

JOHN MUIR TRUST

JOURNAL

59 AUTUMN 2015

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How native woodland can create a better future for our uplands

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COVER: RED SQUIRREL IN PINE FOREST, NEIL MCINTYRE PHOTOGRAPHY

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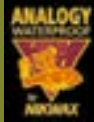
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Photographer: Mark Hamblin/2020VISION



From the chief executive

WELCOME to all our members and other readers to this autumn edition of the John Muir Trust Journal. This is the time of year when people tend to talk about the chill in the air, the changing colours of the trees, and the nights fair drawing in, but I'll try to avoid seasonal clichés and concentrate instead on the process of change over a longer timescale.

The passage of time is an important but often neglected aspect of conservation. Our mission is long term, because wild land itself is the product of millions of years of change. The skeleton of rock might appear permanent, but it's clothed in ever-changing patterns of water, soil and vegetation. When we go into the mountains, or gaze out to sea, we connect with the past in a way we seldom do in the more artificial setting of our everyday lives. That can be humbling. It reminds us of our transient place on earth, and all too often the damage we have wrought upon our planet.

The John Muir Trust was founded to minimise further destruction and to help nature heal itself. In the really wild places that doesn't mean 'giving nature a home'. Nature already has a home. Our role is to allow plants and animals to live there, as far as possible undisturbed by human interference. We do this by challenging damaging activity, whether that is burning vegetation, or overgrazing by sheep and deer. This process of rewilding allows our woodlands to return, bringing with it a rich array of wildlife.

When we purchased our first property at Li and Coire Dhorrcail on Knoydart in 1987, we did so with the intention of achieving just that. In the lead feature in this edition, Lester Standen, our property manager on Knoydart, reveals how hard won the rewards have been. After decades of tireless work, the once dying woodlands have gradually been nurtured back to life; and after centuries of destructive exploitation, we are now seeing the dawn of a new and vibrant era on this part of Knoydart – an effort that recently saw us win

the prestigious New Native Woods category at Scotland's Finest Woodlands Awards held at this year's Royal Highland Show.

We are never more conscious of time than when we consider our own mortality. When Dick Balharry first set out as a young man with a bold new vision for Creag Meagaidh, he well understood that the best would come beyond his lifetime. Mike Daniels, his friend and colleague, reflects on his legacy there.

Trees and woodlands might capture the plaudits, and John Muir was certainly a fan, but I have to declare my love for peatlands. A pine tree might have towered over the landscape for 500 years, but the peatlands have borne witness to thousands of years of history, helping shape our landscape, language, culture and identity. With this in mind, I'm pleased that we are carrying an excerpt from *The Moor* – a collaboration between artist Gareth Watson and author Robert Macfarlane.

Our work with young people, especially through the John Muir Award, is making an investment in future generations. If we can instil a positive relationship, by providing opportunities for fun, adventure and learning, the future guardians of wild places will be more committed to protecting them. In this edition, some of those Award participants from around the UK tell us about their experiences.

Of course, while we must think about the long term, we also have to live in the here and now. Elsewhere in these pages, Helen McDade, our head of policy, explains the implications for wild land of recent decisions by the UK and Scottish Governments, and underlines the progress that the Trust has achieved in its campaigning to protect wild land.

Meanwhile, articles about the ecology of sea trout on Skye, and the exploits of two intrepid explorers who paddled and climbed across Scotland add a watery tone to an otherwise 'woody' issue of the Journal. I hope you enjoy it.

Stuart Brooks
Chief executive, John Muir Trust



Healthy native woodland has benefits for us all



PHOTOGRAPH: MARK HAMLIN / 2020 VISION

Chris Packham invokes spirit of John Muir

More than 400 people packed into the Royal Geographical Society in London in early September to hear naturalist and TV presenter Chris Packham (see p34) give the inaugural Spirit of John Muir talk. His speech featured an imaginary dinner party with Neil Armstrong (pictured), Audrey Hepburn, General Custer, Charles Darwin and, of course, the star guest: John Muir. Chris entertained and captivated the audience for more than an hour, covering a range of thought-provoking subjects from deer management and rewilding to raptor persecution. Find out more about the event, and hear Chris's talk, at www.johnmuirtrust.org/spiritofjohnmuir



Chris addressing a full house at the Royal Geographical Society

PHOTOGRAPH: MATTHEW CHATLIE

Award marks two major milestones

The John Muir Award marked two major milestones in September. Sixteen-year-old Zak Lakota-Baldwin, who volunteers with London Wildlife Trust, became the 250,000th recipient of the Award at a special presentation held at Camley Street Natural Park in London's King's Cross. The event was also attended by the New Roots Project – a programme of gardening, training and conservation activities for prisoners and ex-offenders – some of whose participants also recently completed the Award.

The following week, 550 miles to the north, Scotland's Environment Minister, Dr Aileen McLeod, presented the 25,000th John Muir Award to be achieved within the Cairngorms National Park. The proud recipient, Grace Moir, completed her Award after being referred to Apex Scotland for help with alcohol addiction. Grace, who has amassed 300 hours as an outdoor volunteer, is now a Peer Mentor, supporting other service users to overcome alcohol problems.



PHOTOGRAPHY: JOHN MUIR AWARD



Double celebration: Grace Moir receives her Award certificate in the Cairngorms (left); Zak Lakota-Baldwin with his milestone certificate

Volunteers work flat out over the summer months

Sandy Maxwell, the Trust's volunteer coordinator, has kept members busy over the summer months planting trees, clearing bracken, removing rhododendron, cleaning beaches, maintaining footpaths, repairing and dismantling fencing, building brush hedges, collecting seeds, building tree nurseries, replanting marram grass and much more.

In addition to ongoing work at our own properties, the Trust has also taken teams of volunteers to help out at Mar Lodge and Glen Tanar in the Cairngorms; Portlethen Moss near Aberdeen; North and West Harris; and the Little Assynt Tree Nursery near Lochinver.

Trust's new website launched

The Trust has brought its digital presence up-to-date with the launch of a new website that has already attracted a surge of interest from people keen to find out more about the Trust.

Head of communications, Kevin Lelland, said: "We have great new content on the site, including seven superb short films showcasing our spectacular properties and the range of work carried out by our land team on the ground. It's designed to work smoothly on mobile devices, so it's already opened up a whole new audience."

See our new website at www.johnmuirtrust.org





The snow patch survey on Nevis revealed some remarkable formations of lingering snow

PHOTOGRAPH: BLAIR FYFFE

Review of fundraising practices

The Trust is immensely grateful for the support of our members and donors and the relationships we maintain with them. Charities' fundraising practices have come under recent scrutiny from the media and politicians and a Government Fundraising Review has recommended stronger statutory regulations for fundraising and an overhaul of the regulatory bodies responsible.

We welcome the recommendations and would be pleased to see a more respectful, level playing field for charity fundraising. The Trust is a member of the Fundraising Regulations Standards Board (FRSB) and does not operate any of the practices being criticised, namely selling or exchanging personal data and using outsourced companies to contact potential donors.

Trust staff have recently made phone calls to our life members, and would like to thank those that we have contacted for their time

and their generosity, which has resulted in over £10,000 of donations and some very informative and positive conversations. We have no plans to make any further calls.

If you would like to speak to us about your membership, or your ability to support the Trust with a regular gift, or any other aspect of fundraising, please get in touch with Kate Barclay, our head of fundraising, on 01796 470080, or kate.barclay@johnmuirtrust.org



Trust staff support survey scientists on Ben Nevis

This summer has seen the Trust's Nevis team help out with three scientific surveys, as well as support our own conservation work party volunteers with essential path maintenance and litter picking.

In late August, Nevis ranger Blair Fyffe assisted snow patch survey organiser Iain Cameron to check the remaining snow on Nevis as part of an annual snow patch survey – fascinating work that not only helps build up a scientific log of changing conditions, but which often results in some spectacular images.

Earlier in the month, Blair joined property manager Alison Austin in helping the Nevis Landscape Partnership (NLP) with stage two of a three-year North Face survey. This involved supporting geologists and botanists while they made a week-long examination of the rare plants and geological features found on the north face of Ben Nevis.

The team surveyed approximately 125ha in mid-August. Once available, the full survey data will provide greater detail on the distribution of rare vascular plants, plus a better understanding of geological processes such as cauldron subsistence on Ben Nevis.

The second half of August also saw Alison and Blair help train volunteers to record signs of water vole on an NLP Citizen Science day. "It was pretty damp and midgy, but we did record a fair amount of water vole activity," said Alison.



Recent repair work on the path at Quinag

PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS GOODMAN

Footpath repairs begin on Skye

As we go to press, Arran Footpath Partnership is about to begin a major programme of repairs on the Druim Hain footpath at Strathaird on the Isle of Skye. The company, which carried out the successful upgrade of the Steall Gorge footpath in 2012, will undertake the work in two phases, with completion expected in early 2016. The full cost of the project is expected to be around £67,000 (including approximately £15,000 for helicopter airlifts).

Over the summer, the Trust completed repair work on Quinag, focusing on the section of path that leads from the main saddle to the highest peak. The work was carried out by Mountains Made Easy, a Lochinver-based contractor.



Consent for a major wind farm at Allt Duine was recently refused

Mixed news for Scottish wild land

The Trust has warmly welcomed three recent decisions by the Scottish Government to refuse consent to wind farms on wild land at Beinn Mhor on the edge of Glen Affric; at Limekiln in Caithness and Allt Duine on the western edge of the Cairngorms National Park.

As we go to press, we are still awaiting the outcome of the Stronelaairg judicial review, as well as ministerial decisions on two other major wild land developments, at Glencassley and Sallachy in Sutherland (support our Area 34 campaign at bit.ly/1VrcFpy).

At nearby Creag Rhiabach, Highland councillors backed a recommendation by planning officials to support a 22-turbine wind farm on peatland, including four turbines in a Wild Land Area, despite opposition from Scottish Natural Heritage

as well as conservation and outdoor organisations. The final decision on the proposal will be taken by the Scottish Government.

On a more positive note, Perth and Kinross Council has come out in strong opposition to the proposed 25-turbine Crossburns in Highland Perthshire, which would potentially disfigure the long distance upland walking route, the Rob Roy Way. Again the final decision will rest with the Scottish Government.

The Trust's Policy Officer John Low has just given evidence at Public Local Inquiry into a 14-turbine wind farm at Carn Gorm, near Ben Wyvis. The developer used its right of appeal to pursue the inquiry after the proposal was refused by Highland Council.

For more on recent UK and Scottish Government decisions, see page 22.

Trust welcomes Scottish Land Reform Bill

The Trust has submitted a consultation statement to the Rural Affairs and Climate Change Committee of the Scottish Parliament broadly welcoming the key measures of the Land Reform Bill, while seeking further clarification on some detail.

In addition, we have asked for stronger commitment to rectifying ecological damage to Scotland's uplands, repairing damaged peatlands and restoring native woodlands. Specifically, we have called for increased regulation of the deer industry, by providing Scottish Natural Heritage with the power to intervene and force landowners to manage their deer populations in the public interest.

The full statement can be downloaded from the Trust website, at www.johnmuirtrust.org/about/resources/264-land-reform

Campaigners say no to Lake District pylons

The Trust has added its weight to a coalition of environmental and outdoor groups, led by Friends of the Lake District, that are fighting plans by National Grid to construct a chain of high-voltage pylons the height of Nelson's Column that will pass through the Lake District National Park.

National Grid proposes to run 400kV

cables around the west of Cumbria from Carlisle in the north to Heysham in the south. The proposal, designed to connect up a new power station near Sellafield, represents the largest planned electricity infrastructure project in the UK. In the worst-case scenario, the plan would see 24km of pylons and overhead lines within the Lake District National Park.

Campaigners are calling for the line to be taken offshore or buried underground. www.saynotopylonsinthelakedistrict.org.uk

News in brief

- Over 520,000 people have signed a public petition defending the European Union Birds and Habitats Directive against political moves to water it down, which have also been opposed by over 100 voluntary organisations across the UK, including the Trust. See our website for further updates about the next stages of the campaign.

- The North York Moors National Park Authority has approved an application for the world's largest potash mine, despite opposition from the Trust and almost 30 other environmental and amenity organisations. Following the refusal of the UK Government to call in the decision, the Campaign for National Parks is now considering a legal challenge.

- The UK Department of Energy and Climate Change has refused consent for four major wind farms and an overhead power line in Powys following a long and hard-fought local campaign backed by the Trust. The negative impacts on biodiversity and landscape were among the reasons given for the decision.

- The Trust has joined 42 local community councils to express concern over a proposal from Scottish Power Energy Network to build a 400kV transmission line in Dumfries & Galloway. Based on our experience of the Beaulieu-Denny Public Local Inquiry, we are asking for the environmental impact to be thoroughly considered, along with costs and the technical case. See local campaign news at <http://dumgalagainstpylons.org/>

Save the date

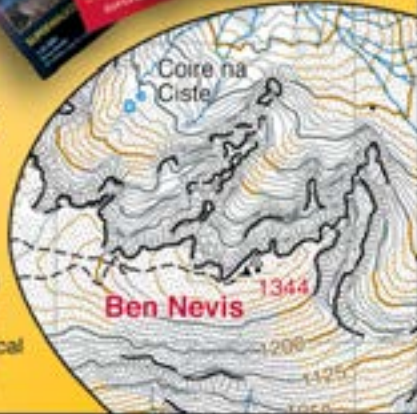
The 2016 John Muir Trust AGM and Members' Gathering will be held at The Ironworks in Inverness from 3-4 June. Full details and a booking form will be included in the January edition of Members' News. If planning to attend, we strongly advise you book accommodation in the area as soon as possible.

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Upland rising

As Li and Coire Dhorrcail wins national recognition, new research shows how wide-scale restoration of upland woodlands could paint a brighter future for remote communities.

Alan McCombes explores Knoydart's place in the bigger picture

WHEN THE SUN SPARKLES on Loch Houran, or when dolphins dance in the clear blue water, and eagles glide high over the hills, casual visitors to Li and Coire Dhorrcail tend to envy Lester Standen. As the John Muir Trust's land manager on the ruggedly beautiful north coast of Knoydart, Lester is often told that he must have one of the best jobs in the world.

The reality is somewhat less idyllic. "Let's start with the torrential rain, the high winds and the clouds of midges," suggests Lester. "Then there are the hazards of navigating steep, tussocky slopes, with dense vegetation hiding deep holes. Or the constantly waterlogged soil which means your feet are never dry. And the logistics of loading heavy equipment and materials onto and off the boat, and then up the hill. Even when the weather's wonderful as I'm sailing across, I don't really look at the views because I'm too busy worrying whether I've forgotten anything vital."

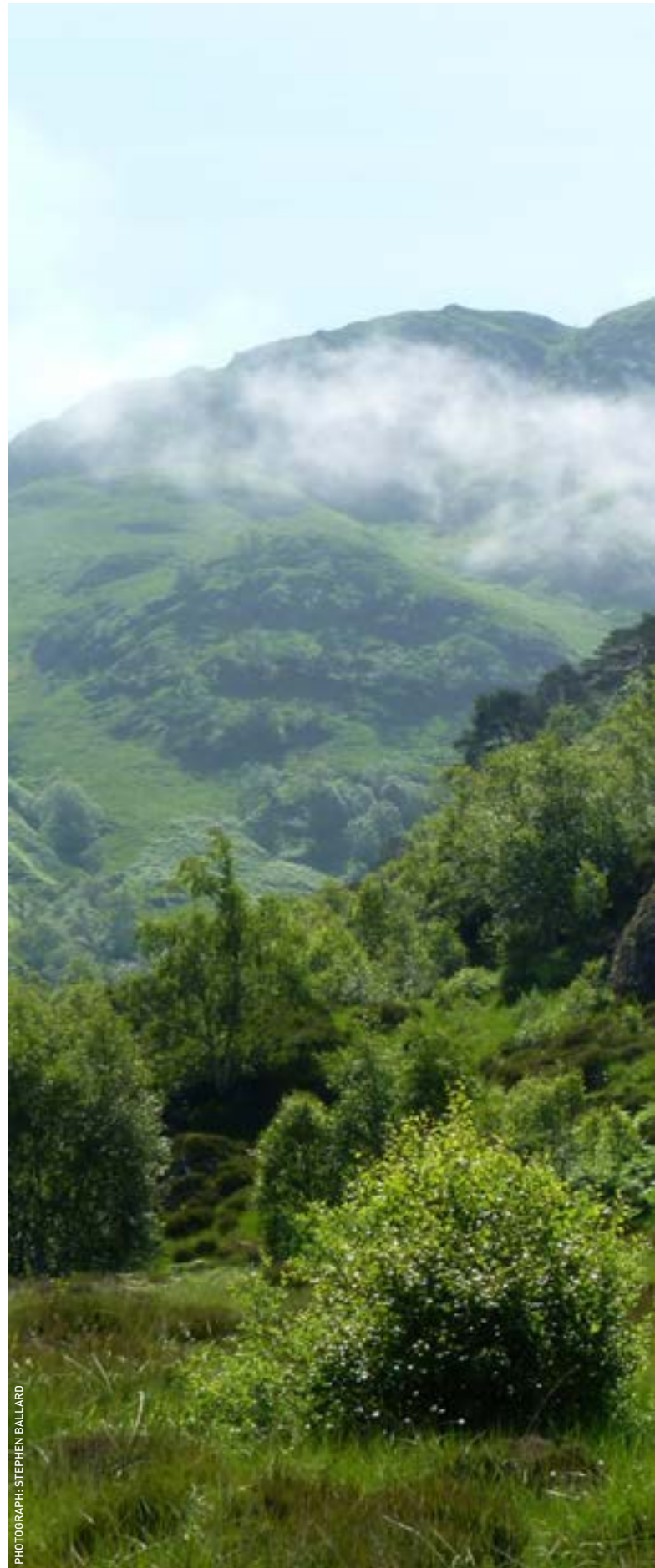
The geography of this peninsula makes it one of the most difficult places in Britain to manage. For volunteers, it is notoriously inaccessible: a five-hour drive from Scotland's central belt, followed by a nine-mile walk in or a boat journey across the loch, then a steep trek up the side of a precipitous gorge. The landscape may be captivating to look at, but the terrain here is among the harshest anywhere in Europe. Not for nothing is this stretch of storm-lashed, volcano-blasted coastline known in Gaelic as *Na Garbh Chrìochan* - the Rough Bounds.

Yet this summer, Lester travelled to Edinburgh to receive a plaque from Scotland's Environment Minister, Aileen McLeod, after Li and Coire Dhorrcail won the prestigious New Native Woods category of Scotland's Finest Woodlands Awards. Speaking at the ceremony, one of the judges, John Gallagher, said: "This is an exemplar of sustainable land management. The John Muir Trust can be truly proud of its achievement over the past 25 years."

TIME THE HEALER

When Lester first set eyes on Coire Dhorrcail in 1986 on his way to the summit of Ladhar Bheinn, he remembers a barren, ecologically-impoverished landscape, grazed almost to death by sheep and deer. A couple of years later, after the John Muir Trust had acquired the property, eminent plant ecologist Paul Jarvis visited the north side of Knoydart to study what was left of what was once a genetically unique outlier of the ancient Caledonian Forest. His report was bleak: "Both in Glen Barrisdale and Coire Dhorrcail there is virtually no regeneration of the wood taking place today. There are no young trees. The wood is dying." He went on to call for "urgent, positive, active conservation".

Lester's involvement with the Trust's regeneration work on Knoydart began almost a quarter of a century ago, after reading an "inspirational" magazine article about the charity's vision for Li and Coire Dhorrcail. As a commercial forestry worker, he brought with him an abundance of skills and expertise. After participating in some volunteer work parties and carrying out contract work for the Trust, Lester was first employed as a ranger at Li and Coire Dhorrcail in 2007, before moving on to become the land manager in 2011. During that time, he has witnessed up



PHOTOGRAPH: STEPHEN BALLARD



After 25 years of Trust ownership, Li and Coire Dhorrcail on Knoydart is now a very different place

close the gradual transformation of this former sporting estate – progress that has been praised by the new campaigning charity Rewilding Britain as an example of what could be achieved on a wider scale across the Highlands.

“Over the decades since I first came here, I’ve seen dramatic progress thanks to the heroic work of scores of people, including John Muir Trust staff and volunteers, and local contractors,” explains Lester. “Where there were only dying remnants clinging to the steepest slopes of the gorge, there is now spreading, open woodland of Scots pine, birch, willow, rowan, hazel and oak, elm and bird cherry.”

Progress up to now has been achieved mainly through tree planting, which is still essential. That has paved the way for natural regeneration, which in recent years has begun to accelerate, aided by birds, voles and other small mammals carrying seeds out from the gorge. The restoration of this natural cycle has only been made possible by controlling deer numbers to reduce grazing pressures. That in turn involves confronting major logistical and political obstacles.

Lester generally works with a local stalker from the village of Arnisdale. Even so, the struggle to reduce deer numbers in this environment requires formidable strength and stamina. There are no bulldozed tracks on this estate. During the summer stag season, when the deer graze high on the hillsides, the carcasses have to be dragged down over steep terrain to be transported across the loch by boat, and then loaded into the trailer before being driven to the deer larder.

Lester also has to face down opposition from some neighbouring landowners, who want to keep deer numbers high because they manage the land mainly for sport. “They have little interest in conservation so don’t really understand what we’re trying to do here,” he explains. “But we get on very well with and work in partnership alongside the community-owned Knoydart Foundation, which shares many of our goals.”

The stated aim of the Knoydart Foundation – the biggest landowner on the peninsula – is to “manage the Knoydart Estate as an area of employment and settlement on the Knoydart Peninsula without detriment to its natural beauty and character, and to seek and encourage the preservation of its landscape, wildlife, natural resources, culture and rural heritage.”

At its peak, before the Highland Clearances, Knoydart supported almost 1,000 people, but by the mid-20th century, under the infamous absentee landowner, Lord Brockett, only a few dozen remained. Even today, despite the success of the Knoydart Foundation community buy-out, this is one of the most sparsely populated tracts of land in Europe, with approximately one inhabitant per square kilometre, mainly concentrated around the village of Inverie.

PEOPLE AND PLACE

In this geographically mobile age, where the bright lights of the cities exert a powerful pull, no-one expects the population of Knoydart to return to the levels of centuries past. But could the regeneration of native woodlands, not just in Knoydart but across the Scottish Highlands, help to repopulate the glens, while restoring damaged local ecosystems?

Dr Helen Armstrong, an ecologist who recently completed a review for the Forestry Policy Group, believes it

could. Her paper, *The Benefits of Woodland: Unlocking the potential of Scotland’s Uplands*, sets out the environmental case for re-establishing diverse woodland and montane scrub across much more of Scotland’s landscape, as well as outlining the social and economic benefits that could flow from such landscape regeneration.

Helen states that at one time around half of Scotland’s uplands would have been covered with native woodland and shrub. Today, after centuries of felling, grazing and burning, that figure has reduced to just 4 per cent. “The uplands are very important to Scotland and cover about 70 per cent of the land area,” she explains. “Uplands are defined by conditions rather than altitude and so can extend in some places right down to sea level. Generally, they’re seen as cold, wet and windy places with poor soils. As a result they’re dismissed as inherently unproductive and only good for hardy sheep, red deer, red grouse and exotic conifers. In our paper, we challenge that, and say that the low productivity of the uplands is at least partly due to human mismanagement of the land.”

Naturalists have long recognised that Scotland’s bleak grouse moors, bare deer ‘forests’ and regimented conifer plantations are ecologically impoverished, and that large-scale reforestation with mixed woodland and scrub is needed to restore biodiversity. This would create a richer tapestry of flora and fauna from ground level up to the 2,000-foot tree line, enhancing the drama and mystery of the high peaks and ridges.

Bringing back landscape-scale woodlands, intimately mixed with open habitats, could also have far-reaching social and economic benefits, believes Helen Armstrong. “Fostering biodiversity and improving the provision of a wide range of ecosystem services has to come first,” she says. “But ecological diversity then has the potential to help develop economic diversity by supplying a wider range of products for local economies.”

Small-scale sawmills, for example, could produce a range of timber products – from fuel wood to fencing and saw logs, depending on local conditions – without the need for clear-felling. “Small sawmills can be far more flexible than bigger scale operations,” explains Helen. “They don’t have to rely on large quantities of identically sized trunks, but can deal with variations in size, age and species.”

While timber is the most obvious woodland product, the

expansion of tree cover across Scotland’s uplands has the potential to foster other small rural enterprises, from woodcraft to the harvesting of edible fungi, nuts and berries. It would also replenish Scotland’s depleted upland soils.

“Without trees and shrubs, our abundant rainfall washes soil nutrients away. If you bring back woodlands you improve the nutrient content and productivity of the soil. That’s because trees – especially deciduous species – will sink roots deep into the soil then draw the nutrients upwards. These are then dropped back onto the ground when the leaves fall.”

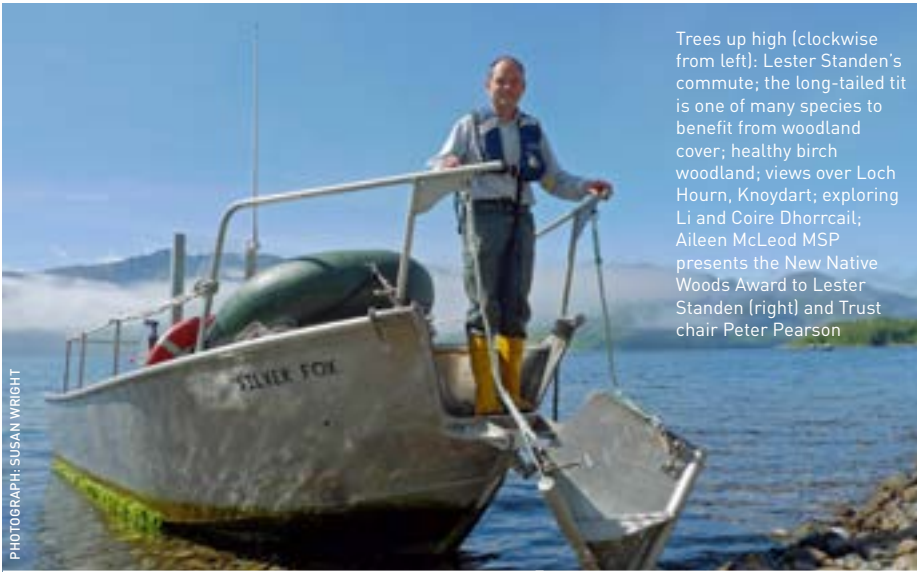
Paradoxically, reducing grazing pressures to allow the spread of woodland could even open the door to the eventual return of sustainable pastoral agriculture. And bringing down red deer numbers in the short term would allow the animals to thrive in the future.

“Domestic livestock do better on

Wood and water

As well as transforming the land, the expansion of woodlands has the potential to dramatically improve the quality of our rivers. “Trees not only reduce the loss of nutrients from the land, they also minimise the amount of soil that’s washed into streams and then deposited as silt,” explains Helen Armstrong. “That in turn creates a knock-on effect, because it provides better conditions for salmon and trout, which need clean, clear rivers and streams to breed, feed and live in.”

Woodland also helps prevent flooding in two ways. First, the canopy catches rain and holds much of it until the water evaporates back into the atmosphere. Second, the more porous soils under a woodland mean that, in times of heavy rainfall, more water is held in the catchment and less flows into the streams, thus reducing the risk of flooding further downstream.



PHOTOGRAPH: SUSAN WRIGHT

Trees up high (clockwise from left): Lester Standen's commute; the long-tailed tit is one of many species to benefit from woodland cover; healthy birch woodland; views over Loch Hourn, Knoydart; exploring Li and Coire Dhorrcail; Aileen McLeod MSP presents the New Native Woods Award to Lester Standen (right) and Trust chair Peter Pearson



PHOTOGRAPH: LIZ AULTY

'I've seen dramatic progress thanks to the heroic work of scores of people, including John Muir Trust staff and volunteers, and local contractors'



PHOTOGRAPH: MARK HANBLIN/ZOOVISION



PHOTOGRAPH: SCOTLAND'S FINEST WOODLANDS AWARDS



PHOTOGRAPH: NICKY MCCLURE



PHOTOGRAPH: SUSAN WRIGHT

meadows set within a mosaic of woodland habitats,” says Helen. “In Norway, Switzerland and other European countries, it’s common to graze sheep and cattle in fields within wooded uplands. The trees stabilise the soil and provide shelter for the animals. Red deer also do far better in woodland settings, where they produce more calves and grow larger than on exposed hillsides.

“In the meantime, we need a transition period in which grazing pressure is reduced by bringing deer and sheep numbers right down for a while, until we reach the point where there is enough woodland cover to sustain higher densities of grazing animals. With lower grazing pressures, reforestation would come about through natural regeneration in many areas, though planting may be needed in others where there is no nearby seed source, or where the soil is currently too poor or the vegetation too dense.”

CHANGING LAND USE

Reducing muirburn would also be necessary, argues Helen. “Burning prevents tree and shrub regeneration. It also has a deleterious impact on soils causing loss of nutrients and erosion. The amazing thing is, we don’t even know how much of our land goes up in smoke every year, or whether good practice is being followed, because no monitoring takes place.”

The timescale for that transition would depend very much on the site, says Helen. “In some areas, especially where there’s a good seed source, woodland can start to get away within 20 to 30 years, by which time you may be able to cautiously bring back some grazing.”

Based on experience elsewhere, she suggests that, “after 100 years of careful management, we could have a very different upland landscape”. But that doesn’t mean everything is put on hold for a century. “By beginning the process, we can still get a lot out of the uplands in the meantime. But that will always have to be balanced against the need for continuing regeneration.”

For those not intimately involved, such grand timescales can seem daunting. But on Knoydart, Lester Standen is content to observe the small, individual changes that accumulate over time to transform an entire landscape. “I see little changes, sometimes so small you’re not even sure it is a change. For example, I might occasionally see a species I’ve never seen before – a woodland bird, for example, that’s just appeared. Or I begin to be aware that there are more roe deer, which is a woodland animal, so that tells me something is changing.”

And other animals are appearing too. “There was a time when we didn’t know of any pine marten here – now we see plenty of evidence of their presence,” continues Lester. “The vegetation can also be revealing. You might start to notice a slight increase in the height of the heather, or the blaeberry, which tells you that the grazing pressures are reducing.”

Lester will never see the final result of the work he has personally spearheaded on Knoydart for much of the last decade. But then who will? The natural world brings never-ending change that will continue as long as the planet exists. But whether that change is for the better or for the worse will depend upon the decisions we take along the way. □

Further info

An overview of Dr Helen Armstrong’s research can be downloaded at:

<http://bit.ly/1MSGjmz>

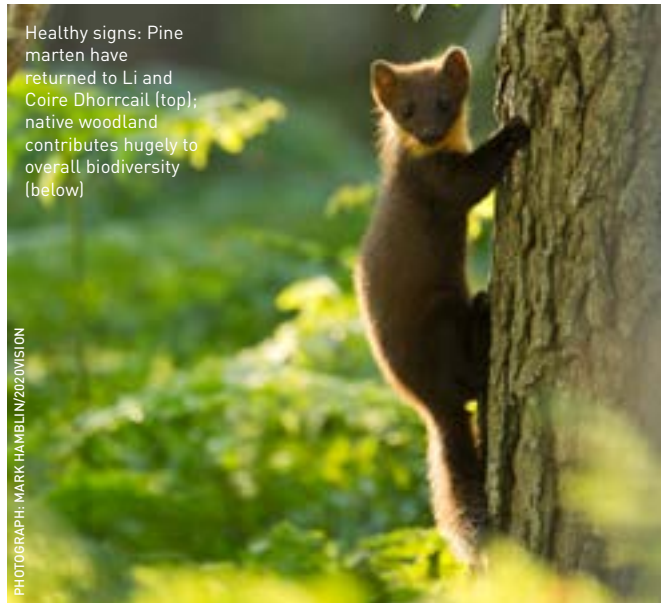
Her supporting evidence can be downloaded at: <http://bit.ly/1MSGwWG>

See also: Our lovely hills? Time to think again, by Simon Pepper
<http://bit.ly/1EmFb9h>

About the author

Alan McCombes is the Trust’s media manager. He can be contacted at alan.mccombes@johnmurtrust.org

Healthy signs: Pine marten have returned to Li and Coire Dhorrcail (top); native woodland contributes hugely to overall biodiversity (below)



PHOTOGRAPH: MARK HAMBLYN/2020VISION



PHOTOGRAPH: MARK HAMBLYN/2020VISION

Benefits for us

As well as the natural world, upland woodlands can also benefit people and communities by:

- Enriching the soil
- Reducing atmospheric greenhouse gases through carbon sequestration
- Stabilising soil thus reducing erosion and landslips
- Reducing the risk of downstream flooding
- Providing shelter and forage for domestic stock and game
- Creating the potential for sustainable enterprises based on forest products.

The Trust recently launched a special funding appeal to sustain the work being done on Knoydart. See the inside front cover of this issue for more details.



A rainforest returns

After a lengthy absence, Reforesting Scotland's **Hugh Chalmers** returns to a remote island in Ardnamurchan to find a landscape reborn

THE RESTORATION OF woodland culture sits at the heart of what Reforesting Scotland stands for. And it's not just an idle dream. It's happening in many places throughout Scotland – not least around the narrow fringes of Atlantic oakwoods found along parts of the west coast.

This Celtic rainforest, our own temperate version of that found in tropical climes, once swept all the way down to coastal areas of northern Europe but today is much diminished. There are, however, encouraging signs.

I had first visited one particular island in Loch Sunart, Ardnamurchan with friends in 1991. When we landed a sailing dinghy on the lee side of the island, it was much like everywhere else along the coast, though it did have some mature birch trees and the occasional mature oak. Camping was soft on the well-grazed lawns and lazy beds beside the ruins of an old croft house.

But as we paddled closer this time, it was apparent that much had changed. Our canoe landed on the same lee shore as before, this time close to a new wooden hut, where we planned to stay for a few nights. A fringe of young alder close to the shore screened the ruined croft house, and in the evening light we strolled westwards towards the highest point of the island to watch the sunset.

As we walked through mature birches, we brushed through troupes of rowan saplings, their first leaves just emerging. Elsewhere, we saw honeysuckle draped around birch stems, while even a few oak saplings had begun to appear.

And when we emerged from the old tree canopy onto the dry heather knolls and damp grassy mires that cover most of the island, we were astonished by the process of renewal. Instead of close-grazed heather, we found a haze of young

birch trees; clear glades still existed, but as far as the eye could see, bright birch leaves appeared translucent in the slanting light. The island was rejuvenating.

TURNING POINT

The bare facts are that in 1995 the (enlightened) owner had taken on a contract with the Forestry Commission to reduce deer numbers in order to allow the native forest to regenerate. We were there to pull up unwanted spruce trees and rhododendron bushes, their seed blown in on the wind from miles away.

Years of vigilance had paid off. We could find only the odd small spruce, while the rhodies had been pushed into one corner of the island. They would soon fall to the saw and lever. Meanwhile, numbers of red deer swimming from the mainland and other islands were kept low by regular stalking visits. On this one small island, we could see the reforestation of Scotland.

The charity I work for campaigns to restore the land and the people, so where do people fit into this story of a tiny west coast island? For centuries, the island and

wider area would have been under the domain of the Lords of the Isles, with cattle raised and oats grown on the best patches of soils, their fertility gradually built up by the import of seaware.

The forests supplied building materials, fuel, nuts and a few deer. After 1745, the turbulence of the industrial era meant that a class of recently-rich landowners and speculators were able to make wholesale changes, with their big Cheviot sheep grazing this fertile land.

Humanity took a back seat in the pursuit of profit. But as those profits fell when Australian wool hit the market, the fashion for remotely-owned shooting estates signalled the end of the sheep, leaving only deer and gamekeepers. The people in the black houses had long moved on.

But is restoring the land and the people possible? It is difficult to see who would wish to live permanently on this particular island. It would be a harsh existence, but with some modern ingenuity, not impossible.

In the past, the island would not have seemed so remote, particularly with extended family living up and down the coast. Then, the local economy was based on cattle for milk and the sale of livestock, but the backdrop was the forest. Now, the modern economy around the Celtic rainforest focuses on seasonal tourism, with many holiday houses, including the hut on the island, and a few fishing boats.

The shoals of herring have gone, but perhaps sustainable mussel farming and lobster pots can provide further employment, as well as deer stalking? With the forest being restored, and the contribution of the Celtic rainforest increasingly acknowledged, the stage is set for people to return. □

About the author

Hugh Chalmers is a director of Reforesting Scotland. For more, visit www.reforestingscotland.org



New growth: the island now looks very different to when Hugh first visited in 1991; the paddlers return (above)



Dick Balharry at Creag Meagaidh National Nature Reserve (main); woodland regeneration above Loch Laggan (inset)

PHOTOGRAPHY: LORNE GILL/SNH

A vision for woodland

In his long career, perhaps the most significant achievement former Trust chairman Dick Balharry, who died in April, is associated with is the regeneration of woodland at Creag Meagaidh. Mike Daniels tells the story

ANYONE FAMILIAR WITH the drive along the north side of Loch Laggan will have seen the dramatic spread of birch from the roadside right up into the mouth of Coire Ardair over the last 25 years. This re-birth in native woodland is symbolic of the potential for change in our wild land; change in both the ecological condition of the land, and in the way deer are managed on it. And undoubtedly, it was Dick Balharry that was the driving force and the inspiration behind these changes.

Ironically, Creag Meagaidh was bought by the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC – the predecessor of Scottish Natural Heritage) to protect it from trees, not deer. In 1983, commercial timber company Fountain Forestry purchased the 4,000-hectare estate with the intention of blanket planting it with Sitka spruce. This led to a public outcry because it was one of the last unplanted slopes in Glen Spean – threatening access to the hills as well as the unique suite of wildlife that existed from the shores of Loch Laggan to the summit of Creag Meagaidh itself.

Hill walkers and conservationists united in their opposition, with David Bellamy threatening to lie in front of the bulldozers if the planting was allowed. The planting plan was referred to the then Secretary of State for Scotland, George Younger, who restricted the planting to only half the area proposed by Fountain Forestry, at which point the company refused to enter into a management agreement with NCC and agreed to sell the ground.

NCC bought Creag Meagaidh in 1985, declaring it a National Nature Reserve a year later. The opportunity now presented itself to the government conservation agency to protect, enhance and

restore long degraded habitats back to their former (and future) glory. Here was the potential to demonstrate what Scotland's uplands could (and should) be. The dying remnants of gnarled and twisted woodlands, the bonsai rowans, the bare *Molinia*-dominated hills and bleak corries were testament to people's abuse of the land for centuries.

The latest manifestation of this abuse – high densities of red deer – were steadily munching through any last attempts by the ailing woodland to regenerate itself. In a letter to *The Scotsman* on 25 March 1985, Roger Smith of the Scottish Wild Land Group wrote: 'Let us leave the NCC to manage Creag Meagaidh as a nature reserve and show thereby that conservation can be a positive use of our magnificent wild land.'



RADICAL THINKING

Under Dick's direction, this is exactly what was achieved. From his experiences across Scotland, but particularly at Beinn Eighe and Inshriach, Dick had come to the conclusion that fencing deer out of woodlands to protect and regenerate them merely treated the symptoms and not the cause. Instead, the estate embarked on a radical deer reduction programme that quickly put it into conflict with neighbouring traditional estates concerned about the effect reductions in

numbers of deer would have on their 'sport'. The arguments used were that 'trees will never grow', 'it will never work without fences' and 'all the deer will be eradicated'.

These same arguments are still used by some traditional deer managers today, but thanks to the evidence from Creag Meagaidh, all three arguments can be readily addressed. The trees are there for all to see. The fences are gone. And there are still plenty of deer for neighbouring estates to shoot. □

About the author

Mike Daniels is the Trust's head of land and science. He can be contacted at mike.daniels@johnmuirtrust.org

ABOUT TIME

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Engineered with



The Moor

A collaborative project that sees pictures by **Gareth Watson** and words by **Robert Macfarlane**, *The Moor* is a powerful portrayal of the almost featureless expanse of moorland found on the Isle of Lewis

CHANCE CAN BE A WONDERFUL THING. When artist Gareth Watson, who lives on the Isle of Lewis, had an unexpected encounter with the writer Robert Macfarlane – there researching his book, *The Old Ways* – it led to a collaborative project that reflected not just on the landscape of Lewis but also the nature of wilderness itself.

The collaboration between the two was prompted by the story of the great Barvas Moor (*Mointeach Riabhach*, or Brindled Moor) – a vast area of largely featureless peat bog in the north of the island. Just over a decade ago, it was a landscape earmarked for a wind farm development on a previously unimagined scale, with the generated electricity set to be ducted off the island to more energy-hungry parts of the country.

With some of those behind the wind farm dismissing the moor as a dark, lifeless place, it fell to opponents of the scheme, including the majority of locals, to launch a sturdy, and ultimately successful, campaign against the proposal. It was a campaign that saw them draw attention to details of the moor that could so easily be overlooked by rekindling a language of place that had long fallen by the wayside – essentially celebrating it as a valued backdrop to their lives and culture.

Gareth's semi-abstract paintings have done much the same, with Robert Macfarlane's scholarly words only adding further to the power of the pictures. Initially, the pair toyed with the idea of simply producing a glossy publication, but they then settled on something more collaborative, with text married to images of artwork and then reproduced as a limited edition book. Fifteen copies of the book were then paired with the original pictures for an exhibition that showed at the Trust's Wild Space visitor centre in February and March of this year.

"Painting space in a landscape where the boundaries between air, earth and water are so mobile is a curious business," explained Gareth in a talk ahead of the opening of the exhibition. "What you see is reluctant to be pinned down and is in many ways already abstract, devoid of signposts that allow you to label what you are looking at. Such an environment requires patience. It is a remarkable area and, in its own way, quite compelling."

To marry words with images, Gareth sent a final selection of pictures to Robert who then compiled the text based on a spontaneous response to what had been received. "I felt it was remarkable how comfortable, how compatible, the end results were," said Gareth.

"And it is this idea – that the Brindled Moor is simply a place to be valued for itself, on its own terms – that is the marrow of this artwork. Art can – maybe should – be more than a pretty picture hanging above the mantelpiece; more than a couple of paragraphs to browse through before turning out the light. It can initiate a dialogue between strangers; it can make a contribution to debates about wider issues, and we would like this work to be considered as exactly that."

We hope you enjoy the following excerpts from this powerful and inspiring collaboration.



▲ MUIRNEAG #2

In a landscape as densely populated as the British Isles, openness is hard to find. It is difficult to reach places where the horizon is experienced as a series of long unbroken lines, or where the blue of distance becomes visible.



► GLEANN MOR BHARABHAS #2

In 1960, the historian and novelist Wallace Stegner wrote what would become known as 'The Wilderness Letter'. It was sent as an appeal to an official involved in a federal policy review of America's 'Outdoor Recreation Resources', and would later be published in a collection of Stegner's essays. Stegner argued that a wild place was worth much more than could ever be revealed by a cost-benefit analysis of its recreational economic value, or its minerals and resources. We need wild places because they remind us of a world beyond the human. Forests, plains, prairies, deserts, mountains, moors: the experience of these landscapes can give people "a sense of bigness outside themselves that has now in some way been lost".

Such landscapes are diminishing in number. The cost of this loss is incalculable. If such wild places – such open places – were all to disappear, we would never again "have the chance to see ourselves single, separate, vertical and individual in the world, part of the environment of trees and rocks and soil, brother to the other animals, part of the natural world and competent to belong in it".



‘Painting space in a landscape where the boundaries between air, earth and water are so mobile is a curious business’



◀ BEN BRAGAR

Living constantly among streets and houses can imprint on the mind a sense of enclosure, of blockage and short-range sight. The spaces of certain places – seas, the vistas visible from mountain tops, the lateral reach of moors – can counteract this.

When I have been in such places, I feel a lightness up behind my eyes – as though my vision has been expanded out by twenty degrees to either side. I possess an open mind. A region of uninterrupted space is not only a convenient metaphor for freedom and breadth; it can sometimes bring such feelings fiercely on.



Gareth Watson pictured with his watercolours and book at the Wild Space exhibition

PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN MUIR TRUST





▲ EARSAL

Seven years ago I walked across Rannoch Moor, and four years ago I walked across the Lewis Moor. On both walks, I found the optics of distance changed by the openness of space.

Objects and movements showed more clearly in the moor's sparseness, and pace was harder to measure. When I glanced up at the hills that brink both moors, to try and gauge the distance

I had come, it seemed as though I had not advanced at all: that, like an explorer walking against the spin of pack-ice, my foot had fallen exactly where I had lifted it.

I remember seeing a trout arrow across its pool in a nameless river to set chevrons growing across its surface. Sunk in the peat I found the big flaring roots of trees from the pine forest that once covered the moor, millennia earlier.



▲ RATHACLEIT

In Lewisian Gaelic, *rionnach maoim* means 'the shadows cast on the moorland by cumulus clouds moving across the sky on a bright and windy day'. *Èig* refers to 'the quartz crystals on the beds of moorland stream-pools that catch and reflect moonlight, and therefore draw salmon to them in the late summer and autumn'. This play between detail and atmosphere, between the precise and the indefinable, is one of true aspects of the moor's wildness.

▲ BEINN NAN CAORACH

We have tended to exercise an imaginative bias against flatlands: moor, tundra, heath, prairie, bog and steppe. For Daniel Defoe in 1725, the moors above Chatsworth were abominable: "a waste and a howling wilderness". We still often describe such landscapes half in awe and half in dismissal: 'stark', 'vast', 'empty'.

Reactions like Defoe's occur in part because of the difficulty of making the acquaintance of flat terrains. They seem to return the eye's enquiries unanswered, or swallow all attempts at interpretation. They confront us with the problem of purchase: how to anchor perception in space of such vastness, how to make such a place mean.



PHOTOGRAPH: ROBERT MACFARLANE

Further info

The Moor, by Robert Macfarlane and Gareth Watson

Robert Macfarlane (pictured left) is author of the award-winning *Mountains of the Mind* and *The Wild Places*. He is a Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. His latest book, *Landmarks*, is reviewed on p32.

Gareth Watson (pictured on p19) works in watercolour and lives on the Isle of Lewis. His work features in private collections around the world.

The battle to save wild land areas, such as Stronelaig, from the threat of wind farms is just one part of the planning picture in Scotland

Levelling the playing field

PHOTOGRAPH: ALAN MCCOMBES

Alan McCombes talks to **Andy Inch** from Planning Democracy, a charity which campaigns for a more democratic and inclusive planning system in Scotland

“THEY PAVED PARADISE and put up a parking lot,” sang Joni Mitchell in her environmental anthem, *Big Yellow Taxi*, back in 1970. Since then, the pace of development globally has become ever more frenzied. In recent years, a maelstrom of activity across the UK has pitted communities and environmentalists against developers over a host of projects from fracking to airport extensions and industrial-scale wind farms.

But according to Andy Inch from the Scottish campaigning charity Planning Democracy, the odds are overwhelmingly stacked in favour of big business. “Developers have huge power and resources,” he says. “They make proposals, they fund proposals, and they pay for expertise to get their proposals through the planning system.”

In theory, the public interest is supposed to be represented by local authorities. In practice, however, planning officials work with a presumption in favour of development, contends Andy. “There is political pressure towards allowing unfettered economic growth because politicians tend to equate that with the public good. And there are some powerful development and property lobbies around, with a lot of hidden political influence.”

That means it’s usually left to local people and environmental groups to challenge the developers. But the odds are heavily stacked on the side of the

developers, with even the language of planning often a major barrier. “The system requires people to speak in the language of the professionals, and be persuasive in that world,” says Andy. “That’s a difficult thing for people to do.”

Planning Democracy was established by Clare Symonds in 2009 to help people negotiate their way through the legal and linguistic maze, and to campaign for a fairer system of decision-making. “It partly came from hearing peoples’ stories of bruising encounters with the planning system. People felt they weren’t being listened to, and weren’t being taken seriously by the professionals and politicians who were taking the decisions.”

From an early stage, Planning Democracy began to collate case studies highlighting the obstacles that people face when trying to defend their local environment. “Typically, people don’t get involved with local plans until they hear about a specific development, and by that time it’s very late in the day,” says Andy. “They then get a limited window to try and work out exactly what’s being proposed, and then have to prepare their case and familiarise themselves with the workings and technical language of the planning system. And all in their spare time.

“Meanwhile, the developer works away with lawyers, planning consultants and other experts. So even when people have been able to dedicate time and effort into understanding the system, they still come

out of it feeling that their voices have not been listened to.”

As well as supporting people within the limits of the current system, the charity has a strong focus on campaigning for political change. It recently mounted a high profile campaign to persuade Holyrood to introduce an Equal Right of Appeal. Under the current system, a developer has the right to appeal against a decision by a planning authority, but that same privilege is currently denied to any community group or environmental charity that challenges an application.

“Although the Scottish Government is not particularly receptive at this stage, we have managed to keep the issue alive,” explains Andy. “Planning Democracy emerged from a sense that people feel they have little influence over the changes to the places in which they live and work. To redress that imbalance, we need a more democratic and inclusive planning system.” □

Further info

The Trust’s head of policy, Helen McDade, sits on the board of Planning Democracy – a position that aids our work to support communities and their right to appeal developments on wild land. www.planningdemocracy.org.uk

About the author

Alan McCombes is the Trust’s media manager. He can be contacted at alan.mccombes@johnmuirtrust.org

Winds of change

Recent UK and Scottish Government energy decisions have brightened the prospect for wild land protection. **Helen McDade** examines the background to these changes, including the role played by the Trust

FIVE YEARS AGO, the outlook for wild land looked bleak. Jim Mather, the then Scottish Planning Minister, had just given the go-ahead to the Beaully-Denny power line after a seven-year controversy over the plan to construct a chain of 600 giant pylons through 137 miles of Scotland's uplands, including in the Cairngorms National Park. At the same time, the Scottish Government consented the huge Muaitheabhail wind farm on Lewis, involving 39 pylons each 145 metres tall.

At that point, it would have been easy to throw in the towel and concede that it was an impossible task to take on governments and energy companies. Onshore wind was also a complex and contentious area for an environmental charity, because of the public perception at the time that major wind farms were essential to reduce carbon emissions and combat climate change. We could have decided to restrict our limited policy resource to seek easier progress in other policy areas. After all, there is no shortage of threats to wild land.

However, the scale of the threat to wild land from this particular type of development and its associated infrastructure was and remains hugely significant. Recent figures set out in Scottish Natural Heritage's Natural Heritage Indicator, showing the changing "visual influence of built development" reveal the massive impact on Scotland's landscapes of the proliferation of wind turbines over recent years. In 2008, the visual influence of turbines extended across 20% of Scotland; by 2013, that had risen to 46%. In comparison, the next largest increase in visual impacts from man-made constructions was just 0.8%, and that from minor roads.

Even as far back as 2010, evidence was already coming to light that concentrating the vast majority of financial support for renewable energy into onshore wind would fail to either maximise greenhouse gas emissions reductions or produce the best mix of energy production.

So, the Trust took a brave step by launching its Wild Land campaign. We brought an extra part-time staff member on board, Mel Nicoll, which allowed us to raise awareness and gather public support by launching online petitions aimed at the UK and Scottish Parliaments. These petitions called for a new environmental designation for the best areas of wild land in Scotland, and improved protection for wild land

elsewhere in the UK. Our campaign explicitly recognised that the biggest threat to wild land was from onshore wind development. In days gone by, it would have been commercial forestry planting – and in the future, who knows?

So, to address the immediate threat, the Trust worked on a strategic energy policy and continues to seek a National Energy Commission. This would comprise independent experts whose role would be to advise the government on the development of a national energy plan – one based on a holistic view not just of economic and technical considerations, but also social and environmental questions.

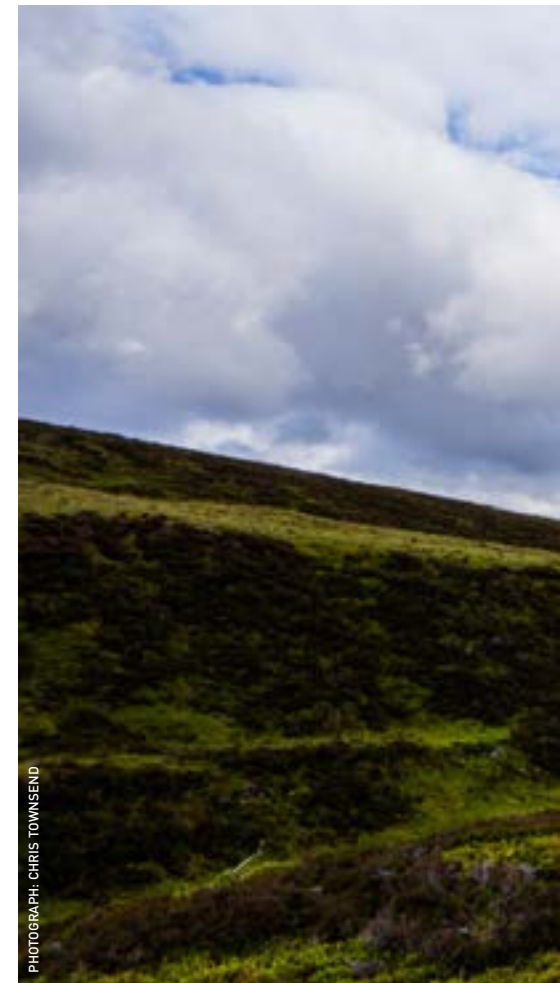
WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Trust members have supported a long, hard fight to get wild land areas protected from inappropriate energy development. Sometimes it seemed as if there was no end in sight and little reward for all our efforts. However, in the last 12 months, both at UK and Scottish government levels, significant policy shifts and planning decisions have brought real hope for the protection of wild land areas from industrial-scale wind farms. These decisions range from the new UK government's decision to cut excessive onshore wind subsidies, to a series of decisions by Scottish Ministers in favour of protecting wild land.

In 2014, the Scottish Government brought in planning policy which recognised and gave partial protection to Wild Land Areas. Although it was not the fully fledged designation we had campaigned for, it nonetheless marked a major advance for the Trust. After a nerve-racking wait while many key wind farm applications in or near wild land seemed stuck in the system, five proposals – at Glenmorrie, Bheinn Mhor, Limekiln, Allt Duine and, most recently, Creag A Bhaire – have since been refused by ministers, with adverse impact on Wild Land Areas cited among the reasons for the decisions.

This is great news, although we continue to hope that we can obtain recognition of the value – economic and social, as well as environmental – of protecting wild land as an asset rather than as a constraint on development, which is its current place in Scottish planning policy.

Following the 2015 UK general election, the UK government delivered on a



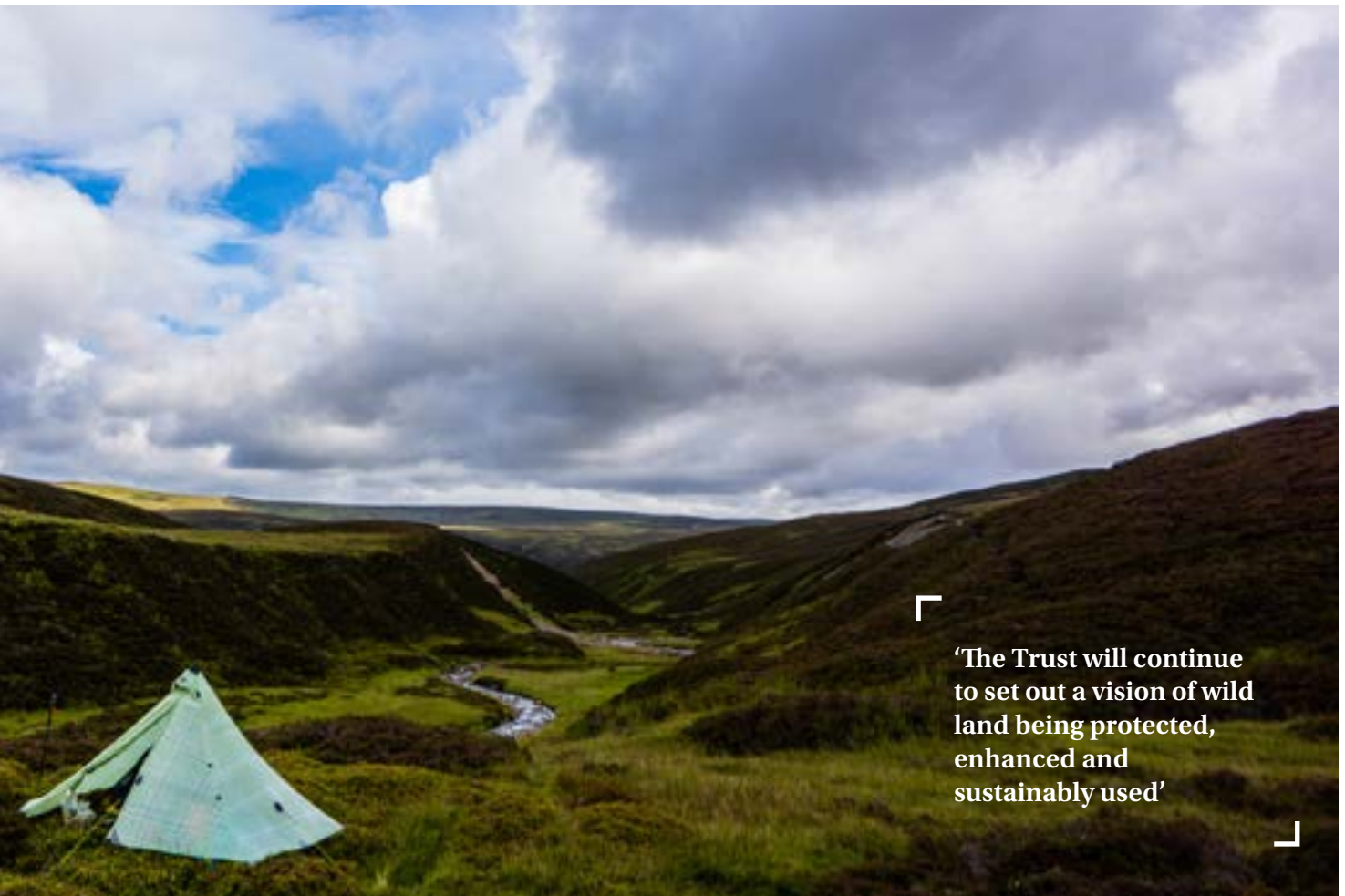
PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS TOWNSEND

manifesto commitment to withdraw Renewable Obligation Certificates subsidy from onshore wind developments unless they had progressed to a certain stage, which included having planning permission as of 18 June 2015. The Minister Amber Rudd's statement recognised there is now sufficient development of this type to achieve 2020 renewable energy targets.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

The Trust has long campaigned for public money to be moved away from excessive and unsustainable subsidy pumped into one particular and uncertain renewable technology in favour of stronger support for energy conservation, as well as research and development into newer renewable technologies. Such policies would deliver greenhouse gas emissions reductions and energy generation more effectively, with less environmental impact.

With this major signal that it will not just be 'business as usual' for energy companies that wish to expand onshore wind development regardless of suitability of site or impact on neighbouring communities, the Trust looks forward to working with others to shape a more rational policy. As mentioned, we will



‘The Trust will continue to set out a vision of wild land being protected, enhanced and sustainably used’

work for a National Energy Commission to advise governments on a coherent energy and climate change policy. Meanwhile the Trust will continue to set out a vision of wild land being protected, enhanced and sustainably used to ensure thriving communities living within an equally thriving natural landscape.

Members and key supporters need to know that their unflinching backing for our work has contributed significantly to these changes. So we thank you with real gratitude for your support – and let’s also congratulate ourselves on getting to a far more optimistic place than we were at five years ago. ☐

With thanks

We are extremely grateful not just for the support of Trust members in our fight to protect wild land areas, but also the substantial support from the JP Getty Jnr Charitable Trust and the Peter De Haan Charitable Trust.

About the author

Helen McDade is the Trust’s head of policy. She can be contacted at [helen](mailto:helen.mcdade@johnmuirtrust.org). mcdade@johnmuirtrust.org

PHOTOGRAPH: JAMIE GRANT



Out in the open: a wild camp site at Allt Duine (main); some of the giant pylons erected along the Beaully-Denny line

John Muir Award Appeal – thank you!

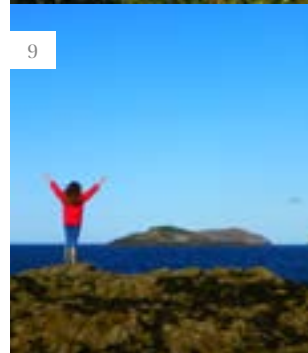
We are hugely grateful to members and supporters for spreading the word about our fundraising appeal for the John Muir Award over the past year and, of course, for the generous donations already received. Since its launch in 1997, the John Muir Award – the Trust’s primary engagement initiative – has touched a quarter of a million lives around the UK. Here, a cross-section of participants, Award Providers and supporters share their perspectives

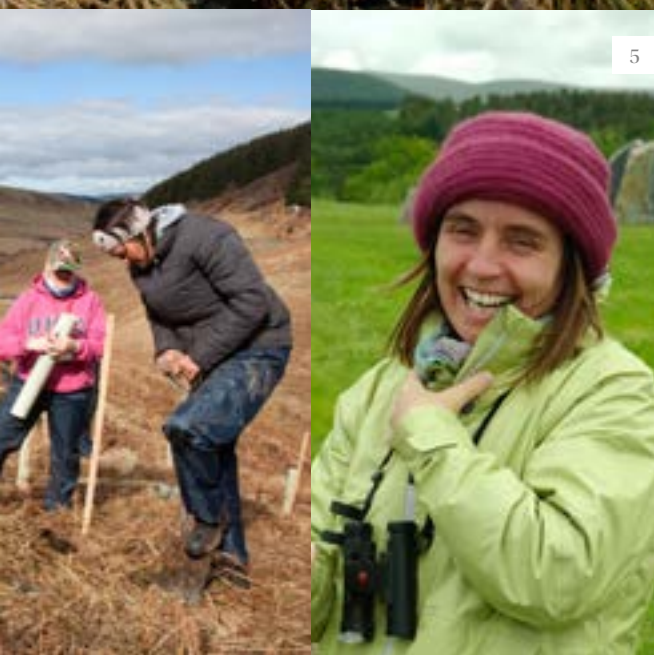
1. “At a time when so many organisations are sharing scary statistics about how people are disconnecting from nature, the John Muir Award is plugging tens of thousands of people into the value of wild time every year. It’s a vital link that not only helps people, but the wildlife and places that they connect to along the way.”
Dan Raven-Ellison, Geographer, Explorer, Educator, Author

2. “I have depression and anxiety, and living with ME means I am often in pain and experiencing fatigue. Getting outdoors and doing something physical with a group helps me feel better. The John Muir Award, as part of Branching Out, was the motivator to keep me involved. I have gone from living my life behind closed doors to getting out and engaging with people. If I had not done my John Muir Award I would not have built the confidence to lead other groups.”
Award participant and peer leader, Dundee Association for Mental Health

3. “I’m often told that it’s the younger generation that needs to be reconnected with nature but I think they already are; they just don’t always realise it. The John Muir Award is an inspirational initiative. It unlocks the door. It lights the blue touch paper reigniting something that is deep within all of us.”
Peter Cairns, nature and conservation photographer

4. “I feel like I’m making a difference.”
Jess, John Muir Award participant





PHOTOGRAPHS: DAN RAVEN-ELLISON; DAMH; PETER CAIRNS; KATRINA MARTIN; JULIET ROBERTSON; STEPHEN WISEMAN; CHRIS TOWNSEND; KATRINA MARTIN; ROB BUSHBY; RICHARD ROWE

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5. "The John Muir Award is the most positive, sustainable award scheme that has been proven to make a beneficial impact on the lives of children and their experiences of wild places. By supporting the John Muir Trust you can help get more children outside, more often and help create environmentally-aware citizens now as well as for the future."

Juliet Robertson, author of Dirty Teaching: A Beginners Guide to Learning Outdoors

6. "The John Muir Trust has helped hundreds of people with drug and alcohol problems reconnect with nature and open their eyes to a whole new world around them. We have seen first-hand the inspiring change it can make to people's lives."

Jon Hall, Commissioning & Development Manager, Phoenix Futures

7. "Conservation flows easily once a deep connection with nature is made ... that's what the John Muir Award is all about - igniting a spark that takes flame and burns steadily through people's lives."

Stephen Wiseman, Heritage Officer for the Caledonian Canal, Scottish Waterways Trust

8. "Whether we live in cities or remote islands, we all need nature in our lives to keep us happy and well-balanced, and nature needs us to care for it. Nature and people are intertwined and schemes like the John Muir Award help people to connect with nature wherever they happen to be."

Chris Townsend, writer, long-distance walker and Trustee

9. "Fresh air comes into your body and all the bad stuff goes out - the stuff that makes people not well, like angeriness and being stressed out."

John Muir Award participant, aged 11, Drumchapel

10. "Today I saw a wild deer for the first time in my life. It clattered off cos I disturbed it, and then stood listening before quietly walking away. MINT!"

Becky, John Muir Award participant with YHA Do it 4 Real

11. "Walking down the burn unlocked so many memories for me. Being bombarded with the sounds, sights and smells, triggered lots of feelings; the main one was a connection with the land that I now realise I have sadly allowed to drift for too many years. The day has allowed me to refocus on what is really important both personally and professionally and reawakened an enthusiasm and energy I will endeavour to weave into every part of my life."

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park staff member, staff team Award participant

John Muir Award Appeal

Since the John Muir Award Appeal began in November 2014, we've seen contributions of everything from pocket money and jumble sales through to an epic fundraising expedition (see p26), a sail around Arran, plus an indication of a legacy gift. To date, over £30,000 has been raised to help support more people connect with nature.

And the more we raise, the more we can achieve, so do please continue to fundraise and donate to support the appeal. Watch our short film and find out more at www.johnmuirtrust.org/connect



Coast to coast ...

When Trust supporters **David Lintern** and **David Hine** undertook a 15-day journey across Scotland earlier this year, they used social media to tweet words and pictures charting their progress

ADVENTURES COME in all shapes and sizes. And this was a big one. In early May, David Lintern and David Hine embarked on a journey that had been long in the planning: an attempt, using packrafts, to paddle coast to coast from the most westerly point of the Ardnamurchan peninsula to Spey Bay, with the added challenge of climbing all nine of Scotland's 4,000-foot peaks along the way. Dubbed C2C4k, the challenge saw them raise money for the John Muir Award – the Trust's outdoor learning programme and primary engagement initiative.

As it turned out, it's fair to say that the late-spring weather was far from kind. The packrafts were used for around a third of the distance on rivers and a variety of lochs, starting with Loch Shiel and ending with a triumphant, if exhausted, paddle down the River Spey. But the summits themselves were another matter. Having summited, with difficulty, the four 4,000-footers found in Lochaber – possibly the first time paddles had been sighted on the summit of Ben Nevis – followed by Braeriach, Ben Macdui



PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVID LINTERN

1: Not a bad place to start. Point of Ardnamurchan. www.givey.com/c2c4k #c2c4k



2: Magic light and a surging tailwind on loch shiel. Support #outdoorlearning www.givey.com/c2c4k



4: Wild & wonderful loch shiel. Coast 2 coast for the John Muir Award with @grdnrth www.givey.com/c2c4k



3: We salute U @JohnMuirTrust from the biggest ben of them all. www.givey.com/c2c4k



5: A break from squalls & bucking paddles on loch ericht. The psychological halfway point. Pls support #outdoorlearning www.givey.com/c2c4k

and then some

and Cairn Gorm in the Cairngorms, a combination of heavy snow, high winds and poor visibility saw the pair sensibly back off from attempting Sgor an Lochain Uaine and Cairn Toul.

But no matter. It was a proper adventure – one full of perils, pitfalls and perseverance. And it was an adventure that people could follow every step and paddle stroke of the way. Even in the wildest, most remote sections of the trip, the magic of wireless technology meant that images could be transferred from camera to phone and then tweeted to keep followers, and potential donors, up-to-date with progress. Here's a taste of how the two told their story ... and kept the pennies rolling in. □

Follow the Trust on Twitter at @JohnMuirTrust

Further info

For much more on the two Davids' adventure (which to date has raised £1,300), visit <http://bit.ly/1L5kGkk>
And if you'd like to help raise money for the John Muir Trust, then please contact Adam Pinder at adam.pinder@johnmuirtrust.org



9: 15 days in the saddle & we've arrived at Spey Bay. Thx 4 all the support & good folks along the way. If you've followed #c2c4k & not donated to #johnmuiraward yet, pls dig deep or dig shallow, but dig – yer dig? www.givey.com/c2c4k



8: A symphony of birdsong at the last wild camp of #c2c4k. Coasting to the coast on the Spey today.



6: Arriving in beautiful Glen Feshie on day 9 of our coast 2 coast in aid of the John Muir Award. www.givey.com/c2c4k



7: Following the source of the stunning river Avon. Check out #c2c4k for the journey so far & give up a few pennies 4 a great cause at www.givey.com/c2c4k



To the sea and back

Sea trout once thrived around the Trust's property at Strathaird on the Isle of Skye, but today it's a different picture. **Peter Cunningham** believes their recovery could mark a more positive ecological future for the area

SEA TROUT ARE a form of brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) which, after three or four years living in freshwater, migrate to the sea where they grow faster. Sea trout can grow to 3.5kg (8lb) or more. In the west of Scotland, most are female fish, as many of their brothers remain in freshwater for their whole lives. In contrast to salmon, most of which die after spawning for the first time, some sea trout return from the sea to spawn in freshwater many times, and can live for over 10 years.

Within the John Muir Trust's property on Skye, there are five notable stream systems that once supported prolific

populations of sea trout. From the slopes of Sgurr nan Gilleann, the Sligachan River flows north through a glaciated valley to enter the sea just beyond the iconic road bridge opposite the hotel. The river's clear waters run over a streambed of stones – gabbro from the Cuillin – which appear turquoise-blue. Not so long ago, hundreds of sea trout gathered in some of the Sligachan's pools during the summer months.

Elsewhere, the Coruisk, Camasunary, Kilmorie and Strathmore river systems flow into Loch Scavaig and Loch Slapin to the south. The once remarkable sea trout fisheries of these rivers were described by Stephen Johnson during his time in German prison camps after his fighter bomber was shot down in 1942. His notes were published in 1947; an angling classic, *Fishing from Afar* (republished in 2004) remains one of my favourite fishing books.

FROM FRY TO 'MOONIES'

Almost two years ago now, I visited Camasunary with fisheries



Health check: a return to past numbers of sea trout could be part of a wider ecological reawakening at Strathaird

owner Alan Johnson and family, and the Trust's Strathaird property manager Ally MacAskill, to learn more about its fish populations. To survey juvenile fish, electro-fishing equipment was used. We found trout fry in the nursery stream above Loch an Athain and brightly-coloured salmon parr in the main river. From Loch na Creitheach, we caught samples of older trout using rod and line and a fyke net (with special permission from the Scottish Government and the Skye DFSB). Our catch of a dozen trout included four mature male brown trout and six sea trout - the largest, a female measuring 348mm (just under 14 inches).

In the past there were many larger fish. The Johnson family tradition is that any angler who catches a sea trout of 8lb or more should paint a life-size replica of the fish to be pasted on the wall inside the lodge at Camasunary, near the mouth of the river. Until the 1980s, these big sea trout, called 'moonies' (after a ghillie had cursed one that got away) were caught at a rate of at least one per year.

I measured and photographed 78 moonies caught between

1939 and 1983, each the product of a wildlife encounter as memorable as any that one could hope for (my largest sea trout to date is a 4lb fish caught when I was just 16!). For devoted followers of wild trout, Camasunary lodge is like a shrine: the 70-year artistic record of Camasunary and Coruisk's fabulous sea trout provides a reminder of just how wonderful wild sea trout fishing can be.

But sea trout are important for far more than just sport. For many of the animals of Strathaird, from otter and fox to rodents, raptors, other birds and many insects, the spawning runs of wild salmon and sea trout represent an important seasonal food source.

At sea, trout grow quickly by feeding on sandeels, herring, and other small fish and crustaceans. And like salmon, sea trout provide a 'trophic' pathway, delivering nutrients of marine origin in the form of fish eggs and fish carcasses to otherwise oligotrophic (nutrient-starved) streams. In the past, marine-derived nutrients would have enriched the streams and lochs much more so than today - a natural source of life-sustaining

'Infestations by sea lice associated with the salmon farming industry have been a major cause of the collapse of stocks in the west of Scotland'

fertiliser within an otherwise leached and barren landscape.

At Strathaird, sea trout would have been an integral part of the ecosystem. During periods of abundance, sea trout may have impacted positively throughout the wider ecosystem, much like the salmon around the north Pacific. Juvenile trout and salmon gorge on surplus fish eggs at spawning time. The production of juvenile trout may have increased when there were many big sea trout providing surplus eggs, and when larger amounts of marine nutrients in fish carcasses were recycled within the valley by people and other predators.

THREATS AND UNCERTAINTIES

Stephen Johnson's *Fishing from Afar* describes an abundance of sea trout around Strathaird not seen for several decades. Since the mid 1980s, sea trout have been subject to many pressures, including the collapse of inshore fish populations as a result of increased fishing pressure following the removal of the coastal 'three-mile' exclusion zone for trawlers in 1984.

Lawrence Court, a local angler I spoke with recently, tells an interesting story of a mass fish kill following night-time trawling (possibly dredging) just off Camasunary beach. "Three years ago we had a trawler in the bay at night and it turned its lights off when we put a high beam lamp onto it," he says. "It was no more than 100-150 yards off the beach. The next morning there were tens of thousands of sandeels all dead on the beach. It was an incredible sight and very saddening."

But inshore trawling is far from the only threat. For sea trout, infestations by parasitic sea lice associated with growth of the salmon farming industry have been a major cause of the collapse in stocks in the west of Scotland. As such, the future for Camasunary sea trout and those of other river systems within the South Skye sea lochs area (Loch Scavaig, Loch Slapin and Loch Eishort) remains uncertain.

The local community has objected strongly to recent planning applications for three huge (2,000+ tonne biomass) new salmon farms. If any of these farms are established, there is little prospect of a recovery in sea trout populations, given the salmon farming industry's continuing inability to control sea lice populations. However, if the area remains free of salmon farms, and other issues are addressed, prospects for the recovery of sea trout populations in the Strathaird area appear good, as the next nearest salmon farms (and major sources of larval sea lice) are 25 miles away.

A further threat comes from predation, with high numbers of seals around Scotland. Seals (both grey and harbour) are often seen around river mouths when sea trout and salmon gather, while some grey seals also follow fishing boats to feed on discards. Fostering the recovery of other inshore fish populations and reducing the amount of by-catch discarded at sea should help to restore marine ecosystems to a point where seals have a wider diversity of healthy prey.

Meanwhile, poaching also remains a problem. There is a tradition on Skye, almost a culture, of taking 'one for the pot'. When stocks of salmon and sea trout were prolific, losses to poachers may have had little impact on fish stocks. However, in recent years, the numbers of adult salmon and sea trout entering some of the rivers on Skye have been barely adequate to produce



PHOTOGRAPHY: PETER CUNNINGHAM

the next generations of young fish. School-based education projects may help to change attitudes. Many anglers and fisheries now practice 'catch and release' where a majority of sea trout and salmon are returned to enable them to spawn.

COLLAPSE ... AND RECOVERY

From my vantage point by the side of Loch na Creitheach, the surrounding hillsides looked denuded and impoverished. My interpretation is that over many centuries, grazing and trampling by cattle, sheep and deer have exacerbated vegetation and soil loss and leaching, degrading the productive potential of the Camasunary valley.

Although the underlying geology of the catchment area includes base-rich rocks (and their influence on vegetation can be seen on the slopes of Blaven) there is little food for juvenile fish in the nursery streams. There are virtually no trees, and few bushes to provide leaf litter to feed some of the insect larvae upon which juvenile trout and salmon feed. The loss of vegetation (especially larger plants), breakdown of ecological processes and trophic pathways connecting different parts of the ecosystem have led to biological impoverishment. This has been exacerbated by the export of nutrients contained in cattle, sheep and deer carcasses outwith the catchment, plus soil erosion.

To successfully restore wild sea trout and salmon populations, a Skye-wide initiative is needed. The current generation of children on the island are missing out on something their forefathers took for granted. Restoration of sea trout populations and ecosystem fertility requires a change in the management of both the land and the waters surrounding the island.

Perhaps there are opportunities to develop some sort of initiative at Strathaird? Could a joint project between the John Muir Trust, the crofting community, other local people and



Signs of life (clockwise from main): Otter spraint containing salmon bones and egg (inset); ancestral trout redds below Loch na Creithach; Peter (right) and Camasunary fisheries owner Alan Johnson with a small sea trout

Feeding others

On one excursion in late-November, the Trust's Ally Macaskill and I set off from the Sligachan Hotel to look for signs of salmon along the river bank. No fresh salmon redds were seen, and only one adult fish was encountered. But we did see signs that an otter had taken a female salmon, and that a fox had also patrolled the river bank, probably in search of the otter's leftovers. It was a telling discovery. In the American northwest, bears and wolves still help to distribute marine nutrients into surrounding riparian areas from salmon spawning streams. Marine nutrients can be detected in trees and other plants sometimes several hundreds of miles from the sea.



wildlife and fisheries interests be a way forward for the Camasunary valley, for the benefit of all?

Some things are clear. Soils need to be redeveloped where eroded away. Roots of trees and scrub can bind screes and other fragile slopes to reduce rates of erosion. However, it's not just about planting trees and controlling grazing pressure. Look carefully: nutrient hotspots around bird and mammal perches and otter spraint sites support vegetation richer in phosphorus and other minerals than the surrounding ground. Why not focus upon these natural biodiversity 'oases', and develop a fertility mosaic to replace the missing nutrients and restore life within the landscape?

Like feeding the birds, I'd recommend supplementary application of bone meal fertiliser (or a similar phosphate-rich fertiliser) at rates which mimic those that would have occurred when salmon and sea trout were much more abundant and the ecosystem was in better health. And to address issues within the marine environment, could the nearby Small Isles Marine Protected Area be extended to foster recovery of seabed habitats and wild fish populations, including sea trout, in the waters around Strathaird?

Two years on from my visit, I remain just as excited about the prospects of restoring sea trout populations and revitalising the area to bring benefits to the lives of many. That's my vision for the future of Strathaird. □

About the author
Peter Cunningham works as biologist for the Wester Ross Fisheries Trust which has carried out surveys of fish populations in Skye in support of the Skye Fisheries Trust. Peter can be contacted at info@wrft.org.uk





Landmarks, by Robert Macfarlane

Mike Brown revels in the rich – and vulnerable – vocabulary of landscape in this latest book from the mercurial Robert Macfarlane

APPARENTLY SMEUSE is a Suffolk dialect word for ‘the gap in the base of a hedge made by the regular passage of a small animal’. As author Robert Macfarlane points out: ‘Now I know the word smeuse I will notice these signs of creaturely movement more often’. And so, I find, do I.

Landmarks is a compilation and reflection on the diversity of words which the languages and dialects of these islands deploy to describe nature. The collection encompasses Shetland and the Channel Islands, the flat lands of Lincolnshire and the bogs of Lewis and much in between. It’s both a work in progress and a race against time. Some words survive among older members of remote communities or practitioners of obscure crafts, others only in faded anthologies of nineteenth century collectors. Many are familiar still – but for how long?

Macfarlane’s thesis is simple and challenging: how can we save something once we have lost the words to describe it? He quotes John Stillgoe in *The Shallow Water Dictionary*: ‘Landscape – or seascape – that lacks vocabulary, cannot be seen, cannot be usefully, accurately visited’. As fewer people live and work in the countryside, as visitors cluster increasingly around tourist honey-pots, or buy tickets for the ‘farm experience’, fewer words are used, fewer ideas expressed, and fewer features observed – or their fates noticed.

As Macfarlane prepared to go to print the once-prestigious Oxford University Press gave powerful, if unintended, endorsement of his warning. The latest *Oxford Junior Dictionary* had casually

excised vast tracks of nature. Words such as acorn, catkin and cygnet had been made redundant, while heather and heron and otter were all deemed irrelevant to the modern child. Warnings of adder would go, potentially lethally, unheeded, all replaced by words such as blog, voice-mail and chatroom. As Macfarlane comments ruefully: ‘For blackberry, read BlackBerry’.

The book is not only an exploration of the vocabulary of landscape, but a celebration of other writers who, through the vividness of their descriptions, have given life to wild places and fostered their survival. Finlay MacLeod’s *Peat Glossary*, with its evocation of the dense and detailed language giving life to what some would call empty wilderness, was the trigger for this book. Macfarlane goes on to cite an eclectic range of authors: Hugh MacDiarmid’s splenetic rant *Nothing but Heather*; Nan Shepherd’s love letter to the Cairngorms, *The Living Mountain*; and, unsurprisingly, John Muir and the words which wooed Roosevelt onto that camping trip in the Sierra Nevada and the saving of Yosemite.

This is a book to be dipped into and relished, full of surprises and vivid insights. It is a work still to be completed: there are so many evocative words yet to be harvested while they can be found, and while the objects of their descriptions still survive. There are blank pages at the end for you, the reader, to add your words to this precarious store. Do so. Quickly.

Price: £12.99
www.birlinn.co.uk

Further info

For more from Robert Macfarlane on how language can bring landscape alive, see p18.

The reviewer

Mike Brown is a former editor of The Journal.

Others we like

Doubling Back, Linda Cracknell

A wonderfully-moving collection of ‘ten tales trodden in memory’ that stretch from Kenya to the Scottish Highlands. £8.99, www.freightbooks.co.uk

The Blind Man of Hoy, Red Szell

Partially-sighted climber Red Szell heads to Orkney to realise a boyhood dream of climbing the Old Man of Hoy. £8.99, www.sandstonepress.com



Nature's Architect, Jim Crumley

The prolific Scottish nature writer turns his focus on the return of beavers to our landscape after an absence of some 400 years. £12.99, www.saraband.net

What Nature Does For Britain, Tony Juniper

In a follow up to his *What Has Nature Ever Done for Us*, Tony Juniper



highlights the many free ecosystem services that we often take for granted, from the peat bogs and woodlands that help secure our water supplies, to the bees and soils that produce most of the food we eat. £9.99, www.profilebooks.com

A Handbook of Scotland's Coasts, edited by Fi Martynoga

An inspirational resource for those looking to explore Scotland’s varied coastline, from geology and wildlife to coastal culture, landmarks and foraging. £12.99, www.saraband.net

At Night, A Journey Round Britain From Dusk to Dawn, Dixe Wills

Richard Rowe enjoys the premise of a book that encourages us to embrace rather than fear night-time – an otherworldly period when our experiences and senses can be heightened if only we let them

WE ARE TUNED, almost programmed, to respond to darkness in a specific way. Stripped of sight, our keenest sense, we retreat indoors as the sun goes down, where we rely on the comfort of artificial light. Seen through our windows, the night seems darker than ever, so we shut it out further by drawing curtains and pulling blinds. There is a slight fear – a sense of vulnerability – of what might be outside, looking in.

But night-time should not necessarily mean down-time, as travel writer Dixe Wills explains in this celebration of mooching around after dark. The book has echoes of Alistair Humphreys' *Microadventures*, in which readers are encouraged to explore the five to nine rather than the nine to five, although even he doesn't delight in the hours of darkness with as much passion as Dixe Wills.

'Night is a magician,' he writes. 'A place familiar to us in daylight can seem suddenly strange and unknown beneath the velvet cape of darkness – a whole new mysterious entity brought into being by some subterfuge of the dark arts.'

Certainly, darkness sows little seeds of doubt in minds already full of childhood stories about things that go bump in the night. Sound is amplified, making the creatures that scurry around in the undergrowth seem much larger than they actually are. It's a time that demands our attention, when other senses take over, allowing us to hear, smell and feel more acutely. 'The bark of a tree caressed in the dark of the night is a landscape all of its own,' writes Wills.

Presented in two parts, the book begins with chapters on moorland, island, forest, mountain and sky, as the author recounts tales of exploring hidden corners of Britain at night, plus the myth and legend so often associated with such places. He stays overnight on Dartmoor, where the devil is said to ride out, takes a night-time stroll through the remnants of Sherwood Forest, and experiences the truly dark skies of Galloway Forest Park (Britain's first official Dark Sky Park).

Perhaps my favourite section is the

chapter on Skomer, a tiny island off the Pembrokeshire Coast that is home to more than half a million Manx shearwaters. These tiny but tough little seabirds are most active at night because, for them, conversely, it's the day-time that is so full of terrors.

The second part of the book deals more with travel than landscape, as the author rides on the Caledonian Sleeper; embarks on an overnight cycle to the Suffolk coast; and wanders the streets of London like a modern-day, sleep-deprived Dickens.

Now while I'm not about to jump on the Caledonian Sleeper and deliberately stay awake from Fort William to London, or even spend the night strolling through Robin Hood country, this book has made me hatch a few plans closer to home. There's a wood nearby where a gnarled old tree has relented to the wind and now lies propped up on the ground at an inviting angle – a perfect spot to sit awhile as dusk falls and listen as the woods come alive with the creatures of the night.

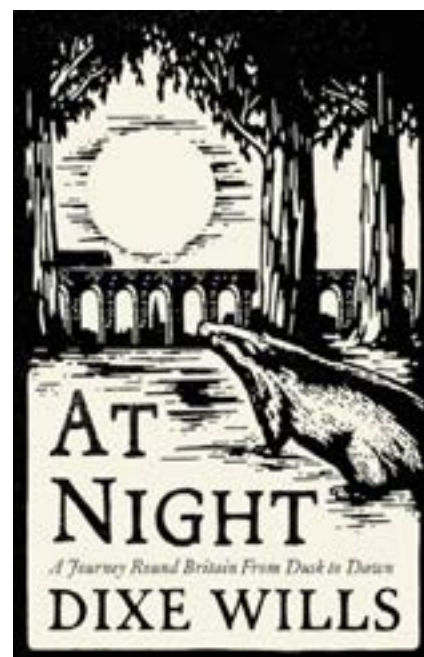
That seems like a good start to exploring our night-time world, particularly as the days shorten and the shadows start to lengthen.

Price: £16.99

www.theaa.com

The reviewer

Richard Rowe is editor of the John Muir Trust Journal. He can be contacted at journal@johnmuirtrust.org



PHOTOGRAPH: JAMES HILDER



PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS PACKHAM

Chris Packham

Kevin Lelland caught up with naturalist, nature photographer and television presenter Chris Packham – the first speaker in a series of events hosted by the Trust called the Spirit of John Muir

Is there a recent statistic about the natural world that particularly shocks you?

Our conservation news is a horror show of appalling statistics. The one that currently troubles me most is that 40 million birds have vanished from the UK since 1970. I try to imagine 40 million ghost birds, but can't.

Why did you recently say that conservationists in the UK are generally timorous?

Because I'm frustrated by their risk adversity and politicking. Many of their 'leaders' lack the courage to clear out the old lingering problems, have foolishly embraced vanity projects which strangle their ability to progress on a broader front, or have got lost in their egos, forgetting the bigger issue. Time has run out so I'm not embarrassed to be sometimes gently, sometimes soundly, kicking them up the backside. Someone has to say boo to the cowering goose.

By when will the rewilding movement in the UK be able to claim success?

Given the way we afford a voice to the ignorant and ill-informed, a lot longer than it should. I like democracy and that

we can all be stakeholders in our destiny, but I loathe nimbys or people who are afraid of change. It's broken, we broke it, and we need to fix it. Sooner rather than later would suit me ... and the whole natural world.

I read you love punk rock. Which band would write the soundtrack for the movie of your life and why?

Shout Above the Noise by Penetration is my musical mantra ...

'When everything around you falls

And all the walls are closing in
Situations in control

You must exercise your strength of will

Don't let them win

Don't them drag you in

Shout above the noise'

Who would you most like to influence to do more for nature?

You! Everyone reading this. Because if we all empower ourselves we can make a difference. We can't trust the world's current decision-makers to do anything more than pay lip service to environmental issues. That will change,

but we can drive that change and most certainly speed it up. Caring is not enough – do something!

If John Muir were alive today, where would he be focusing his skill and energy?

On a healthier landscape, a richer place for people to live with a greater connectivity to the machinations of the natural world, its seasons, its vagaries, its nuances – a world where the subtle would sparkle for them, where the humble would hold great store, where the fragile would be treasured and nurtured, and where the gentle would be cupped in a loving hand. ☐

Further info

The first Spirit of John Muir event was held at the Royal Geographical Society on 9 September. Chris brought to life the legacy of Muir and spoke about his own career and campaigning work (see p6). You can hear his speech at www.johnmuirtrust.org/spiritofjohnmuir

The event was supported by Mountain Equipment.

About the author

Kevin Lelland is the Trust's head of communications. He can be contacted at kevin.lelland@johnmuirtrust.org



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