

*wild* places: DISCOVER EXPLORE CONSERVE SHARE

# John Muir Award News Autumn 2011

The John Muir Award is the main educational initiative of the John Muir Trust. It encourages people to connect with, enjoy, and care for wild places.

At the heart of the John Muir Award are four Challenges – Discover a wild place, get out and Explore it, do something to Conserve it, and Share your experiences.

In this edition of John Muir Award News, we look at the variety of ways people interpret and engage with these themes.

They are used to provide a structure for wide-ranging activity, and can help to bring awareness-raising and responsibility into a programme. They also offer a way to integrate themes that can sometimes seem a little abstract, such as sustainability, biodiversity, outdoor access and climate change.

"It offers a simple framework for spending time outside and its flexibility allows it to fit in really well with other schemes such as Forest School."

Jamie Corrie, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

## Discover a wild place

#### Where does John Muir Award activity

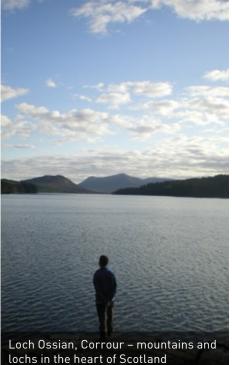
take place? What natural character does it have and why use it as a location? This might be predetermined – e.g. school grounds or activity venues during a residential programme – or it might be selected. It can be one place, a series of locations, or the route of a journey.

Although we're giving a page each to our four Challenges, they can often best be seen as inter-related themes that can merge into each other, rather than separate boxes to tick.

Taking photos, for example, can help to explore a place, is clearly a way to share, and might be used to help with survey work or show the 'before and after' story of conserve activity.



Woodlands are the most common place used for Award activity









Sunsets bring a sense of drama to a place



Dunbar Grammar School Enhanced Curriculum group discover the same places John Muir did as a boy, including the meadows where Muir played with his friends. Pupil: "It makes you quite proud that you live in the same town as he did!"

sty McKluskie





Graveyards are full of biodiversity and heritage. This one is in Leith

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## Explore your wild place

What do people do to tune in, understand and appreciate wild places? How do they experience them and find out for themselves about their special qualities?







Walk barefoot during a lunch break







hunts



"I am certain that this week's wild weather was the wildest experience of some of these students' lives!" Senior Outward Bound Instructor Matt Lander takes students gorge walking as the tail of Hurricane Katia sweaps across the west coast of Scotland.







## Conserve your wild place

#### What do people do to make a difference? And what does it mean to them?

Phoenix Futures clients reflect on their conservation therapy programme:

"It's not just about me, I'm doing something that really means something, that makes a difference to this place."

"It's structured, it got us out. Planting these trees is something special, they will still be here in 300 years."



Pond and walkway maintenance with the Green Team, Vogrie County Park, Edinburgh





Deerpark Primary pupils breathe new life into Cowpark Wood, Alloa, with BBC Breathing Places funding



Wildlife gardening with SAMH Chrysalis project



For Resource Guides on Biodiversity, Surveying and Wildlife Gardening go to the Resources and Links page on the John Muir Award website.

Borders Environmental Education Services (BEES) conservation breaks visited St Aiden's Sand Dunes, Seahouses to pull ragwort, maintain footpath steps, survey butterflies and look for the Piri-piri burr, an invasive species from New Zealand.

Watch a great 5 minute film at www. youtube.com/watch?v=9znGJwC-U30











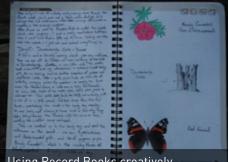
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## Share your experiences

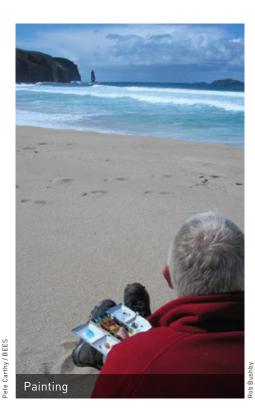
How do people share their involvement in the John Muir Award?

"The four challanges have given them much to talk and write about. Pupils who previously were reluctant to put pencil to paper now confidently write about their work. They readily share what they have done so far with pupils, staff and visitors. Their Wild Place project seems to have taken on a life of its own"

> Fiona Dumma, Teacher, Brunfoot Community School, Hawick



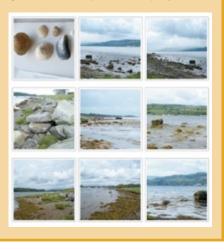
Using Record Books creatively



Blogs can be by groups or individuals, and can generate discussion and links to other articles and websites. Here's one from a Lochgilphead High School pupil. www.blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ab/ JohnMuirAward/2011/

I have completed my John Muir Discovery Award and really enjoyed exploring the shores of Loch Gilp and learning about John Muir. I am looking forward to exploring more places and learning about all things wild.

I now realise what John Muir meant when he quoted: "Tug on anything at all and you'll find it connected to everything else in the universe" – I now appreciate biodiversity and am glad that I completed this project."





Poems – acrostic, mesostic, tied to trees









In the course of a year 17 year old Lewis Bain walked the same route from Bolton to Gifford in East Lothian over 60 times in different seasons. He got the Council to put in a bench, and used this for his certificate presentation.





## John Muir Award Gatherings - 'Enjoying Wild Places'

Provider Gatherings are for all involved with the John Muir Award – teachers, instructors, youth leaders, care workers, rangers, volunteers, and up to 5 Award participants from an organisation.

They offer a chance to network, share practice and explore new ways of getting involved.



Our theme this year is **'Enjoying wild places'**, and each day will include:

- John Muir Award Case Studies examples from Award Providers
- Showcasing 2020VISION, 'Britain's most ambitious conservation multimedia initiative...ever!'
- Different ways to enjoy wild places Mission:Explore, 'Simple Pleasures' and more...

For booking details email info@ johnmuiraward.org or tel 0300 321 4962

"The company, the chat, everything provided me with new perspectives on what I was doing and armed me with additional tools to enable me to do it." Gathering participant 2010

Edinburgh, Holyrood Park Education Centre	6 October
Cumbria, Brockhole Visitor Centre	12 October
North East England, Castle Eden Dene Nature Reserve, Peterlee	14 October
South West England, Somerset Earth Science Centre	21 October
Cairngorms, Kin Craig	4 November
Wales, Call of the Wild, Neath	4 November

## One Thousand John Muir Awards in North East England

A ceremony in May marked a thousand people achieving the John Muir Award in North East England since a partnership between the John Muir Trust and Durham County Council was established in October 2009. Johnathan Stewart from North Shields was the recipient of the milestone Award, presented at the VONNE (Voluntary Organisations Network North East) Voluntary and Community Sector Awards 2011. The event honours volunteers from across the region who have made a significant contribution to the community.

Johnathan is an active volunteer with Community Space Challenge, a national programme for young people to transform run down and forgotten wild places into fresh green places for everyone to use and enjoy. Together with four friends Johnathan worked with local residents to create a wild garden in an allotment. They researched which plants and flowers attract wildlife, built a pond and created habitats for insects and birds. As part of their campaign to encourage organic gardening, the group surveyed allotment users and planted shrubs which act as a natural pesticide. To share their achievements they created a scrapbook, displayed photos and invited members of the community to visit their wild garden.

Project leader for Community Space Challenge in North Shields, Carly Hudson, said, "John Muir Award activity at the community allotment is changing local residents' perspectives on youth. Through this project the community has seen what a valuable contribution young people can make. The project has helped the group to develop their confidence and skills. Johnathan really shone as a leader and helped other members of the group with their Award activity."



The John Muir Award in the North East is supported by Durham County Council's Outdoor and Sustainability Education Service (OASES) and is funded by Natural England through Access to Nature, as part of the Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces programme. The partnership has raised the profile of the Award in the region, offered increased support to Provider organisations and encouraged new involvement.

You can view a 3 minute video celebrating the 1000th Award in North East England on the John Muir Award YouTube Channel, under the 'Award Provider' playlist.

## John Muir Award Leader Training

John Muir Award training isn't essential for delivering the Award, but courses do enable leaders to find out more about its practicalities, network with others, and develop their own skills and confidence. These two-day residential courses give a thorough introduction to what it's all about.

Bendrigg Lodge, Near Kendal, Cumbria	Sat 24 & Sun 25 September
Comrie Croft-full	Tues 27 & Wed 28 September
Hendre Isaf (NT Basecamp), Betws-Y- Coed, Wales	Thurs 6 & Fri 7 October
Broomley Grange, Stockfield, Northumberland	Sat 8 & Sun 9 October
Cost: £120 for two days, including food and accommodation. Reduced rate of £80 for charity representatives and those attending in an individual capacity.	

# Exploring Scotland's rocks with Angus Miller

What are the links between Scotland's amazing geodiversity, land use and people? This day will explore Scotland's geology and landscapes, led by



Geowalks founder Angus Miller. A range of practical ideas will help you and your group explore stories of Scotland's deep past and find out how this past influences the present and the future.

Date: Saturday 12th November 2011 Venue: The Dolphin House Outdoor Education Centre, South Ayrshire. Cost: £20

How to Book: Email info@ johnmuiraward.org with the date and venue to check that spaces are available. For more information on Leader Training and other training opportunities and events visit www. johnmuiraward.org

## Ben Nevis hosts the UK's highest London 2012 Open Weekend event

Traditional rock and ice climbing are unlikely to become Olympic sports any time soon. But if they were included in the London 2012 Olympics, Ben Nevis would offer a world class venue, and Scottish climber Dave MacLeod would be a gold medal contender.

In the absence of a high profile climboff next year, these two elements were brought together in July by the John Muir Trust as part of the celebrations marking 'One Year to Go' to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Of the 1,200 events held across the UK over the weekend this was the highest, with Dave leading a guided walk to around 1000 metres, and possibly the most dramatic, set among the imposing corries and buttresses on the northern flanks of Nevis.

26 members of the public headed up Allt a' Mhuillin, past the CIC hut, and in to the shadow of the North Face of The Ben. This was the perfect setting to explore its climbing history, from the earliest Victorian ascents to Dave's ascent of Echo Wall in 2008, described as 'the hardest traditional rock climb in the world.' Rob Bushby, John Muir Award Manager for the John Muir Trust, said: "If the Cultural Olympiad is about engaging people and showcasing what the country has to offer, then its natural heritage should feature highly amongst its finest assets. We're delighted to be promoting wild landscapes, and introducing people to new and exciting aspects of them as part of a wider celebration. It's been great to have such a high level of interest from the local community."

Duncan MacPhee, Director of Lochaber Sports Association said: "It was an unmissable opportunity for non-climbers to see Ben Nevis's North Face close up, and to hear from the expert how he goes about his extraordinary business. The day was thoroughly enjoyed by all. I think it should be made an annual event."

'Open Weekend' is supported by BP as part of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad - the largest cultural celebration in the history of the modern Olympic and Paralympic movements. Spread over four years, the Olympiad is designed to give everyone in the UK a chance to be part of London 2012 and inspire creativity and involvement in art, film, literature, music, theatre and the outdoors. This particular event was commissioned by Discovering Places, a UK-wide campaign to inspire people to discover, explore and be inspired by the buildings, public spaces and natural places where they live and work.



## Back issues - what have we looked at?

Most editions of John Muir Award News look at a theme that's topical and relevant to Award Providers. Here we look back at what was covered over the past three years.

### Spring 2011 'Enjoy wild places'

Our annual Gatherings continue this theme in Autumn 2011, with examples of the locations and activities used by John Muir Award Providers, and



a look at techniques and ideas that help to value and appreciate the natural environment.

### Autumn 2010 'Biodiversity -

what's it ever done for us?' Highlighting the relevance

of people to International Year of Biodiversity.



The General Assembly declared 2011-20 to be the Decade on Biodiversity, with the aim of inspiring broad-based action for conservation, its sustainable use of biodiversity, and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

We produced a 'Biodiversity Stories' leaflet showing how a wide range of groups and individuals using the John Muir Award in 2010 to help engage with nature – go to our home page and click on an image for more on each story.

## Spring 2010 '100,000 John Muir

#### Awards'

A celebration of the journey to a major milestone.

Since the presentation of this landmark Award to Jake Atkinson in Cumbria

## Autumn 2009

Exploring how landscape and biodiversity – and our relationship with them - might contribute to meeting carbon reduction targets.



in January 2010, momentum has continued with over 140,000 achieved up to August 2011.

## ʻlt's 2050'



The value and contributions made by nature (including in relation to climate change) continues to be a hot topic. The 2011 National Ecosystem Assessment, part of the Living With Environmental Change initiative, recently published the first analysis of the UK's natural environment in terms of the benefits it provides to society and continuing economic prosperity.

### Spring 2009 Other kinds of wild'

Discussing the spectrum of wild places from 'the crack of a paving stone to the crash of the seas against cliffs'.



The John Muir Trust published its Vision 'Our Essential Wildness' in 2010, outlining the importance of wild land and wild places: 'Wild land is one of the UK's most important assets – where we find our most spectacular scenery and abundant wildlife...[It] provides us with important natural resources such as clean air, water and food...and is hugely important to our economy, tourism and leisure industries. But a connection with nature and a sense of wildness can be found in our towns and cities as well as our countryside. And it is in these wild places that most people are frequently able to enjoy, value and care for nature.'

### Autumn 2008 'Wild places: good for us?'

An increasing body of work shows that the countryside is not just a pretty place. Studies show it can cut recovery times from



illnesses, fight against cancer and boost your mood. Country views reduce time in hospital, natural surroundings reduce stress and tension, and regular exercise can be stimulated by outdoor settings.

A Scottish hospital – Forth Valley - has employed its own ranger (who makes use of the John Muir Award) to encourage staff and patients to make more use of the hospital grounds, in what is thought to be the first project of its kind in the UK.

#### Spring 2008

#### 'Inspiring activity' How groups make a

difference, not just to wild places, but to themselves and their communities.



Our audit of Conserve activity over 2 months in

2009 measured 32,000 hours contributed and a wide array of outputs in 10 key habitats. We are carrying out an audit throughout 2011 to capture and summarize how groups put something back. See page 9.

Back copies of John Muir Award News can be referenced at www.jmt.org/john-muir-award-newsletter.asp

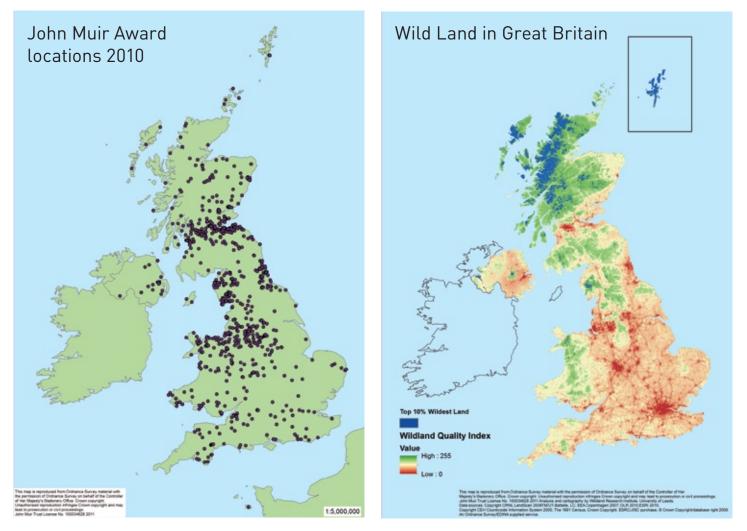
## Mapping and capturing John Muir Award activity

A teenage student recently told their John Muir Award Regional Manager how he felt isolated and doubted the value of what he was doing. "You sometimes wonder what the point is, doing this conservation stuff, it feels like you're the only ones doing it," he said.

Clearly, from the map below, that's not the case. In 2010, 799 different groups (not to mention individuals and families) got involved and contributed to the total 23,008 John Muir Awards achieved - all making a difference to wild places, from Shetland to Jersey.

The wild land map shows where the finest areas of the UK are located – those with high scenic and wildlife value with minimal evidence of modern human development. It also shows where people are. The two maps together offer a visual statement about the work of the John Muir Trust, with its 9 properties mostly in the top 10% of wild land (blue), and John Muir Award activity (the Trust's educational initiative) increasingly reaching the red parts of the map.

A team of 10 (adding up to 7 and a bit full time roles, including Trust employees and staff hosted by other organisations) oversees this activity. Limited staff capacity in England has restricted our growth opportunities in recent years, however we plan to address this in early 2012.



## Capturing Conserve activity – Audit 2011

Our aim in 2011 is to capture, quantify and accumulate all of the Conserve activity that goes into the John Muir Award. Thanks to your continued support, supplying information on what you've been doing to meet the Conserve challenge of the Award, this exercise should give us an idea of how much takes place, where, and how varied it is.

Figures at the end of June are already thought-provoking. 237 completed Audits show that over 5335 working days have been completed, equivalent to an amazing 15 years' work. From woodlands to wetlands and school grounds to the sea, a great number of habitats have benefited. Award participants have been at their busiest removing 75,000m<sup>2</sup> of invasive species including rhododendron and Himalayan balsam – almost 11 football pitches! 10km of footpath has been maintained or created – the length of a walk up and down Ben Nevis. 4517 trees native species of tree have been planted and 715 wildlife habitats have been created, including 10 pine marten boxes.

We'll conclude this survey in December and report in Spring 2012.

## 2020VISION Young Champion in focus

2020VISION is Britain's most ambitious conservation visual media initiative. It aims to show the link between healthy ecosystems and healthy people. Its pro-photographers are mentoring young people around the UK to help spread its message. Toby Clark spent a morning with 2020VISION Young Champion Katrina Martin and asked the questions.

#### Your focus is Cumbernauld, just outside Glasgow. Isn't it famous for winning a public nomination for the demolition of its town centre in the Channel 4 series 'Demolition'?

[Katrina laughs]... Yes, it does have a certain reputation, but this can be unfair. I got involved as a Young Champion by volunteering in Cumbernauld with the Scottish Wildlife Trust. Their Living Landscapes project aims to work with a range of local landowners, community groups and other agencies to create vibrant and thriving places for people and wildlife. So you can easily see the connection with 2020VISION.

## Have you enjoyed looking at nature in and around Cumbernauld?

Of course, there is more to Cumbernauld than first meets the eye. The Scottish Wildlife Trust, who have been managing and championing its wildlife reserves for over 20 years, recognise the unique opportunity that the town offers – bringing people in contact with urban wildlife on their doorstep, often where they least expect it.

#### How has the project been going?

Great! I'm loving it. Spending time in Cumbernauld's greenspaces through the different seasons is such an eye-opener. Also doing my John Muir Award gives me focus to get involved with Cumbernauld's greenspaces at deeper levels than simply just recording them. I've planted trees, joined guided walks, and helped community group events too.

## Is working with a professional photographer a bit daunting?

Not really...well, maybe at first. I've built up a good relationship with Niall Benvie, and although we've only met twice he gives me plenty of advice and support by phone and email. Niall even gave me a useful reference book to help when photographing people.

#### What has been your highlight so far?

It's been great to see how enthusiastic people have been to join the 2020VISION initiative. I set up a Flickr page [an image hosting website] to pool images of Cumbernauld and the results are fantastic, you should see it for yourself!

## Other than on Flickr, how can we follow what you are up to?

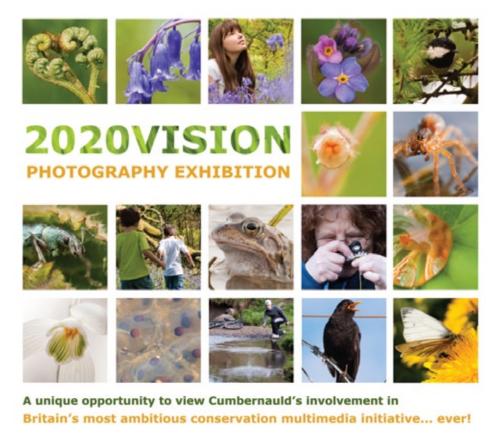
You can see the experiences of Young Champions from across Britain on the 2020VISION blog, and I've contributed to the STV Cumbernauld news blog too. I've also got my own blog that lets people know of exhibitions I'm involved with.

#### What's next for you?

Now 2020VISION is established, the challenge is to keep focused on the initial brief of communicating the value of ecosystems for people. In Cumbernauld I'm hoping to get involved with the 'Simple pleasures, easily found' campaign run by Scottish Natural Heritage. It encourages more people to get outdoors and enjoy nature for free. I'd like to explore the idea of people using Cumbernauld's greenspaces for health and enjoyment, and see how best I can communicate the value of this. Katrina's 2020VISION photography exhibition is on at Palacerigg Country Park, Cumbernauld from the 1st – 9th October. All are welcome and admission is free.

#### Note

Cumbernauld is a Scottish new town in North Lanarkshire. It was created in 1956 as a population overspill for Glasgow City and is the eighth most populous settlement in Scotland. The name comes from the Scots Gaelic 'comar nan allt', meaning 'the meeting of the waters' as, geographically, from its high point in the Scottish central belt burns (streams) flow west to the River Clyde and east to the River Forth. Infamous as the town that won a public nomination for the demolition of its town centre in the 2005 Channel 4 series 'Demolition'. Cumbernauld is perhaps not the first place you think of when asked to consider healthy natural ecosystems.



Links	
2020VISION	www.2020v.org
Katrina's blog	www.katrinaswildlife.tumblr.com
Cumbernauld Flickr	www.flickr.com/groups/2020vision-cumbernauld/pool
Niall Benvie	www.niallbenvie.com
Simple pleasures	www.snh.gov.uk/enjoying-the-outdoors/simple-pleasures

## Mission:Explore

The creators of Mission:Explore have just launched a brand new version of their website. Now a social network, you can visit missionexplore.net to search for challenges and win points and rewards for doing them. As with the Mission:Explore books, you can expect to find many thought-provoking challenges that encourage us all to explore and interact with the world in new ways. The Mission:Explore website is free and available now at www.missionexplore.net.



### Free Images Websites

- www.arkive.org: ARKive Education is a free-to-use, multimedia resource bank for educators, making use of stunning imagery and films from around the world.
- www.freeimages.co.uk/galleries/nature: a range of themed galleries including water, woodland, animals, sky, flora, views...
- www.classroomclipart.com/cgi-bin/kids/imageFolio.cgi: An American website for Free Clipart, Clip Art pictures and illustrations.
- www.ltscotland.org.uk/5to14/resources/illustrations/index. asp: pictures for all curriculum areas, more up-to-date site via Glow as well.

## CALEDONIA – Scotland's Heart of Pine

Published to coincide with the UN International Year of Forests, the new book CALEDONIA marries inspiring imagery by renowned photographer Peter Cairns, with wide-ranging essays by acclaimed nature writer Niall Benvie, that make the case for the expansion of Scotland's native woodland. The book will undoubtedly appeal to forest lovers but it also talks directly to land managers and policy makers who are key to the restoration and reconnection of native woodland. It is a valuable and inspiring manifesto for rewilding our landscape.

Available from www.northshots. com, CALEDONIA retails at £20.00 and bulk orders are £12.95 per copy (minimum order 10 units).



The new faphio book portraying a vision for Scotland's wild forest

## Alastair Humphreys – Year of Microadventure

'2011 is the year of the microadventure: a whole year when, instead of exotic foreign adventures, I am committed to trying to encourage people to get outside, get out of their comfort zone, go somewhere they've never been, go on a microadventure. An adventure that is close to home, cheap, simple, short, and yet very effective.'

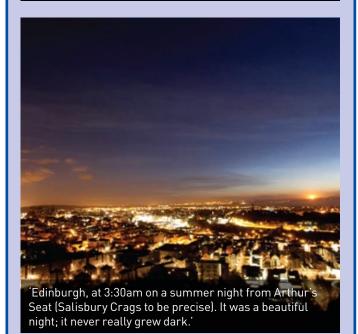
www.alastairhumphreys.com/adventures/yearmicroadventure

We particularly like the film of a trip to Shetland/Muckle Flugga by folding bike and pack-raft, and Alastair's 24 hour bivvy challenge:

'Even the Queen, ensconced in the very middle of Britain's biggest city, is only a 15-mile yomp away from a great bivvy site in the woods by the Great Pond on Epsom Common. Nobody in the UK lives more than 15 miles from somewhere green, pretty, and invigorating to spend a night.'



Bike, camp...jump!



#### John Muir Trust News Merchandise - Wild Nature Collection

The Trust's inspiring Wild Nature Collection is now available to buy online. Both the 2012 Wild Nature Diary and Calendar, edited by John Beatty, contain incredible photography – an amazing daily reminder of the natural beauty that the great outdoors has to offer.

The range includes the Trust's Christmas and greetings cards featuring superb images of wildlife, wild land and stunning winter scenes by Laurie Campbell, Keith Brame, Iain Brownlie Roy and Peter Cairns. Our clothing range, including t-shirts and fleeces, is also available.

Visit our online shop at www.imagescotland.com/buy-online.asp.

Visit the John Muir Trust Facebook page www.facebook.com/ JohnMuirTrust for fortnightly opportunities between September and the end of December to win a diary or calendar.



### North West Scotland John Muir Trust Gathering

Join the Ullapool Members' Gathering for a talk by Michael Scott on 'Scotland and its Wild Flowers'. Michael is a Wester Rossbased natural history writer, broadcaster and author of 'Scottish Wild Flowers' with a particular interest in arctic and alpine wild flowers. The talk will be preceded by a Members' Forum, giving members of the Trust the opportunity for open discussion with Chief Executive Stuart Brooks.

When: Friday October 28th Members' Forum 5pm,
Supper 6pm, Talk 7.30pm.
Where: MacPhail Centre, Ullapool
Cost: Supper £7.50, Talk £5 (£3 John Muir Trust Members).
Contact: Sue Hopkinson at hopkinson.rhue@virgin.net or call 01854 612756.

### South West England John Muir Trust Gathering

Join Southern members for presentations from Chief Executive Stuart Brooks, followed by our guest speaker Patrick Holden CBE, Director of the Sustainable Food Trust, and a former Director of the Soil Association. Further details can be found at www.jmt.org/events.asp.

When: Saturday 12th November 10am – 5pm Where: The Bristol Hotel, Bristol Cost: £18 Contact: Dave Stewart, dave@curious-coaching.com

**Contact:** Dave Stewart, daveldcurious-coaching.com or call 07776 153 428.



### Get in touch with the John Muir Award — the educational initiative of the John Muir Trust

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