of the landscape, but also a different kind of social history: one that follows in the footsteps of our ancestors to trace the stories of a variety of unremembered but important lives. £20
canongate.co.uk



Cameron McNeish in familiar territory (main), and packrafting on Loch Insh

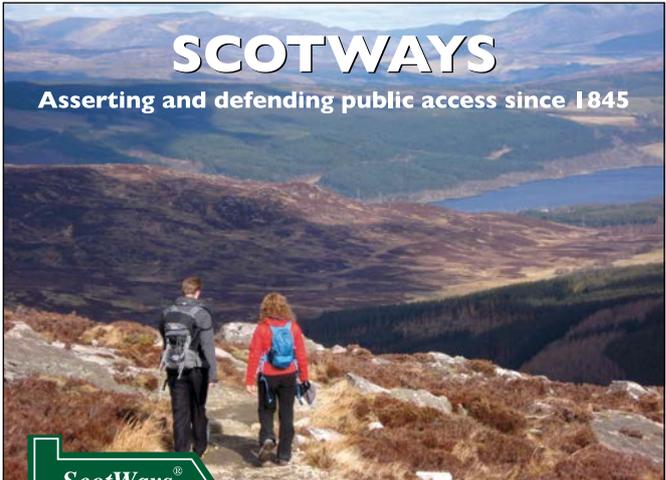


PHOTOGRAPH: CAMERON McNEISH

Wainwright Revealed, Richard Else
As a television producer working with a somewhat reluctant star, Richard Else got to know Alfred Wainwright – the doyen of Lakeland hill walking and writing – better than most. This affectionate book offers a compelling insight into an obsessive and complex figure. £16.00
mountain-media.co.uk



Britain's Best Small Hills, Phoebe Smith
Hot on the heels of her best-selling *Wilderness Weekend*, Phoebe Smith returns with a celebration of some of the adventures and experiences that can be enjoyed on Britain's less lofty hills. A perfect confidence booster for those new to hill walking. £14.99
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Kevin Lelland caught up with Mark Hamblin, one of the UK's most respected wildlife photographers and a key member of a major multi-media project, Scotland: The Big Picture

How did you get involved in photography?

I first became interested in nature when a family friend gifted me a subscription to the Young Ornithologist's Club for my 11th birthday. I became fascinated by birds, and my dad began taking me out bird watching around my home county of Warwickshire. We became hooked and soon afterwards started to venture into photography.

Do you remember when you took your very first photograph?

Yes, it was taken in the garden from a makeshift hide consisting of four garden canes and an old sheet with a hole cut for the lens and flash. The subject was a blue tit feeding on a bag of peanuts. To be so close to a wild bird, and to capture a picture of it, was a seminal moment for me.

Formally trained or self-taught?

I've not had any formal training, although when I started my Dad and I took night school classes from a local bird photographer. Much of what I learnt was gained from trial and error. Gradually, I acquired a knowledge of bird behaviour plus the fieldcraft skills that are so important to nature photographers.

What is the most challenging aspect of your job?

Capturing a unique or rewarding photograph, especially of a species that



might be very elusive, or from a viewpoint that is difficult to reach. Photography has become undervalued by many due to digital capture, which means it is much more difficult to make images stand out from the crowd. The trick now is perhaps not to think in terms of single images but in how to use images to tell stories about the natural environment.

And what do you enjoy most about it?

I have always felt excitement at the prospect of capturing a great photograph. It's what gets me out of bed at 2am on a frosty April morning to photograph black grouse lekking, or drive 100 miles in the dark to reach a hide before dawn. To be lucky enough to spend countless hours in the company of wildlife, often at close range, is fantastic. Who wouldn't enjoy that?



ALL PHOTOGRAPHS: MARK HAMPLIN

Flights of fancy: ptarmigan high up in the hills (left); a moment of calm (above)

Do you ever use film, or are you 100 per cent digital?

I was brought up on film and used it until I switched to digital in 2004. For some reason, I do still have a few rolls of Fuji film in my fridge – I have no idea why as I don't even own a film camera anymore. I'm reminded of a previous era each time I reach for the milk!

Tell us about your current project, Scotland: The Big Picture

It's essentially a follow up to 2020VISION, which I worked on in my role as Director of Wild Media Foundation. However, while 2020VISION showcased habitat restoration projects around the UK, Scotland: The Big Picture centres on communicating the case for a wilder Scotland, both for wildlife and people. I'm working with Peter Cairns – the project founder – James Shooter and Mat Larkin, along with a number of other professional writers, designers, educators, sound recorders and filmmakers.

And the project led to working with the Trust on Skye ...

Yes, I was tasked with capturing images of golden eagles, attracting them to deer carcasses as a means of telling the story around nutrient recycling. Having established a feeding station within eagle territory on Trust property in 2015, and used a camera trap to identify that eagles visited the site, we built a wooden photographic hide which enabled me to capture some very rewarding images. In future, we hope that the hide will be made available to clients as a further example of the benefits of nature-based tourism to the local community. □

Further info
For much more on Scotland:
The Big Picture, visit
scotlandbigpicture.com

About the interviewer
Kevin Lelland is the Trust's
Head of Development and
Communications

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