

JOHN MUIR TRUST

JOURNAL

48 SPRING 10

08 The role of wild land in tackling climate change

16 Learning the lessons from Beaulieu-Denny

22 Rowing solo on a wild ocean journey

JOHN
MUIR
TRUST

FOR
wild LAND &
wild PLACES



STRENGTHEN OUR
VOICE. STAND UP
FOR WILD LAND.

JOIN US

WILD LAND

A FAST DISAPPEARING RESOURCE

Wild areas throughout Britain are
under threat.

Your voice counts.
Support our wild land campaign.

www.jmt.org/wildland
or call 01796 484936

REGULARS

- 02 Foreword from the Chief Executive
- 04 News round-up
- 28 Classic texts
Seton Gordon's Cairngorms, An Anthology,
Compiled by Hamish Brown
- 29 Book reviews
The Dawn of Green, Manchester, Thirlmere and
Modern Environmentalism; Wildlands Philanthropy,
The Great American Tradition
- 30 Opinion: You can't eat scenery
Graham White on why we should adopt the
US ethos of nature conservation
- 32 Contact us

FEATURES

- 08 Copenhagen and beyond
Wild land and climate change
- 12 Culture change
A new direction for management of wild deer
- 14 Connect and conserve
International travel as a force for good
- 16 Making a stand
Learning the lessons from Beaulieu-Denny
- 20 Park of plenty
The work of Conservación Patagonica
- 22 Wild at heart
Rowing solo across the Indian Ocean
- 24 100,000 Awards ... and counting
The John Muir Award goes from strength to strength
- 26 Fuel for thought
Supporting community energy needs on Skye
- 27 Life through a lens
A photographic celebration of Scotland's wild places

BECOME A GUARDIAN OF WILD PLACES JOIN THE JOHN MUIR TRUST

The John Muir Trust is the leading wild land conservation charity in the UK. Working with people and communities to conserve, campaign and inspire, we seek to ensure that wild land is protected and that wild places are valued by and for everyone.

www.jmt.org

Cover photography

The mountain of Blà Bheinn, Isle of Skye, has long been a source of inspiration for mountaineers, poets, artists and photographers

Inside front cover photography

Ladhar Bheinn, on the southern shores of Loch Hourn, Knoydart, safeguarded by the John Muir Trust

PHOTOGRAPHY: KEITH BRAME

From the Chief Executive

Stuart Brooks introduces the spring issue of the John Muir Trust Journal – one that examines not just developments here in the UK, but also offers an international perspective on conservation efforts and experiences from around the world

Welcome to the spring edition of the John Muir Trust Journal. Having attended a very well organised John Muir Trust members' day in Bristol last year I became acutely aware of our UK dimension and the need to reflect this in our outlook and ambition. We are delighted therefore to report increased take-up of the John Muir Award in England and it is no surprise that we passed our 100,000th award milestone with a participant from Cumbria (*see page 24*).

While devolution has had many positive benefits for Scotland and Wales – not least in instilling a greater sense of national awareness and pride – it does present challenges to organisations with a UK-wide constituency such as ours. This is especially apparent in our policy work where we keep one eye on Westminster and another on Holyrood. One day I hope to expand our influence further to Cardiff, Brussels and beyond.

To emphasise the value of looking beyond our own national boundaries, this edition of the Journal has something of an international flavour as we look at the experiences and challenges facing those working elsewhere in the world. Taking such an international perspective helps crystallise our understanding about what we have – and what we should fight for – at home.

In the pages that follow, we highlight the plight of wild lands in Patagonia, how international travel can be a force for good and celebrate incredible journeys of discovery in the Indian Ocean. Closer to home, we also lament the decision of the Scottish Government to grant consent to a line of huge electricity pylons that will march through the very heart of Scotland's beautiful wild landscape.

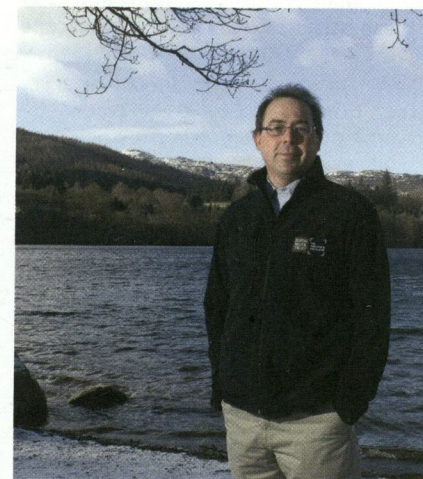
We open, however, by examining the implications of the collective failure to secure a legal agreement on reducing greenhouse gas emissions at Copenhagen. The Trust has sometimes found itself arguing on the opposite side of the table to other environmental organisations when it comes to our country's energy future – in particular regarding the use of remote and wild places to generate renewable energy.

The facts are often hazy, the issues complex and the moral arguments hazardous. However, we stand firm in our belief that renewable energy targets can be met without industrialisation of our most precious landscapes and that wild land should be protected and managed to deliver multiple benefits.

And if climate change is not a controversial enough topic, how about a change in direction for managing Scotland's wild deer population? Turn to page 12 to read how the Trust plans to address some of the conflict surrounding one of our most iconic wild land species.

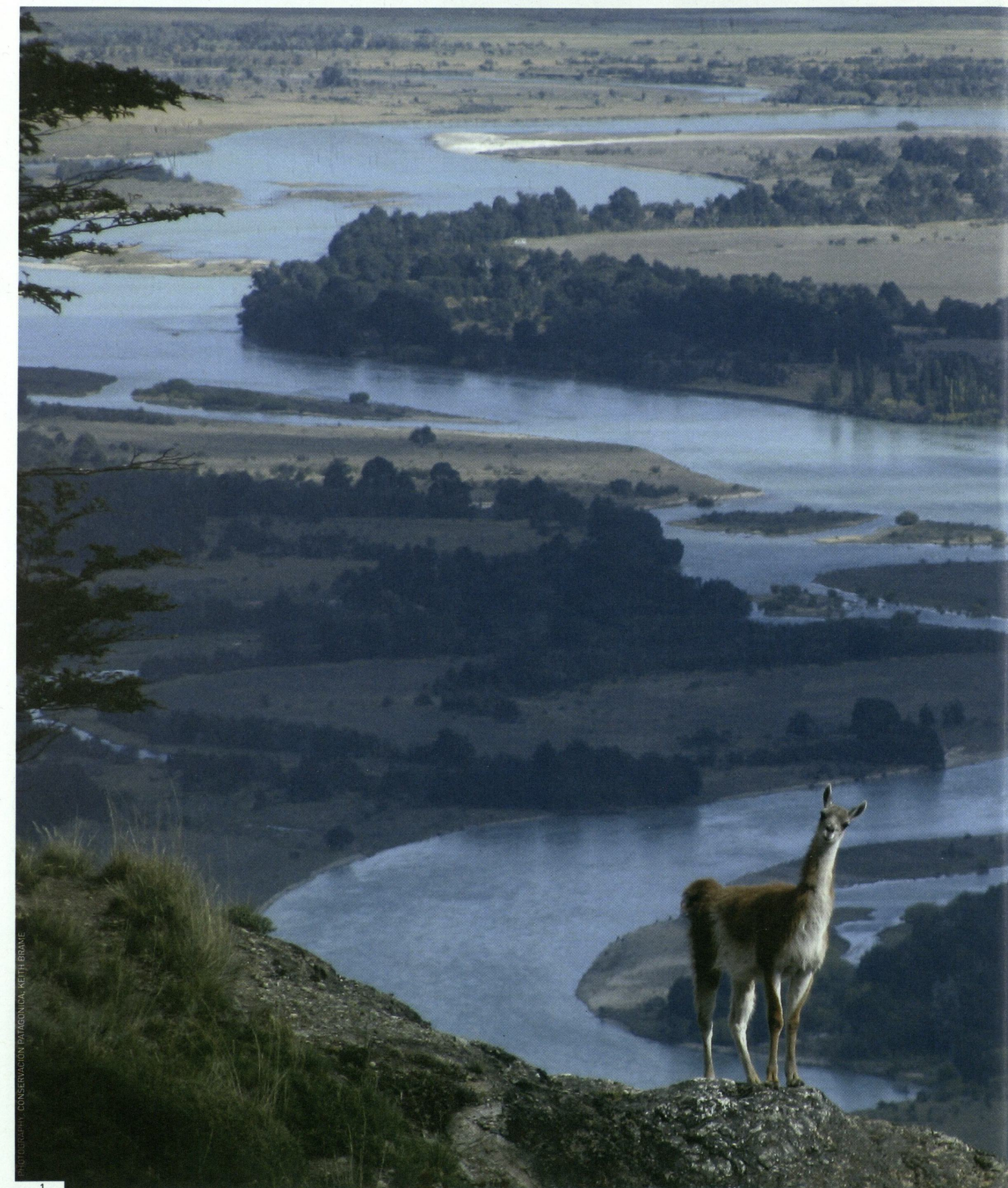
Enjoy the Journal – and the spring weather!

Stuart Brooks
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
JOHN MUIR TRUST



Photography

1 A guanaco stands high above the Rio Baker in Patagonia – one of two rivers in the area threatened by damming



JOHN MUIR TRUST 2010 WILD WRITING COMPETITION WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The winners of the John Muir Trust 2010 Wild Writing competition were announced at the Fort William Mountain Festival in February. Now in its third year, the competition celebrates our landscape and wild places by encouraging new and up-and-coming writers to detail their experiences and share their stories.

This year's competition, which saw more than 100 entries, was judged by author and folklorist Margaret Bennett.

The overall winner was writer and magazine sub-editor Melissa Harrison (pictured below) from South London, for her short story *Dimmity*. Melissa won an exclusive day out on a John Muir Trust Estate – an article on which will appear in a future issue of the Journal.

Second place went to Michelle Frost for *Leap of Fate*, while Martin McKendry won

third place for *Misinformed*. The winner of the poetry category was Iain Dubh with *Michaelmas*, and the winner of the Gaelic category was Neil McRae with *Fada air Chùl*.

There was also an extremely high standard of entries in the junior competition, which was won by Grant MacCallum from Invergarry Primary School for his poem *Mountain*.

"I enjoyed reading all of the entries and it was great to see there are so many inspiring writers out there," commented Margaret Bennett. "I was particularly impressed with all of the young bards who entered their poems."

The John Muir Trust would like to congratulate this year's winners and also thank all those who entered the competition. For a full list of winners, visit

→ www.jmt.org/wild-writing2010.asp



PHOTOGRAPHY: MELISSA HARRISON

SUPPORT FOR TIGHTER CONTROLS ON HILL TRACKS

The John Muir Trust has lent its support to a petition calling for tighter controls on the construction of hill tracks, such as the one pictured below in the Monadhliath. The petition follows growing concern about the increasing number of hill tracks constructed to allow vehicle access to upland areas intruding into wild landscapes and damaging the natural environment.

Current planning rules stipulate that as long as the tracks are claimed to be constructed for land management purposes such as agriculture and forestry, they can be built without the need to secure planning permission – even in designated areas such as National Parks.

"Uncontrolled and badly constructed tracks are one of the biggest threats to the country's wild land," commented Helen McDade, Head of Policy for the John Muir Trust. "It is vital the planning system is strengthened to ensure these tracks are constructed only where they are necessary, and in a way that is sensitive to the environment."

The issue has been raised in the Scottish Parliament by Peter Peacock MSP on behalf of the Mountaineering Council of Scotland. Mr Peacock tabled a motion noting public concern about the intrusion of these tracks into the natural landscape and the impact on otherwise wild land.

"There has already been a four-year delay since a report by Heriot-Watt University, commissioned by the Scottish Executive, clearly recommending an extensive overhaul of the uncontrolled rights of landowners to construct hill tracks through our beautiful wild areas," noted Hebe Carus, Access & Conservation Officer, Mountaineering Council of Scotland. "The longer the review of Permitted Development Rights is delayed the more of wild Scotland will be lost forever."

John Muir Trust members are urged to show their support by signing the petition on the Hill Tracks Campaign website.

→ www.hilltrackscampaign.org.uk



PHOTOGRAPHY: HEBE CARUS

EIGG COMMUNITY SHOWS THE WAY FORWARD

The imagination and commitment of islanders on Eigg has seen the community rewarded as one of three winners of the Big Green Challenge – a £1 million prize fund run by the National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts (NESTA) to encourage community-led carbon emission reductions.

The 95-strong community – the only Scottish finalist in a UK-wide competition that saw 350 entries – was awarded £300,000 for its efforts in finding innovative ways to reduce carbon emissions on the island. Eigg's 'Islands Going Green' initiative has seen the community reduce its CO₂ emissions by an estimated 32% in the past year alone. This has been achieved through a range of initiatives that include generating its own renewable electricity, installing insulation and solar panels on homes (pictured below), producing local food and developing low-carbon community transport schemes.

"The Isle of Eigg team has exceeded our expectations of what communities can achieve in reducing carbon emissions and should be congratulated," commented Jonathan Kestenbaum, NESTA's Chief Executive.

John Hutchison, Chair of the Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust – and the John Muir

Trust – is delighted with the award. "The islanders of Eigg have shown how positive community action can make the switch to a low-carbon economy," he commented. "After the failure of world leaders to stand up to the plate at the Copenhagen conference, the residents of Eigg are inspiring us all by finding local solutions to the global threat of climate change."

The forward-looking approach is bringing a huge range of benefits to the island, with Eigg bucking the trend of remote rural communities in having a growing population and increasing numbers of young people returning to the island.

Although plans have yet to be finalised, the award money is likely to go towards the installation of additional solar panels, the construction of an eco-house for students and the purchase of a community electric vehicle for the island.

"We took forward to sharing and learning from these initiatives on Eigg as so much of what they are doing is transferable across Scotland," added Hutchison. "It is a privilege to be involved with such a resourceful island community, showing the pioneering spirit we all need to take the leap forward into a truly sustainable future."

→ www.islandsgoinggreen.org
→ www.biggreenchallenge.org.uk



PHOTOGRAPHY: THIS PAGE: BIG GREEN CHALLENGE



▮ MORE ANSWERS NEEDED

Scotland Before Pylons and the Beauty-Denny Landscape Group have called for the Public Local Inquiry on the proposed Beauty-Denny electricity transmission line to be reopened. The proposal, which will see a line of giant pylons run for 220km from Beauty in Inverness-shire to Denny in Stirlingshire, was approved by Scottish Ministers in January.

The groups have written jointly to Energy Minister, Jim Mather, requesting a response to unanswered questions regarding what are seen as procedural errors in the handling of the decision, the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment, and an inconsistent approach to undergrounding the line along sections of its intended route.

According to the groups, two important legal points have been raised by the decision to approve the line. First, the rules governing Inquiries state that if the Minister has differed from his Reporters in a number of material respects, then parties involved at the Inquiry should be allowed further representation. In this case, Mr Mather chose not to follow the view of Reporters on areas it was recommended that consent be withheld. By deciding to overrule his Reporters without consulting local authorities and other bodies, the groups argue that the Minister acted outside of his powers.

The groups also believe the Energy Minister had the power to specify conditions, such as undergrounding along the route of the line.

Scotland before Pylons comprises a variety of community groups that all objected to the line, while the Beauty-Denny Landscape group comprises six major environmental organisations: The Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland; Mountaineering Council for Scotland; John Muir Trust; National Trust for Scotland; Ramblers Association Scotland; and the Scottish Wild Land Group.

[See page 16 for more on the John Muir Trust's approach to protecting wild land following Beauty-Denny, including a new campaign for improved statutory legislation for wild land.]

▮ CELEBRATING OUR BIODIVERSITY

The United Nations has declared 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity to promote understanding of biodiversity, its value and its rate of loss. The John Muir Trust is marking the year with a variety of initiatives and events. On our land, we are now in our third year of the Wild Land Biodiversity Project. As well as continuing our deer management and recording and monitoring of species and habitats, we aim to complete biodiversity action plans for each of our properties over the year ahead. To get involved with the Trust's biodiversity activities, you can visit our wild lands, find out about our surveys and engage with our activities. For more information, visit

→ www.jmt.org/biodiversity.asp
→ www.biodiversitylife.net



2010 International Year of Biodiversity

▮ CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS

Members and non-members alike are invited to join the John Muir Trust's conservation work parties in 2010. These popular events take place on Trust properties and those of partner organisations. Tasks for this year include a mass clean-up of Camasunary beach on Skye, a continuation of pathwork on Quinag and even the chance to tackle a new invasive plant species – Gunnera, or Giant rhubarb – on Harris.

A new location for work parties this year is the Corrou Estate near Roy Bridge, which has worked closely with the Trust on its conservation management since 2008. Work planned includes repairs to the path from Loch Ossian to Rannoch, as well as removing rubbish left by irresponsible wild campers at the head of Loch Treig.

Work parties are open to all and are a fantastic opportunity to contribute to the maintenance and preservation of wild land while, of course, spending time outdoors in some of Scotland's most beautiful locations. For more information, visit

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



▮ WILD LAND CONFERENCE

A new, two-day conference and discussion forum entitled 'Scotland's Wild Landscapes – New Ways Forward' plans to raise awareness among key stakeholders and the general public of recent research, policy developments and vital issues relating to Scotland's wild landscapes.

The event will be held at Scottish Natural Heritage's headquarters at Battleby near Perth from 13-14 May. Participants will discuss a variety of key questions and include presentations across a wide spectrum of interlinked themes relating to wild landscape, such as biodiversity and rewilding; renewable energy and climate change; cultural and recreational perspectives; the importance of wild landscapes to the general public; and latest research and policy development.

The event has been organised by the Centre for Mountain Studies, Perth College UHI, with support from Leeds University's new Wild Land Research Institute, Lochaber College UHI, the Scottish Wild Land Group, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Cairngorms National Park Authority and the John Muir Trust.

The conference organisers would particularly like to thank UNESCO Scotland for its generous support of this event, along with the John Muir Trust, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Cairngorms National Park Authority. For more details, visit

→ www.wildlands.info

▮ CORRECTION, JOURNAL 47

The Trust has been informed that an image used on page 5 of Journal 47, meant to illustrate an incidence of wildlife crime, was a staged photograph. The image was used in good faith and obtained from an established wildlife image library. While the location was not mentioned in the article, someone with local knowledge may be able to identify it, and we would like to make clear that this image does not depict an actual wildlife crime in this area.

▮ EXTRA PROTECTION FOR GOLDEN EAGLES

Key areas of golden eagle habitat along Scotland's west coast may be in line for additional protection following a recent decision by the Scottish Government to look at recognising more areas in Scotland that are important for the bird.

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) has now launched a public consultation on the proposal to create new Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for golden eagles at Glen Fyne, Glen Etive, Moidart and Ardgour and the islands of Jura, Scarba and the Garvellachs. SPAs are protected under European legislation covering rare or vulnerable populations of birds in the European Union.

The west coast sites are part of a series being consulted on in Scotland. The other sites are Foinaven, Glen Affric to Strathconon and the Cairngorms Massif. Scotland already has eight SPAs for golden eagles but the Scottish Government has decided to look at adding up to six more to supplement the conservation of this important bird.

Golden eagles once ranged over most of Britain, but since the 18th century they have been restricted to more remote and upland areas of Scotland and remain vulnerable.


The consultation is open to all those who have an interest in the areas under consideration. This includes owners and occupiers of the land, recreational users such as walkers and climbers, scientific groups such as ornithologists and people living in the local area. All comments received during the consultation process will be collated by SNH and reported to Scottish Ministers. Ministers will then consider the comments before deciding whether to approve the new sites.

For more information and how to comment on the consultation, visit

→ www.snh.org.uk/strategy/GE_consult01.asp



PHOTOGRAPHY: LAURIE CAMPBELL



Copenhagen and beyond

The need for developed nations to lead in reducing greenhouse gas emissions through the development of renewable technologies should not be seen as a licence to overexploit our valuable areas of wild land. **Stuart Brooks**, Chief Executive, reiterates the Trust's stance on wild land and the threat of climate change

WILD LAND PLAYS AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN THE LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEMS OF THE PLANET

Copenhagen, Denmark. December 2009. This historic meeting was an opportunity for world leaders to replace the existing Kyoto Protocol and develop a consensus on responsibility, governance, targets and incentives for tackling climate change. What we got was recognition that a 2°C increase in atmospheric temperature would be bad news and that deep cuts in global emissions are required to prevent this from happening. Developed countries, meanwhile, will be expected to help developing nations with mitigation and adaptation planning through the provision of finance, technology and capacity-building support.

But no binding targets or commitments were set, nor was there any agreement to take action or responsibility. As such, the Kyoto Protocol will continue for a while longer – a move not widely supported by developing nations or environmental groups.

Given these outcomes, what impact can we expect Copenhagen to have on the way wild land is valued and managed here in the UK? And how will this alter the work and attitudes of the John Muir Trust?

CALL FOR ACTION

For developed nations, energy generation and consumption is by far the largest source of harmful greenhouse gas emissions. In the UK, for instance, almost 57% of all emissions in 2007 were estimated¹ to be a result of either energy supply (35.4%) or transport (21.5%).

The European Union, meanwhile, has set a target for the UK of 15% renewable energy generation by 2020. If we are to successfully deliver on this, we must break our dependency on fossil fuels by developing and installing new and reliable technologies that can exploit our massive renewable potential – with resources such as wind, wave, hydro and biomass all readily available.

But while each of these options can rightly be regarded as being cleaner than conventional sources in terms of the energy they produce, they do not come free of negative environmental

impacts. The installation of wind turbines, for instance, can cause peat to dry out and birds to abandon vital nesting grounds; hydro schemes can alter the flow of rivers and streams, endangering wildlife reliant upon the water; biomass projects can be land-intensive (just look at energy crops) or controversial (energy-from-waste); while industrial-scale proposals of any kind can have a significant impact on remote and wild landscapes. This means that when considering proposals for renewable energy projects, we cannot simply say that the threat of climate change is an over-riding factor; we must take a holistic view of the environment in which the scheme will exist. Important questions must be asked. Is it appropriate for the area? Does it contravene relevant legislation? Is the scientific evidence provided accurate? And are the potential losses or damages to the environment acceptable in relation to the potential energy likely to be generated?

TRUST POLICY

In October 2004, the John Muir Trust adopted a clear policy on renewable energy developments. We stated that developments within wild land will be

opposed, while those on the periphery will be assessed based on their potential threat to habitats and species, and the scale of the proposal in relation to the surrounding area.

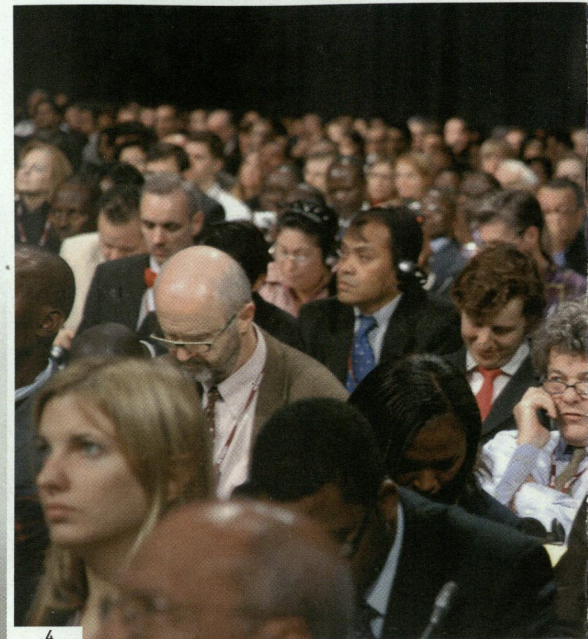
Since the adoption of this policy, the Trust has objected to only 10 industrial-scale wind power proposals, all of which were determined as failing to meet the policy's acceptable criteria. In addition, the Trust has provided input to the Scottish Government's Committee on Economy, Environment and Tourism Inquiry into Scotland's energy future, a House of Lords Energy Report, the review of the National Planning Framework in Scotland and the Consultation on an Energy Efficiency Action Plan for Scotland.

In each case, the Trust has maintained a consistent stance: in the first instance, we should promote energy conservation and efficiency using some of the public money currently going to industrial-scale renewable energy. The next priority is to appropriately site renewable energy schemes, with an emphasis on avoiding areas of high ecological and landscape value. Preference should be given to community-scale schemes, ideally

adjacent to existing settlements that give maximum benefit to local communities, followed by industrial-scale schemes located on previously developed sites.

The current rush to exploit sustainable resources is uncoordinated and fragmented. Let us also not forget that there are huge financial incentives helping to drive this process. Indeed, there would appear to be a significant resonance between the recent Beaulieu-Denny campaign (see page 16) and John Muir's unsuccessful battle to save Hetch Hetchy in Yosemite all those years ago: development within a National Park; alternative options ignored; and opposition to development denounced as out of touch with society's needs.

In both cases, campaigners were not opposed to the need for *some* development, but were simply committed to promoting and conserving the natural benefits of the land where the particular development was proposed. This is because wild land plays an integral role in the life support systems of the planet, with the provision of clean air, food and water among its many environmental services. Similarly, wild land also helps



with the effects of climate change by offering carbon 'sinks' in the form of blanket bogs and woodlands.

PEATLAND CONSERVATION

The Trust has become an active partner in a new International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) projectⁱⁱ which is geared towards changing attitudes and policies to support peatland conservation across the UK. While the biodiversity value of peatlands has been championed by conservationists in the past, its relevance to climate change mitigation could become its most important attribute from a public policy perspective. Covering an estimated three million hectares (or 12% of the UK land area), deep peat provides a store of at least 3,000 million tonnes of carbon - 20 times as much carbon as is stored in the whole of the UK's forest biomass.

When plants that grow on peatlands die they do not decompose but instead build up as layers of peat, so storing carbon. But this only happens on healthy, wet peatlands that are not subject to damage from overgrazing, burning or draining. Such activities not only prevent atmospheric carbon dioxide from being fixed and stored, they also have the effect of releasing thousands of years of stored carbon.

The IUCN project estimates that some 10 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year are being lost to the atmosphere from the UK's damaged peatlands. This means that compared to other forms of carbon management, such as renewable energy development and bio-fuel production, peatland and woodland restoration is far more cost effective.

Under existing policy, the UK government could offset the equivalent of 37% of all UK CO₂ emissions if it invested the same amount of money in peatland restoration as it does to deliver its current 5% biofuel targetⁱⁱⁱ. So, the Trust's vision for large tracts of functioning woodlands and peatlands not only appeals from a landscape and wildlife perspective, but it could also play a crucial role in reducing our carbon emissions.

There are also significant opportunities for farmers and other land managers to receive payments for undertaking restoration work that could deliver multiple public benefits. Unfortunately, both international and UK policy still has some way to go before it can help realise these benefits.

In the meantime, the Trust will continue to support large-scale ecosystem restoration and oppose developments -

including renewable energy schemes - on deep peat sites in core areas of wild land.

It is true that wild places and the unique habitats and biodiversity they possess are facing their greatest threat in the form of climate change, but that does not mean that our sensitive landscape should be exploited by business for its natural resources. By adopting a more strategic approach to land management and sustainable energy generation we can avoid the need to consider developments in sensitive areas and help develop solutions that offer the best outcomes for all concerned: clean, affordable and secure energy supplies, economic resilience and sound environmental protection. □

THE TRUST WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT LARGE-SCALE ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

Footnotes

ⁱ Greenhouse Gas Emission Statistics, Paul Bolton, www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/briefings/snsg-02745.pdf

ⁱⁱ IUCN UK Committee Peatland Programme 2009-2012, www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org

ⁱⁱⁱ Source: The Root of the Matter. Carbon Sequestration in Forests and Peatlands. Policy Exchange, 2008. www.policyexchange.org.uk

Photography

- 1 Wild land looking towards Beinn Dearg, Skye
- 2 Coire a Mhail in the Mamores, looking north towards Steall
- 3 Wind turbines pose a very real landscape threat
- 4 All ears at the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen

Wild land needs wild businesses

Mountain Equipment is very pleased to be a new gold corporate member of the John Muir Trust. Like many other mountain enthusiasts, we should have joined years ago! We look forward to working with the Trust to support its activities and to promote membership amongst the thousands of people that use our gear in the British hills every year.

Hamish Dunn, Brand Director
Mountain Equipment

The John Muir Trust would like to thank its Corporate Members and Supporters

GOLD CORPORATE MEMBERS

Berghaus
Corrour Trust
Haggis Adventures
HF Holidays
Highlander
Image Scotland
Mountain Equipment
Tiso

BRONZE CORPORATE MEMBERS

Alpine Exploratory
Avendris
Dandy
Dewar's World of Whisky
Edinburgh Mountain Film Festival
The George Hotel, Edinburgh
Heart of the Lakes
Highland Adventure Safaris
King's Manor Hotel, Edinburgh
Scotland Calling
Ultimate Outdoors
The Watermill, Aberfeldy
Webducate

SILVER CORPORATE MEMBERS

Ben Nevis Distillery
Fergus Macfarlane Pharmacy
Profitmaster Systems Ltd

THE MOUNTAINS ARE CALLING AND I MUST GO

JOHN MUIR

We value the contribution of the growing number of companies that are helping the Trust through membership, donations, promotional opportunities and in-kind support.

If you would like to join us in the business of protecting wild land & wild places, please contact Sam Baumber Membership Manager recruit@jmt.org / 0131 554 0114

grasslands or heathlands, to create woodland clearings and even provide niches for seeds to germinate in their hoof prints. Even in death, their grallochs and carcasses provide much-needed nutrition for a host of plants and animals in what is often an impoverished environment.

FORWARD THINKING

The Trust's vision is to optimise the deer population on wild land and maximise their full ecological potential. However, this requires a more sustainable model of deer management than the current 'traditional' approach with its focus on producing as many sporting stags as possible.

The history of traditional deer management, from the rise of the Victorian deer forest to the capital value of estates being partly based on the number of sporting stags shot, is well rehearsed. With the development of the shooting estate, deer were protected, local peoples' access to hunting restricted and deer numbers rose.

The challenge for the Trust is to see whether traditional deer management can adapt to more sustainable practices. It is a change in approach that raises several questions which I will try and answer:

Does the Trust want to eradicate deer?

No. Deer are an essential part of a healthy ecosystem and stalking is a crucial part of sustainable wild land management. However, the main aim of stalking in a sustainable model is to manage the habitat, with revenue from 'conservation hunting' and the sale of venison offsetting some of the costs. Deer will also contribute to the rural economy and employment of wild land areas through eco-tourism.

Does the Trust want to return to a particular time in history?

No. The past is a different country. Although the Trust's vision means reducing deer numbers in some areas, the approach is based on concerns about the present rather than trying to turn the clock back.

Why doesn't the Trust simply fence deer out?

Fencing is a useful tool to achieve forestry or woodland objectives, particularly for planting of nursery-grown trees, and has been used on our Knoydart and Skye properties.

However, the main flaw of fencing as a universal solution is that it treats the symptoms of the problem rather than the cause. If we fence but do not address deer numbers outside, what happens when we take the fence down? Or, put another way, once a fence is up there will

ATTITUDES TO RED DEER MANAGEMENT ON WILD LAND ARE CHANGING

never be a good time to take it down. The trees – or their seedlings – would always be at risk of damage.

And it is not just woodlands that need lower deer impacts to achieve full ecological potential; if deer numbers are too high the entire ecosystem, from arctic-alpine plant communities on the high tops to blanket bogs on the glen floor, can be impacted by grazing and trampling. If fencing is the solution, then the entire ecosystem (or property) should be fenced – a massive and costly undertaking.

Fencing creates other problems, too. Given that deer are an integral part of the ecosystem, fencing them out entirely is counter-productive. For example, when deer are fenced out of woodland the ground vegetation grows rapidly making it more difficult for seedlings to establish. And then there is the visual intrusion on wild landscapes, restrictions on movement for wildlife and people, plus the risk of fence strikes for vulnerable birds such as capercaillie.

Finally, fencing does not remove the need to cull deer. Fencing deer out of their natural forage and shelter areas could have serious welfare consequences, or concentrate their impacts outside the fence. Therefore a 'compensatory' cull of those animals that once depended on the fenced area for foraging and shelter is usually required to minimise the risk of death from starvation or exposure.

Will the Trust's approach harm traditional deer management on adjacent land?

The concept that one landowner is killing another's deer is false. Legally, wild deer belong to no-one until they are dead. Interestingly, on estates neighbouring those where sustainable management is now practiced, sport shooting has continued. Some impacts have been observed in terms of availability of sporting stags but, overall, changes have not been dramatic.



2

The assumption has been that culling deer creates a 'vacuum' that then sucks replacement animals into the vacant territory. The logical conclusion of this is that continually culling deer on one property would see the entire deer population from the wider area 'drawn in and killed'. However, thanks to a combination of biological and behavioural reasons, this appears not to happen. Hinds are generally 'hefted' to an area and are very slow to colonise. Plus, if an area is continually shot and disturbed, it is unlikely that deer of either sex will settle there.

But this is not to suggest that sporting estates will see no impact at all. If the overall population is reduced in an area, then logically the availability of sporting stags will be proportionately affected. Of course, the reverse can equally be argued: traditional deer management on adjacent land may well impact on the Trust's objectives for a more sustainable approach.

TURNING TIDE

Encouragingly, attitudes to red deer management on wild land are changing. In 2008, for the first time, the Scottish Government published a national strategy on the sustainable management of wild deer. This was followed a year later by consultation on how deer should be managed as part of a proposed bill.

Both developments illustrate recognition at policy level that deer represent a national resource that belongs to all and that deer impacts – both positive and negative – affect not just those with the right to shoot them. In addition, the Government's obligation to achieve 2010 (and beyond) biodiversity targets is focussed on keeping designated sites such as SSSIs in favourable condition. For many wild land areas, this means reducing deer grazing impacts.

There is a general recognition in government and wider society of the need to take a more strategic view of

land management. In 2010, the two public bodies responsible for deer and natural heritage (Deer Commission Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage respectively) are scheduled to merge. Meanwhile, 'ecosystem thinking' has begun to replace the previous focus on individual species or habitats. The Government has also completed a rural land use study and is developing a 'sustainable land use strategy' with a view to integrating competing objectives in the countryside.

This broader attitude to land management is reflected on the ground. Today, the motivation of wild land owners is very different to when traditional deer management was born, or even when the Trust was founded in 1983. Public bodies such as the Forestry Commission and Scottish Natural Heritage, community buy-outs, other non-governmental organisations and an increasing number of private estates now focus much more on ecosystem enhancement and wild land restoration.

There is no reason why traditional deer management cannot adapt to sustainable practices. It has already evolved with new technologies such as all terrain vehicles and telescopic sights, and to new practices such as stalking qualifications, venison quality assurance schemes and best practice guidance. A shift to sustainable deer management would mean a change of emphasis from sporting stags to ecosystems. It would also entail using habitat monitoring to determine deer density; ceasing to supplementary feed stags over the winter; and moving the cull to a time of year that minimises the impact of deer and their extraction on fragile habitats and soils.

But given the changes that have already occurred in traditional stalking, this shift should not be insurmountable. And with sustainable deer management still requiring skilled stalkers and support hunting – albeit for conservation purposes – such a shift should be seen as an opportunity rather than a threat. Wild deer would then become an icon of a truly healthy wild land ecosystem. □

About the author

Mike Daniels is Chief Scientific Officer for the John Muir Trust. He can be contacted at: cso@jmt.org

For a fascinating account of stalking with the Trust's wild land rangers, see Henry Straker-Smith's article *Hard yards with the JMT* at www.jmt.org

Photography

1 Deer extraction on Trust land

2 Skilled hunters would still be needed for sustainable management of wild deer

Culture change

If wild land and wild deer are to flourish together, the Trust believes a more sustainable approach to deer management is needed. Mike Daniels explains

Standing proud on the cover of the Trust's 2010 Wild Nature diary, the red deer is an iconic wild land species. Our largest native land mammal, red deer are found on all Trust-managed wild land, but their presence poses a significant challenge for the sustainable management of that land – with considerable resources spent on culling around 400 animals each year.

Such a cull is necessary in part to replace the role of natural predators, but also to bring deer populations to levels that allow the full ecological potential of the land to be realised. Many of our wild land ecosystems are in poor health as a result of centuries of intensive grazing by deer and sheep, as well as burning, draining and planting of exotic species. At higher levels, deer grazing has suppressed habitats and restricted many species of plants to inaccessible ledges. Lower down, deer trampling on blanket bogs has contributed to the erosion of peat and release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

The problem, of course, is not the deer, but rather man's management of them. Magnificent animals in their own right, deer are an integral part of the wild land ecosystem. They are 'keystone' species with the ability to maintain flower rich



Connect and conserve



Every year, millions of people travel to places such as Africa and South America to enjoy rare wildlife and remarkable landscapes. Countless more head to the Scottish Highlands to experience our own mountains and beautiful coastline. But, asks Neil Birnie – a co-founder of Wilderness Scotland – how do we inspire the people who travel to *see* these things to also want to *conserve* them?

REGRETTABLY, FOR MANY OF OUR WILD PLACES TO SURVIVE THEY MUST OFTEN DEMONSTRATE ECONOMIC VALUE

Wilderness Scotland and its international division Wilderness Journeys were borne out of a desire to introduce people to wild places and, in doing so, support their protection. Now in its tenth year of operation, the Edinburgh-based walking and adventure holiday company provides significant financial support to the John Muir Trust through its innovative Conservation Contribution scheme.

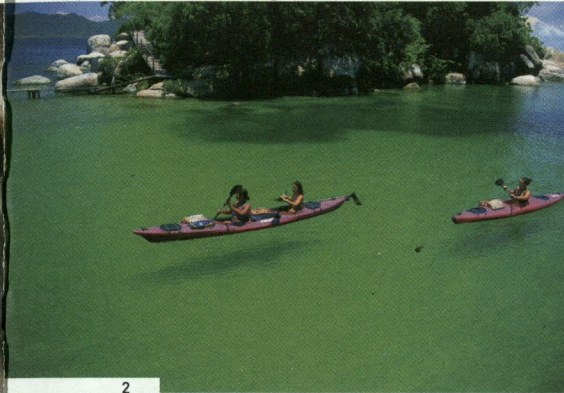
Yet for a company founded by passionate environmentalists, our industry presents us with a continual dilemma. Air travel is considered to be the fastest growing source of carbon emissions, while insensitive tourism developments are placing increasing pressure upon fragile ecosystems world-wide.

Tourism is, however, the only major global industry to place commercial value upon pristine natural habitats. Indeed, in many locations, tourism is the sole reason for the continued existence of wildlife, forests and precious biodiversity. And with

deforestation believed to account for up to 20% of all carbon emissions (compared with up to 4% through air travel) there is a compelling rationale for travelling in a conservation-supportive manner as a means of doing something positive.

Tourism supports conservation in two primary ways: by providing revenue to local communities who live near important natural areas – with such revenue serving as an economic alternative to more environmentally damaging forms of land use; and by enabling people who travel to wild and natural areas to forge a personal connection with these places and to thereafter feel inspired to actively help protect them.

Wilderness Scotland and Wilderness Journeys have always understood the fact that by journeying through a wild and beautiful region our clients will be minded to place increasing value on such places. Ideally, they will engage directly and support the work of a



2

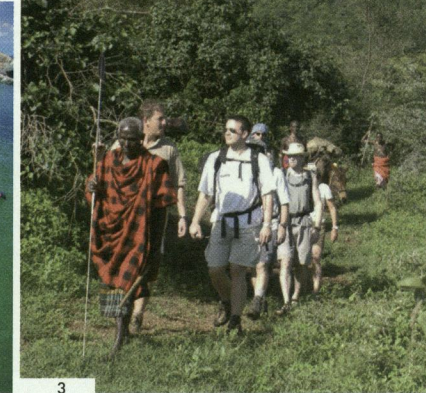
conservation organisation. Others might simply consider the environment the next time they vote, or be inspired to do more with their families in order that their children might grow up more environmentally aware.

A second and perhaps more persuasive argument behind tourism's importance for conservation lies in the regrettable reality that for many of our precious wild places to survive, they must often demonstrate some form of economic value. This means that in most successfully integrated conservation and tourism contexts there are clear dynamics at work: there must be both a threatened biodiversity resource and a human population that can (should they derive benefit from it) influence the protection of that resource to an extent that it outweighs the benefits of a potentially more environmentally damaging use of such a resource.

WORKING IN TANDEM

The contexts in which conservation and tourism have been most successfully integrated are in developing nations where government is least effective and public finance for conservation most limited. The grave and urgent threat to many of the world's most precious natural treasures has caused embattled conservation organisations and the private tourism sector to collaborate in creating innovative conservation tourism and sustainable enterprise models.

Wilderness Journeys has always primarily sought to develop international adventure travel experiences in contexts where tourism is integrated with an effective conservation regime. Revenue from our African walking safari itineraries, for instance, enabled us to provide the initial £12,000 of financial support to kick-start an initiative in the Leroghi forests of northern Kenya where the Wilderness Foundation has formed a partnership with Wangari Mathai's Green Belt Movement to plant more than one million trees in the region.



3

And others are doing likewise elsewhere. For example, the creation of an eight-bed, luxury eco-lodge in Kenya's Mathews Mountains has led to the return of elephant, lion and African wild dog to the region. It has also helped generate the seed-finance to create Africa's largest community-conservation area in partnership with Kenyan conservation body the Northern Rangelands Trust.

In Bolivia, the buffer zone around Madidi National Park in the upper Amazon river basin is being protected through a series of innovative and community-based conservation tourism initiatives led by the Wildlife Conservation Society. Here, local communities are incentivised to develop ecotourism operations as an alternative to logging and small-scale poaching.

Meanwhile, in India, a scheme to convert former tiger poachers and sandalwood gatherers into tourism guides has resulted in a series of conservation successes in the Periyar Tiger Reserve in Kerala. Visitors stay in a jungle lodge as guests of the local community, while the poachers-turned-tour guides offer gentle rafting and bird watching journeys through lagoons in which they once hunted tigers. While the animals remain under serious threat, this venture has at least resulted in a significant decline in deforestation rates and a boost to the reserve's remaining tiger population.

UK PARALLELS

While the opportunity to integrate conservation and tourism is most pronounced in an overseas and developing nation context, there are relevant parallels to be drawn here in the UK. We have witnessed, for instance, how a community partnership in Assynt was moved, out of financial necessity, to consider the development of industrial wind turbines in the immediate vicinity of Suilven – a natural treasure of international importance. It is essential that the local community in Assynt be supported in developing a viable local ecotourism industry to help it balance

conservation with stimulating a viable economy for their children and grandchildren.

Not so long ago, the wild places of Harris were under threat from a super quarry, while today they face the prospect of a further industrial-scale wind turbine development on nearby Pairc. Although, of course, a complex and emotive issue, it is conceivable that if there was more tourism on the islands – and a greater integration between tourism and conservation – then such a development may have been prevented earlier.

I liken tourism's role in the global conservation struggle to putting a series of sticking plasters on precious areas of biodiversity while governments slowly inch towards a system of effective environmental protection. Although much of the tourism which exists today is undesirable from an environmental perspective – with the air travel often involved undeniably harmful – there are many tourism operations that are, on balance, doing a great deal of good. So, until such time as political will supports our governments to find a more sensible way forward, choosing your holiday in a manner which genuinely benefits conservation is one way of making a small yet valuable contribution to conserving the earth's precious wild places. □

About the author

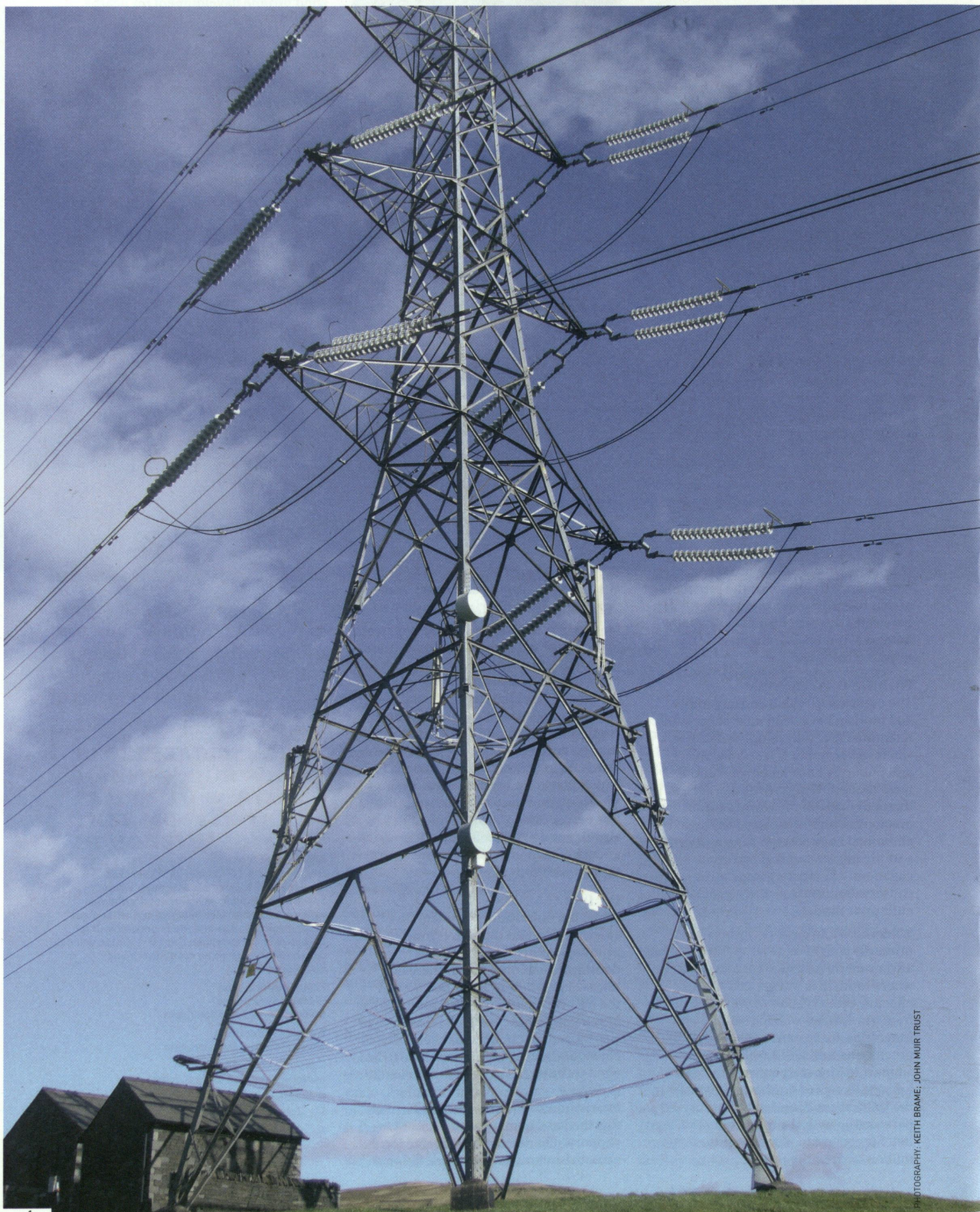
Neil Birnie is a co-founder of Wilderness Scotland and Wilderness Journeys, which between them offer environmentally-themed walking and adventure holidays in Scotland and other inspiring locations. He is presently Chief Executive of Conservation Capital, an international conservation enterprise consultancy and investment firm.

Further information

Wilderness Scotland
www.wildernessscotland.com
Wilderness Journeys
www.wildernessjourneys.com
Conservation Capital
www.conservation-capital.com

Photography

- 1 Zebras at a waterhole
- 2 Kayaking on Lake Malawi
- 3 A Wilderness Journeys walking safari in northern Kenya



PHOTOGRAPHY: KEITH BRAME; JOHN MUIR TRUST

Making a stand

The John Muir Trust fought long and hard against the planned upgrade to the Beaulay-Denny power transmission line. But having seen this and other projects approved, it is time for a step change in the approach to protecting wild land, writes **Helen McDade**

The recent Ministerial decisions approving the Beaulay-Denny electricity transmission line and the Muaitheabhal wind farm development on Eiscein in Lewis raise a number of important questions. How well is wild land protected? What are the lessons we can learn from our campaign efforts and what is the best way forward?

Since the application for the Beaulay-Denny upgrade was first lodged in 2005, the Trust has been heavily involved in opposing a proposal that will now see a line of 600 pylons, some as high as 65 metres, run for 220km from just west of Inverness to Stirlingshire. The Trust's stance was based on an assessment that it would simply not be possible to mitigate against the significant adverse effects on the visual and landscape environment by, for instance, careful micro-siting of the line.

THE ESSENTIAL STATUS OF WILD LAND IN THE UK REMAINS VAGUE

In fact, there are several significant areas where action to minimise the impact locally is almost impossible. These include the Corrieyairack Pass through the Monadhliath Mountains, a section through the Cairngorms National Park and, further south, where the line passes to the east of Schiehallion.

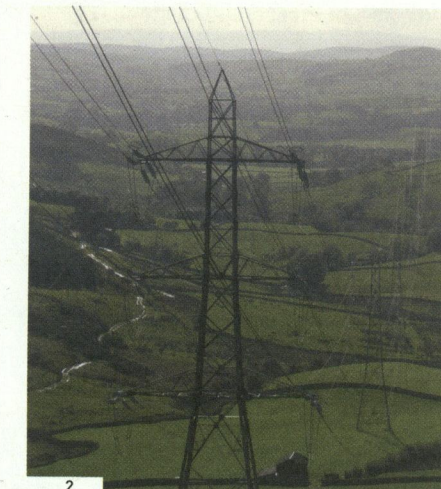
However, we also recognised along with our partners in the Beaulay-Denny Landscape Group that, to stop the development, we would need to demonstrate alternative ways for the increase in renewable electricity generated in Scotland – the prime reason cited for upgrading the line – to be delivered to consumers in the south.

MAJOR BATTLE

When the Trust adopted this stance, we recognised that the chips were stacked against us. All major political parties were keen to stress that Scotland's renewable energy potential must be tapped and seemed to accept the industry view that a line between Beaulay and Denny was essential. Individual politicians who represented areas along the line were, however, also keen to stress that due notice should be taken of legitimate local concerns.

Sadly, it soon became apparent that very few politicians thought this a matter that they needed to study in detail. This was unfortunate because the detailed data we provided offered answers to some of the key questions. Is the line required and does it need to go from Beaulay to Denny? And are the costs of alternatives really as much as claimed by the Applicant?

But after an eleven-month inquiry and a further two years in the system, the Scottish Government Energy Minister, Jim Mather, announced approval for the line with very little change from the original proposal. The Trust believes this to be a very poor decision not just environmentally but also economically and technically.



Hard on the heels of the Beaulay-Denny announcement came Ministerial approval for the Muaitheabhal wind farm on Eiscein in South Lewis. The Trust opposed an earlier version of this – which involved more than 50 turbines, each 125 metres high, half of which were in a National Scenic Area (NSA) – at a Public Local Inquiry in 2008.

Although modified in that it will now be situated outwith the NSA, the approved scheme will still have a major impact on key wild land areas. There will now be fewer turbines – 33 in all – but with each reaching a height of 145 metres, and the nearest turbine just 5km away from the NSA, they will be clearly visible from Beinn Mhor, the highest mountain on the Paicr peninsula.

Beinn Mhor itself is within a Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) Search Area for Wild Land – areas identified as places whose nature and extent suggest that they are where the qualities of wildness can be best experienced. So, while the Trust is pleased that the combined efforts of the objectors ensured that the NSA was protected, we are very sorry to see such a magnificent area of wild land so seriously impacted.

MAPPING THE WILD

So what now? The Trust is currently working with a team from Leeds University looking at maps of wild land in Britain (see below) and using Geographic Information System data to assess the impacts of such developments on our diminishing wild land resource. A recent SNH Key Indicator figure which stated that "the extent of Scotland unaffected by any form of visual influence declined from 41% to 31%" between 2002 and 2008 provides an indication of the scale and immediacy of the threat.

Taking all these points together, the Trust believes it imperative that we see a step change in the approach to protecting wild land. Voluntary measures such as urging best practice on decision-makers and developers have simply not worked. It is little understood that high-value landscape and scenic interests have scant protection compared to, say, species and habitats through relevant European Union Directives.

The Trust has taken part in groups of landscape interests, such as the Scottish

Landscape Forum, to try and ensure that the landscape case is heard at decision-making level. But it has not been easy.

Sadly, the recession seems to have made governments in the UK excessively keen to give the go-ahead for badly thought through developments in an attempt to kick-start an economic recovery. As a result, there appears to be little appetite for better protection measures – at least in Scotland.

Although there is some encouraging thinking on landscape issues and ecosystem scale from organisations such as Natural England, the essential status of wild land in the UK remains vague. While wild land is mentioned as important in various planning documents, such as the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework, there is no hard and fast rule about how to actually protect it. Our conclusion is that there is an urgent need for a wild land designation to be introduced to protect core areas of unspoilt wild land, and then a further agreed buffer zone which would allow transitional activities.

FRESH START

The Trust recently launched a wild land campaign to gather support from the thousands of people who are deeply concerned about the future of our wild landscapes. Worryingly, when asked to support a Landscape Forum, a Government Minister commented recently: "I just don't see a groundswell of opinion from communities about landscape". But he is wrong. Over 90% of the 20,000 objectors to the Beaulieu-Denny line were concerned about landscape.

Politicians need to see evidence of this concern and recognise that wild land and landscape concerns matter greatly to people. They need to be informed about what wild land does for us, not just in terms of how people feel and respond to it, but also its contribution when it comes to water quality, carbon storage and biodiversity. They need to understand and feel what we already know – that wild land must be protected NOW.

And it is easy to get involved, be it through signing our petitions to governments, or circulating details of our campaign to friends in the UK and overseas. With elections coming, this is a perfect opportunity to challenge politicians on where they stand on this matter and obtain their support.

Meanwhile, Trust staff will be seeking the professional support needed to have a wild land designation discussed in the corridors of power, while a Trust-run Wild Land Conference in 2011 will cover the scientific aspects of our campaign, as well as celebrate the wild land we have left.

The ambition behind this campaign is not small and we need your help. If you can join or give a donation, it will help pay for the staff and research required to take the campaign forward. Keep an eye on our website for further updates. This won't happen overnight but it can and must happen before we lose our precious wild land altogether. □

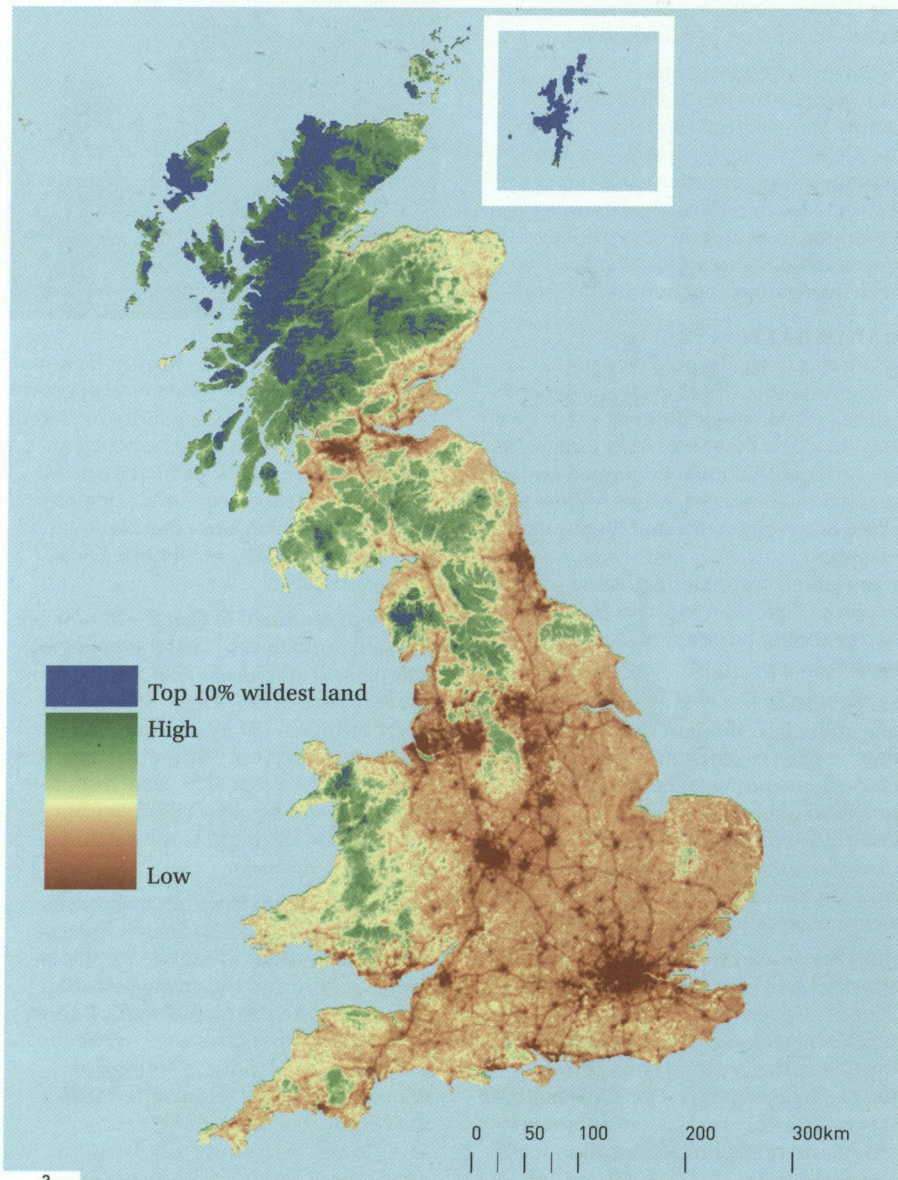
About the author
Helen McDade is Head of Policy for the John Muir Trust. She can be contacted at policy@jmt.org

Photography
1/2 Giant pylons in the Lake District similar in size to those planned for the Beaulieu-Denny line

3 A map depicting Britain's remaining wild land areas on a gradated scale from deep blue (wildest areas) to red (most built up areas).

MAP SUPPLIED BY DR STEVE CARVER, WILDLAND RESEARCH INSTITUTE. MAP REPRODUCED FROM ORDNANCE SURVEY MATERIAL WITH THE PERMISSION OF ORDNANCE SURVEY ON BEHALF OF THE CONTROLLER OF HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE. CROWN COPYRIGHT.

WILD LAND IN BRITAIN



LET YOUR LEGACY ALLOW THE WILD LAND AND WILD PLACES YOU LOVE TO FLOURISH, FOREVER.

FOREVER WILD

TIME FOR REFLECTION

PLEASE CONSIDER INCLUDING A GIFT IN YOUR WILL TO THE JOHN MUIR TRUST. FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE OR CONTACT SARA McCARTER FOR A LEGACY INFORMATION PACK.

www.jmt.org/legacy

fundraising@jmt.org / 0131 554 0114

LOCHAN DUBHA IN THE HEART OF THE CUILLIN, ISLE OF SKYE, SAFEGUARDED BY THE JOHN MUIR TRUST.

PHOTOGRAPHER: KEITH BRAME

Each generation brings a new adventure.

Berghaus has been helping great British mountaineers to reach their goals for over 40 years. From Sir Chris Bonington to Leo Houlding, generations of adventurers have gone further and reached higher, supported every step of the way by Berghaus.

www.berghaus.com

Sir Chris Bonington, Menlungtse, Himalayas 1988.

Leo Houlding, Mount Asgard, Baffin Island, Canada 2010. Copyright Alastair Lee 2010.

BERGHAUS and  are registered trade marks of Berghaus Limited. © Berghaus 2010.

Park of plenty

Conservación Patagonica has spent a decade working to protect a vast area of wild land that is home to some of the most awe-inspiring scenery in the world. We talk to Executive Director, **Jake Blaine**, to learn more about the organisation's work

Journal: Please explain the thinking behind the formation of Conservación Patagonica (CP)

Jake Blaine: CP was founded as a non-profit organisation in 2000 with the mission to preserve biodiversity and restore degraded grasslands through the creation of national parks. We decided to work within the context of national parks because they are the most secure way to protect the land and its biodiversity in perpetuity. To date, CP has conserved more than 460,000 acres of critically endangered grasslands and created Argentina's first ever coastal national park: Monte Leon National Park.

Patagonia itself offers an unparalleled opportunity for large-scale land conservation because of its vast and available tracts of untouched wild lands and its wide range of native species. It is also a place where CP can work at a scale that significantly contributes to global carbon sequestration; it is a transition landscape with great importance for climate adaptation; and its untapped land, mineral and energy resources represent an attractive target for government and corporate exploitation.

What is the main thrust of your focus today?

Our primary focus is on the creation of the future Patagonia National Park (PNP). When completed, PNP will comprise a total of 750,000 acres – similar in size to Yosemite National Park – and will sit in a transitional zone between the Southern Andean foothills, the temperate beach forest and the semi-arid grasslands known as the Patagonian steppes.

The park will open a vital migration corridor that was previously blocked by fences constructed by ranchers to confine their sheep and cattle. The corridor will be used by puma, huemul deer (the Chilean symbol of nature) and other International Union for Conservation of Nature red-listed species. The Corporacion Nacional Forestal – the Chilean equivalent of the US National

Park Service – has made this project the country's number one conservation priority.

One of the outcomes that CP hopes to achieve is to bolster the local economy with sustainable industries such as eco-tourism and low-impact recreation activities. PNP sits between two large national reserves and the completion of the park will require CP to work closely with the local communities, regional universities and all levels of government. Globally, we hope this project will shine light on the significance of conserving one of the last wild places on earth.

Presumably the future PNP is just one part of a wider ambition for the region?

CP's goal is to establish a balance between human use and native habitats. We aim to achieve not just biodiversity but a richness of diversity that allows all inhabitants to remain intact and evolve in their natural ways. Today, these systems are deeply compromised by human use and, in particular, suffer from a century of sheep and cattle grazing – practices that have destroyed the grasslands and pushed many of the native species into marginal landscapes. CP is committed to bringing back these species and restoring the region so that humans and non-humans can live, if not in harmony, then at least in some sort of truce.

What kind of ecological health is Patagonia in today?

Although a place of dramatic beauty and wide-open spaces, the land itself is ecologically fragile. Intensive grazing by domestic livestock has caused grave damage to Patagonia's grassland ecosystems, while widespread deforestation, the killing of native carnivores, expanding oil and mining exploitation, and proposed mega-dams for hydroelectricity are all current and future threats to the region's natural character. Today, less than 5% of Patagonia is permanently protected. The agricultural ministry of Argentina

estimates that desertification of the Patagonian steppe ecosystem will affect nearly 80% of the region, so actions must be taken now to reduce pressure on this fragile landscape.

Are you essentially on track?

Yes. There are always unseen obstacles in our path, but overall this project is moving forward at a steady and productive pace. The biggest short-term challenge we face is finding the funding needed to cover the project's operating budget as we begin phase II, which is the consolidation of the Park. The primary long-term hurdle will be to endow the project to ensure its preservation in perpetuity.

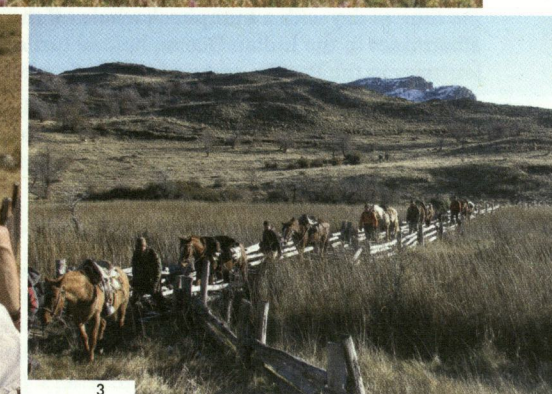
To what extent might your work be considered a model for wild land conservation elsewhere – including here in the UK?

We fully intend for our work – and specifically the PNP project – to be a model for future large-scale land conservation projects in the world. We want people to build on our successes and learn from our mistakes so that together we can preserve and restore as much of the world's grasslands as is humanly possible. We plan on sharing our experiences with any and all land conservation organisations so that they may achieve their goals more efficiently and effectively.

Specifically in the UK, the model of leveraging private lands to create larger public protected areas and the reopening of wildlife corridors to preserve and promote biodiversity are two applicable aspects of our work.

Finally how can people support your work?

The three main ways to get involved are to donate money online at our website, volunteer at the future PNP and spread the word about CP and large-scale land conservation as much as possible. □



Further information
Based in California, Conservación Patagonica was established by Kristine Tompkins, the former CEO of US outdoor clothing manufacturer, Patagonia Inc.
www.conservacionpatagonica.org

Photography

- 1 A classic Patagonian grassland scene
- 2 Volunteers work on fence removal
- 3 Local gauchos (ranchers) on the move



Wild at heart

PHOTOGRAPHY: SARAH OUTEN, RENE SOOBAROVEN

Record-breaking oarswoman **Sarah Outen** explains how an epic voyage rowing solo across the Indian Ocean in 2009 was just one more step in her love affair with wild places

I am going to be frank and tell it how it is. I am in love with the wild and with life; with wildlife and the *wild* life. In short, I am a wild life junkie: I get my fix from exploring and adventuring, sharing an energy that I have thrived on for more than two decades.

Although still young, I have already experienced many wild wonders. I have passed the time of day with a humpback whale off the coast of Scotland, surfed waves with albatrosses in the Indian Ocean, helped turtle hatchlings begin their own salty journeys in the Pacific, and paddled and trekked far and wide in the UK.

I am driven by wanderlust, answering the call of the running tides, the mountains and the stars – journeying and learning in the wilderness. This is what it is to add meaning to the bewildering mystery of life and all its stories, to return to our early roots as people of the land.

WILD CALLING

I was born with a wandering heart and passion for wild things and places. Family holidays to Wales and Northumbria sparked my love of hills, mountains, beaches and rivers. As I grew older, I spent more time challenging myself in such places and reading about great journeys. First experiences of wild camping during my Duke of Edinburgh Awards were magical; a sea kayaking expedition to the Hebrides ignited my imagination; while volunteer work with a local wildlife trust taught me the need for a pragmatic approach to conservation.

At university, I studied biology and first learned of John Muir and his early calls to 'do something for the wilderness and make the mountains glad'. I was happy to answer and spent my summers volunteering with the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust (HWDT) on the west coast of Scotland, furthering my understanding of the marine environment and completing my dissertation on the second largest fish in the ocean – the enigmatic basking shark.



I URGE YOU TO MAKE THE MOST OF TODAY AND ALL YOUR TOMORROWS

It was during my work with HWDT that I was lucky enough to take part in the John Muir Trust's Journey for the Wild. We picked up the baton on Skye and sailed south to Eigg, arriving to a traditional piped welcome on the beach. There was something spiritual about that staff and all that it embodied – calling us to care for and connect with the wild, and look towards a greener, wilder future.

ROWING SOLO

Even while studying at Oxford I had regular fixes of wilderness – albeit in suburban surroundings. Rowing was my passion and I spent many a morning on the river as the sun rose over the famous spires. While there, I dreamt of oceans and set about planning the biggest adventure of my life: a 6,000-km solo row across the Indian Ocean from Australia to Mauritius.

My inspiration was two-fold: I wanted the challenge of an epic voyage, but it was also a trip dedicated to the memory of my father, who died suddenly in 2006. Having been diagnosed with arthritis at just 33 years old, his was a journey racked with pain and suffering during his final years. During those painful times, I had seen him – albeit briefly – restored and revitalised by wild places. He had taught me how to use a map and compass and we often climbed together. It was out in the elements where I felt closest to his free spirit – and still do.

For me, what proved to be a 124-day ocean row was much more than an endurance test or date with nature. It was a way of dealing with grief and committing to life. My time at sea was everything I expected and more; the ocean is sublime and intriguing, relentless and timeless, exhilarating and terrifying, calming and invigorating. A traveller across the deep, I became a voyeur of ocean life and felt truly and wonderfully alive.

When people ask about the best bits of the voyage, I remember the infinity blue of 6,000 metres of salty deep; I think of the 20-metre-long fin whale that surfaced alongside my much smaller boat; I recall the Tweedles – my little crew of pilot fish who followed me for months; of waking to a peachy sunrise on a calm morning; and of sitting beneath the colander canopy of a starry night. Pure magic all.

Isak Dinesen was right when she said: "The cure for anything is saltwater – sweat, tears and the sea." My journey helped heal me and was far more than just a squiggly line across maps and charts. Journeys offer insight into ourselves, opening our eyes to the world and granting us at least a little understanding of life, the universe and everything.

SHARING THE PASSION

After the ocean, life back on dry land was confusing at first. My plan had been to train as a teacher, but that has since changed. I am now writing a book about the journey and sharing lessons from the ocean through talks and workshops. I am enjoying encouraging people to chase their own dreams and experience the wild.

And like any adventure junkie, I am also planning the next expedition. The plan is for a shared journey, one in which folk can follow my travels by video, podcast and blog. 'London to London, via the World' will be an attempt to circumnavigate the globe

by land and sea, rowing, cycling and canoeing. After a 'warm-up lap' of the UK, the journey will begin for real in spring 2011.

It is more than just an adventure, however. The journey will act as a vehicle for encouraging people – especially young folk – to engage with themselves and the outside world. I am excited about what lies ahead and the wild fires I can help spread. After all, what is joy and wonder if not shared and passed on?

So, I urge you to make the most of today and all your tomorrows, to create your own journeys and adventures. Fall in love with the outdoors and live the ways of a wanderer – even if only for the weekend – and taste a bit of what makes us wild life junkies love the wild life. □

About the author

Sarah's remarkable journey scooped three world records – first woman and youngest person to solo row the Indian Ocean, and youngest to solo any ocean – and raised £30,000 for arthritis charities. For more on her adventures, visit www.sarahouten.co.uk, or follow her on twitter: SarahOuten

Photography

- 1 Close encounters at sea were always memorable
- 2 Self portraits were the only option
- 3 Life on the ocean waves
- 4 Back on dry land in Mauritius



100,000 Awards ... and counting

The John Muir Award – the Trust’s primary educational initiative – reached a significant milestone in February with the presentation of its 100,000th certificate. It’s a cause for celebration, writes Rob Bushby



For everyone who has been involved in the John Muir Award since its earliest days, the presentation of an Explorer Award to Penrith school pupil Jake Atkinson on 1 February by Trustee Dick Allen was a landmark moment. Jake, 13, was part of a group from Ullswater Community College who had completed a wildlife garden project in the school grounds. An impressive amount of work was undertaken, including hedge-laying, dry stone walling, tree planting and pond construction – shifting 22 tonnes of clay in the process.

The wildlife garden has enabled pupils to enjoy being outside, learn about local biodiversity and help increase the variety of wildlife in the area. Pupils have also participated in a raft of activities in the Lake District National Park, including helping maintain the Field Study Council’s garden at Blencathra and working with the Forestry Commission on woodland diversity at Whinlatter.

“What I enjoyed most was helping the year six students to achieve the tasks in the eco-garden,” said farmer’s son Jake (pictured left). “I also enjoyed working with my friends and learning new skills to take home and use on the farm.”

Ullswater Community College has been involved in the John Muir Award for five years and head teacher Nigel Pattinson is delighted that Jake’s efforts have been rewarded in this way. “We have a responsibility to develop an awareness of the importance of our environment, giving students an opportunity to learn about conservation and extending links into other curriculum areas,” he commented.

GAINING MOMENTUM

As well as being a proud moment for Jake and all at Ullswater Community College, this latest presentation highlights the momentum generated by the John Muir Award. It took 10 years for the first 50,000 awards to be achieved (in August 2007), but just a quarter of that time for the next 50,000.

Such growth is thanks largely to sustained links with groups that deliver the Award and forging long-term strategic relationships with a variety of organisations around the UK. The Cairngorms National Park Authority, Cumbria Youth Alliance, Youth Hostel Association and The Outward Bound Trust have all invested heavily in the Award over the past decade, while the likes of Durham County Council came onboard last year. All recognise the value of the Award and how it can be utilised to help meet specific organisational aims.

Its framework offers structure and focus to activity, with four key themes – Discover, Explore, Conserve, Share – helping to break down the big topic of ‘environment’ into bite-sized chunks. Crucially, the Award is free from onerous bureaucracy and celebrates what people do at an individual level.

Cumulatively, the sheer scale of activity to date has generated some impressive statistics. Over a two-month period in 2009, for instance, ‘Conserve’ activity by a total of 141 groups and 3,055 participants was valued at around £250,000 (at National Lottery volunteering rates). Outputs included the creation or enhancement of more than 6,300m² of ponds, large-scale habitat creation at 100 sites and the maintenance of more than 5,000 metres of footpaths.

And the little touches make a difference, too. A one-line email arrived recently which read: “I had occasion to attend a cycling course this week at Carronvale House [Falkirk]. Our hedgerow [planted in 2007] is doing well!”

TRUST LINKS

Of course, the involvement of so many Award participants has not resulted in 100,000 people descending en masse onto Trust properties or wild land in general. But what it has done is actively engage a diverse audience in one aspect of the Trust’s vision: that wild places be valued by all.

And it’s not just the usual suspects that participate – 25% of take-up is by individuals from excluded backgrounds including many that do not usually relate to an environmental agenda. At a time when we are largely disconnected from nature or, as WWF-UK suggests, “marinated in a commercial advertising culture”, the Award encourages people to dip into wildness – at least for a few days. It also places a value on experiencing what the writer Robert McFarlane calls “the undiscovered country of the nearby” as much as our grander landscapes. In the same way as Muir himself took early

inspiration from the harbour and meadows around Dunbar, the Award helps reveal a broader spectrum of wild places that are available to us all.

From a Trust perspective, the Award helps position our name and ethos alongside a range of agendas, from education to biodiversity and inclusion. Through direct links with more than 700 groups each year, it reinforces the three strands of Trust activity: conserve, campaign/influence and inspire. Perhaps just as importantly, it also gives a UK-wide dimension to the Trust with Award participants active from Cornwall to Shetland.

WHICH WAY NOW?

From the beginning, we have found that the shape of the Award suits the circumstances of most groups. It also integrates with local opportunities and relates activity to a particular issue – be it curriculum links, biodiversity awareness, healthy lifestyles, or family shared experience. It has a timeless capacity for relevance.

Those at the forefront of environmental communication talk of the need for values-based links with nature. Campaigner and writer Tony Juniper, for instance, stresses the need to promote direct experiences and emotional connections. “Make more effort to reach out, get beyond the middle classes,” he says. Likewise, Huw Irranca-Davies MP, Minister for Marine and Natural Environment, urges us to make our communications “personal and real”, to create a narrative and tell success stories. “The John Muir Award sounds like a really positive initiative,” he says. “I commend your success in reaching significant numbers of young people.”

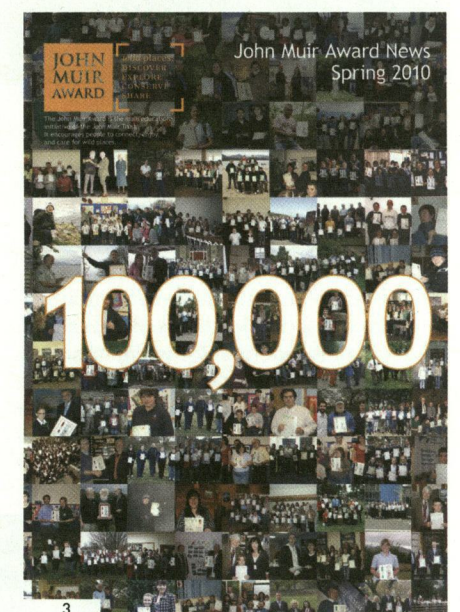
So, the game plan for the next 100,000 John Muir Awards is unlikely to be radically different. What is clear is that there are still many more opportunities to promote connecting with, enjoying and caring for wild places, while also working with people to share their stories. The John Muir Trust was ahead of the game when it established the Award and that is very much where we intend to stay. □

IN THE BEGINNING

The John Muir Award dates back to November 1993 when a draft proposal from Graham White was put to the Chairman’s Committee of the Trust to create a ‘John Muir Environmental Award Scheme’. In essence, the idea was to invite young people to ‘do something for wild places’, with the scheme designed to directly involve large numbers of people in conservation and encourage personal growth by means of environmental education. “There is a large and empty green field waiting for someone to raise the standard,” wrote White at the time. “The John Muir Trust should seize the initiative.”

As the following comment from Pete Crane, a Trust member and Visitor Services Manager at the Cairngorms National Park, indicates, the importance of engaging young people in this way cannot be understated:

“The John Muir Trust owns no land in the Cairngorms and yet by doing the John Muir Award I feel that my children are far better connected to the aims of the Trust than they would have been by visiting any Trust property. The award enabled our children to discover their land in new ways that mean something to them. If we want to win hearts and minds and encourage a new generation of young people to love wild land then we should continue to promote and develop the John Muir Award.”



About the author
Rob Bushby is the John Muir Award Manager. He can be contacted at rob@johnmuiraward.org. For more details on the Award – and the latest John Muir Award newsletter – visit www.johnmuiraward.org

Photography

- 1 Pupils from Beech Hall School in Cheshire enjoying a beach clean
- 2 Jake with his certificate – and part of his handiwork
- 3 People power – the latest Award newsletter celebrates the milestone in style

Fuel for thought

Together with residents from local estates on Skye, the Trust is exploring the feasibility of developing a sustainable wood fuel supply to support community energy needs. Fran Loots provides an update

I remember passing around the head of Loch Slapin on Skye for the first time some 25 years ago. The stark, barren beauty of Blaven and the Cuillin Ridge rising up like castellated fortresses was awe-inspiring. The only signs of life I observed were those of Highland cattle whose rusty brown, shaggy coats contrasted with the solemn grey of the mountains. I don't recall seeing much by way of trees. I guess the forestry plantations that now spill down towards the road would have been in their infancy then.

On revisiting the area when I took up this post some 18 months ago, I was struck by two things: the degraded nature of the land around the head of the loch, and the clear felled areas on the way to Strathaird. I couldn't help but wonder how the landscape might look in another 25 years.

Trust staff continue to engage on this point with residents from the Strathaird and Torrin estates. The 'wish list' is straightforward: the majority of those participating want to see increased biodiversity; recreational benefits that range from places to walk to rediscovering the past; plus potential for wood to be used in craft work, for local employment and for its more obvious use as fuel.

Local school children echo these sentiments, which is perhaps not

surprising. After all, woodlands are great for wildlife and fantastic places for playing and climbing trees. As part of a woodland discussion session with Trust staff last year, local children enjoyed a hands-on demonstration of how to fell a tree and then cut it into logs for fuel.

"I thought it was fun when Ally [the Skye land manager] cut down the tree because I have never seen a tree being cut down in real life. So cool!" commented one youngster. Another remarked: "It was brilliant to be out of the classroom in the fresh air. The midges didn't bother us because we were having so much fun."

NEXT STEPS

So, where are we now? We have pored over maps and some clear ideas have emerged together with practical information on what is likely to grow where. Discussions have sometimes been heated, with differing views on land use a key tension. Overall, however, there is strong support for a long-term supply of wood for fuel – so ensuring a continuation of the existing firewood resource – with a move to hardwood to replace the monolithic forestry blocks. The Trust has since commissioned a wood fuel feasibility study, through the Community Woodlands Association, to gauge the viability of providing a sustainable operation that would

support the local community and meet the aims of the Trust.

Initial findings are positive. To be sustainable, trees need to be planted on a regular basis. This means that a mixture of broadleaf species – mainly ash and some conifer, perhaps spruce – would need to be planted very soon to maintain a supply. However, for this to succeed, the supply would for a time have to only be sold locally otherwise it might run out faster than it can be replenished.

If plans to support a sustainable wood fuel supply proceed alongside other woodland objectives, we could be looking at a very different landscape in the area over the next 25 years. We would see natural regeneration interspersed with ash and spruce in small, manageable amounts that together blend into the landscape.

In the meantime, people would have access to a locally-available and carbon neutral form of energy – with local employment provided into the bargain. Wood as fuel is feasible and can meet multiple needs if properly planned. □

I COULDN'T HELP BUT WONDER HOW THE LANDSCAPE MIGHT LOOK IN ANOTHER 25 YEARS

About the author
Fran Loots is Communities Officer for the John Muir Trust. She can be contacted at communities@jmt.org

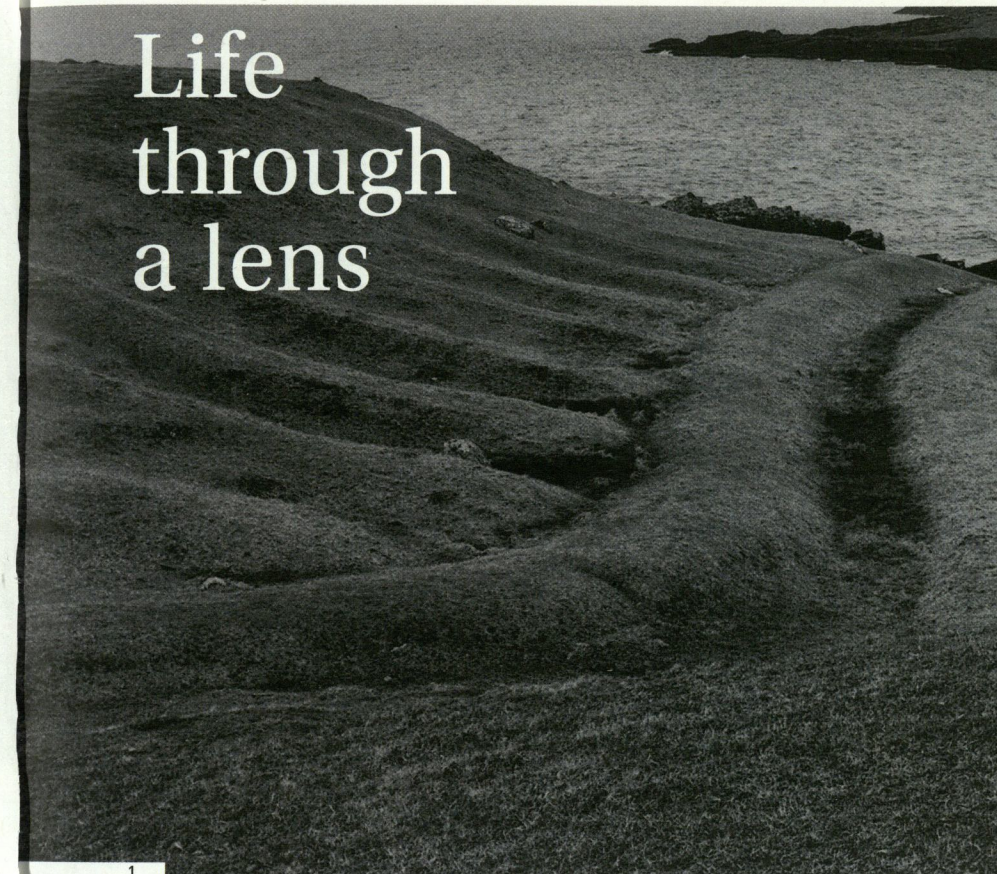
Follow Fran's dedicated blog on the Trust's community-led projects
www.jmtcommunities.blogspot.com

Photography

1 Skye land manager Alasdair MacPherson shows Elgot Primary School pupils a log splitter used on the estates



Life through a lens



The John Muir Trust is now the proud owner of a vast collection of photographs taken by the late Dr Gordon Thompson – a man with a lifelong passion for Scotland's wild places

An Edinburgh astronomer by profession, Dr Gordon Thompson spent much of his long, happy retirement hill walking and exploring Scotland's wild places. Between 1988 and 2006, he spent around 950 days and nights away on walking expeditions. He was also a keen amateur photographer in the days before digital cameras and had a significant interest in geology and archaeology.

Such interests are reflected in a wonderful collection of around 3,000 photographs recently donated to the John Muir Trust by his son, Graham. Dr Thompson's varied interests stand out strongly in his powerful and often poignant shots of mountains, forests, islands, wildlife, rock formations and standing stones. The collection is especially strong on the Highlands, the Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland. He also had a particular love for Skye, noting in 1999 that he was delighted with "several pictures of the Cuillins, which were bathed in sunshine with woolly white clouds and blue sky".

But what makes the photos particularly valuable is that almost every print has the location, date taken and – critically

– a six-figure Ordnance Survey grid reference on the back. We can maybe thank his scientific background for such attention to detail. These carefully-recorded details mean the collection could be useful to researchers and communities looking for a photograph of a specific site over a period of almost 20 years.

Dr Thompson's notebooks of his trips occasionally suggest he was himself aware of returning to places that he had seen before. On 11 March 2003, for example, he was in Glen Tress, and noted: "I have a very vague memory that sometime in the distant past I got to the top of Glen Tress and saw a vast area of hillside newly planted ... this must have been in 1960 ... I wonder if the trees I walked beside today are those I saw then?"

Stuart Brooks, the Trust's Chief Executive, would like to take this opportunity to thank Graham for gifting these photos. "We are delighted to have been donated this extensive visual memory of a lifetime's hill walking in some of Scotland's most special wild places," he commented.



"This archive is being indexed and will help us refer back to past landscapes. The collection also represents a stunning set of images in its own right – the work of an accomplished photographer who so patiently captured the steely beauty of this island's northerly fringes." □

Further information

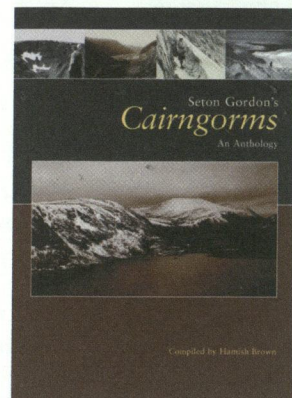
Graham Thompson has established a charity in his father's memory, The Blackford Trust. The charity has already provided funds towards the Trust's programme to support partner organisations across Scotland that in turn help young people from disadvantaged backgrounds take part in the John Muir Award.

www.blackfordtrust.org.uk

Photography

1 Lazy beds, Clasketoll

2 Victoria Falls, near Loch Maree



Seton Gordon's Cairngorms, An Anthology, Compiled by Hamish Brown

Hamish Brown, who compiled this anthology of Seton Gordon's essays, introduces an author who had a profound influence on future generations of naturalists and photographers

When I began putting together the anthology *Seton Gordon's Scotland* (Whittles, 2005) I, perforce, had to read through the author's 27 books – a task which took years rather than weeks or months. Time and again I recognised both factual and folklore stories which were deeply set in my own consciousness and it slowly dawned that this was because I had imbibed Seton Gordon as a youngster. Part of my own interest in wildlife and all things of Scottish history and culture had their roots in this man's observations. And if this was true generally, it held even more so for the Cairngorms which I discovered early and returned to again and again at any opportunity.

For a decade I was lucky enough to pioneer what is now a somewhat emasculated 'outdoor education'. We made many multi-day expeditions into the Cairngorms, walking the great Lairigs staying in bothies now gone or under the Shelter Stone, climbing summer and winter routes, skiing on the plateau, enjoying nights in snow holes on Glenmore Lodge courses, watching dotterel and eagle, taking the odd fish, studying deer, botanising – anything and everything that made that world whose every aspect was a passion for Seton Gordon.

One of our best school visits came about fortuitously. We had gone to Skye but after three days of Cuillin monsoon fled east and, as one of the party wrote in the school newspaper: "We had a super trip to Skye. We climbed every Munro in the Cairngorms."

Because Seton Gordon lived to such a ripe old and endlessly productive age, we tend to think of him as an old man. But he grew up by the River Dee and wandered the Cairngorms from his teens (his first book appeared when he was just 18), already set on studying wildlife and writing about and photographing it.

When the pioneer naturalist Richard Kearton wanted to see and photograph a ptarmigan nest he wrote to Seton Gordon who arranged to take him on the hill. On descending from the train, Kearton was somewhat surprised that the 'expert' meeting him was a schoolboy.

The Cairngorm Hills of Scotland (1925) is perhaps the most sought-after Seton Gordon title, but his second book, back in 1912, *The Charm of the Hills*, had also been about just the Cairngorms and has a splendid young man's enthusiasm in the writing. It is a discoverer's book, one written on the wings of a first flight. He returned to the Cairngorms throughout his life and many of his later pieces have the benefit of his greater knowledge and experience.

Seton Gordon's father was a long-serving town clerk of Aberdeen, his mother the 'Queen's Poetess' and they had a second home at Aboyne. At 17, he was presented with a "half-plate Thornton Pickard Ruby camera with Dallmeyer Lens" and progressed from cycle to motorbike to car in short order at a time when Oxford, where he studied, was mostly for the affluent or 'connected'.

Yet out of this background and obviously with parental encouragement came our first, and for a long time only, field naturalist-photographer who would influence so many with his writings. George Waterston, Tom Weir, Adam Watson, Desmond Nethersole-Thompson, Morton Boyd – all have acknowledged his influence. And his great, earliest influence was this vast unique world of the Cairngorms. We all inherit. □

Book details

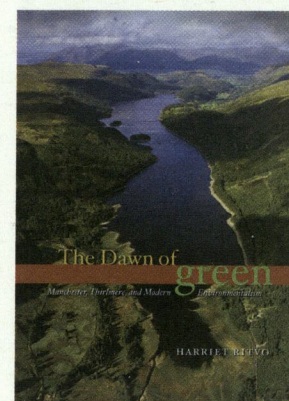
Seton Gordon's Cairngorms, An Anthology, Compiled by Hamish Brown is published by Whittles Publishing, price £25.00. www.whittlespublishing.com



The reviewer
A professional writer, lecturer and photographer, Hamish Brown has written more than 20 books, including his first and award-winning *Hamish's Mountain Walk*.

Photography

- 1 Seton Gordon
- 2 Spying the Lairig Ghru from Braeriach



The Dawn of Green, Manchester, Thirlmere and Modern Environmentalism, by Harriet Ritvo

Reviewed by Sue Hopkinson

Following what many of us believe to be the Scottish Government's disastrous approval of the Beaulieu-Denny upgrade, it is difficult to know whether to laugh or cry at Harriet Ritvo's analysis of the battle to save Thirlmere Lake from the grasp of the Manchester Water Board (MWB). The parallels between the campaign waged by the Thirlmere Defence Association (TDA) nearly 150 years ago and the efforts of our own Beaulieu-Denny Landscape Group are uncanny.

According to Ritvo, Thirlmere was the first campaign to express the full range of modern opinions about large-scale environmental engineering and became a template for subsequent environmental struggles.

The arguments about Thirlmere raged, with the MWB claiming that the damming of Thirlmere was essential to the livelihoods of working people in Manchester, while the TDA argued that such a development would deface an unspoiled valley, destroy the integrity of a uniquely beautiful region and that alternatives should be sought. Appealing to environmental economics, the TDA argued that "we have no price current for the beauties with which God has clothed our world". It urged the government to follow the precedent of Yellowstone National Park and take the Lake District under its special protection. It also mobilised support from the great and the good of the time, including Octavia Hill – champion of the preservation of common open spaces.

The MWB, on the other hand, was familiar with the parliamentary approval required for major municipal improvements and – equally – knew well how to grease the wheels. To their surprise, Parliament insisted on establishing a special

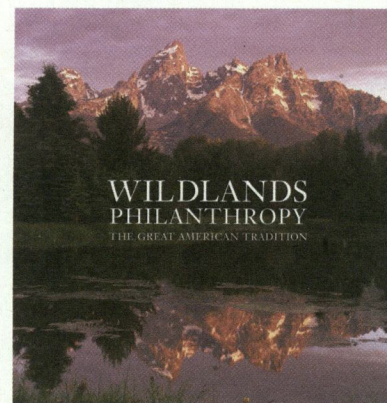
committee to consider the public interest in issues such as "the scenery of the Lake" and the need to extract water from Thirlmere.

However, the outcome was all too familiar: the committee decided in favour of the Thirlmere scheme on almost every issue. And while campaigners were assured that provisions would be made to ensure little or no damage to the scenery, the reality proved rather different. The MWB plundered the woods around Thirlmere for timber; replaced the deciduous trees with regimented blocks of pine, spruce, larch and fir; and posted the lakeside with notices forbidding access.

And in a particularly unwelcome twist, the promoters of the Hetch Hetchy Dam, which John Muir fought so hard to prevent, sent a delegate to Manchester who returned with rave reviews about the beauties of the reservoirs of Britain. We all know what happened next.

The Dawn of Green is a compelling, thought-provoking and beautifully-written account of a chapter in history that speaks loudly at a time when the perceived benefits of renewable energy projects conflict so dramatically with the preservation of iconic UK landscapes.

The University of Chicago Press, 2009. Price: \$26.00. www.press.uchicago.edu ISBN: 9780226720821



Wildlands Philanthropy, The Great American Tradition, Essays by Tom Butler

Reviewed by Bob Aitken

When we in the John Muir Trust think about American wilderness areas and National Parks, it is normally as public lands – Federal or State reserves. So, Tom Butler's book is instructive in showing the scale and variety of American philanthropy in buying tracts of private land for conservation.

The core of the book is 39 essays illuminating the personalities and diverse lands they have protected from exploitation – ranging from areas in the US to as far as Tierra del Fuego and even Namibia. The people vary in style from young activists to magnates such as the Rockefellers; their actions range in time from the early 1900s to the present day, and in scale from a few hundred to many thousands of acres.

But while the essays, clearly the result of much research, are individually intriguing and collectively inspiring, Butler doesn't take us much beyond an inventory, stopping short of a hard analytical overview of the issues raised and the results achieved – not least by the subsequent allocation and management of these purchases.

At almost 40cm square and 5kg deadweight, this is a mighty tome – a test for the stoutest coffee table. Its large format was probably designed to maximise the impact of the photographs by Antonio Vizcaíno that accompany each essay. Alas, by the exalted standards of modern landscape photography and printing, these illustrations are disappointing. They are also devoid of captions, perhaps on the basis that the pictures aim to epitomise the character of each wild area, making exact location and description superfluous.

Inside this behemoth, a tightly focused, sharply analytical smaller book – one that could be of great interest and value to the Trust – is screaming to get out.

Earth Aware Editions, 2008. Price: £24.94. www.earthawareeditions.com ISBN-13: 978-1-60109-019-5

You can't eat scenery

Trust members usually come to know John Muir through his books such as *The Story of My Boyhood and Youth* and *My First Summer in the Sierra*, which describe Muir's years of solo exploration and climbing in the High Sierra. But the books tell us little of his 40 years as political campaigner, conservationist and creator of national parks; nor of his role in creating the Sierra Club as a vehicle for legislative change.

Muir did not accept the role of 'campaigner' willingly; he did not want to waste decades fighting with lawyers, politicians and lobbyists, but friends convinced him that if he did not accept this challenge the battle would be lost. He was the right man in the right place at the right time and he knew that the enemy was already at the gates, writing in his 1888 *Essay on Mt Shasta*: "The great wilds of our country, once held to be boundless and inexhaustible, are being rapidly invaded, and everything destructible in them is being destroyed. Every landscape, low and high, seems doomed to be trampled and harried. The wedges of development are being driven hard and none of the defences of Nature can long withstand the onset of this immeasurable industry."

In 1889, Muir castigated developers with an article in the San Francisco Daily Evening Bulletin, writing: "If possible, and profitable, every tree, bush and leaf, with the soil they are growing on ... would be cut, blasted, scraped, shovelled and shipped away to any market, home or foreign."

The American conservation ethic, distilled from the writings of Thoreau, Emerson, Muir, Olmstead, Leopold, Rachel Carson, Edward Abbey and many others, has guided the environmental debate in the US for 150 years. The arguments which these visionaries deployed for the conservation of nature were scientific, ethical, moral, aesthetic and spiritual, while the exploiters - the loggers, ranchers and mining companies - used bribes,

political influence and 'the public good' as bargaining chips to get what they wanted. Muir's great adversary, the forester Gifford Pinchot, promoted the utilitarian 'wise-usage' of nature, as bringing "the greatest good for the greatest number of people" - an ethos which still dominates today. The utilitarian argument springs from the legal principle of 'eminent domain' in America - similar to that of compulsory purchase in the UK - which allows the State to forcibly acquire private property in the public interest, be it for housing, water supply, railways, or energy generation.

In the 1890s, to Muir's despair, the lovely Hetch Hetchy Valley, ostensibly protected within Yosemite National Park, was dammed and drowned to provide water for San Francisco. The city employed the same argument used in the recent Beaulieu-Denny decision - that public need transcended the conservation interest. In the modern case, however, a 'greenwash' argument - that 'low-carbon' windmills reduce global warming - was the key to blighting the Perthshire landscape with giant industrial structures. Ironically, Scottish wind turbines generated little power during the recent bitter winter: the wind did not blow for six weeks and conventional power stations had to work overtime to keep Scots from freezing.

Since the UK population is forecast to increase to 70 million by 2030, compulsory purchase will increasingly be used to seize land for housing, roads and energy infrastructure. If 'growth' is the only economic model, then Beaulieu-Denny may be just the beginning. Studies suggest the UK must build six new cities the size of Birmingham within 20 years; whether any national parks or wild areas could survive that is an urgent question for all conservation groups to address.

As for Muir, he knew there was no end to campaigning. Lobbyists would always have a rationale for the destruction of



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE US MINT
1

nature. Writing in the Sierra Club Bulletin in January 1896, he lamented: "If only one of our grand trees on the Sierra were preserved as an example of all that is most noble ... it would not be long before you would find a lumberman and a lawyer at the foot of it, eagerly proving, by every law ... that this tree must come down. The battle we have fought is a part of the eternal conflict between Right and Wrong, and we cannot expect to ever see the end of it."

It was heartening to see the John Muir Trust's Helen McDade putting forward such an eloquent case against Beaulieu-Denny on *Newsnight Scotland* recently. Perhaps it is time for the Trust to revisit the ethical arguments used by Muir in his conservation campaigns of the 1890s and which are still employed by the Sierra Club today?

If we do not have such a well-developed nature conservation ethos as the Americans, we may just have to invent one, because politicians will always go for the utilitarian argument. There are no significant votes in nature conservation when jobs and incomes are at stake - as they say "you can't eat scenery". But John Muir would undoubtedly argue that Scotland should preserve her glorious scenery and exploit it via sustainable tourism rather than blight the landscape with giant pylons to feed the Euro-grid with dribbles of intermittent energy. □

About the author
Graham White served as founding director of the Edinburgh Environment Centre from 1980 to 2001. He recently edited *The Wilderness Journeys - A John Muir Reader*, published by Birlinn, Edinburgh 2010.

Photography
1 Muir's appearance on a California 'quarter' underlines the esteem in which he is held in the US

VISIT
THE WORLD'S
LARGEST
SCOTCH WHISKY
COLLECTION
AT THE
The Scotch Whisky Experience

WWW.SCOTCHWHISKYEXPERIENCE.CO.UK • NEXT TO EDINBURGH CASTLE

EAGLE SKI CLUB

Eagles ski tour in Scotland

www.eagleskiclub.org.uk

Membership Secretary,
Eagle Ski Club,
5 Fitzgerald Road,
London SW14 8HA

...the UK's largest and most active ski touring and ski mountaineering club, organises a varied programme of ski tours and training courses every year. Year-round outdoor and social activities in the UK. We welcome both alpine and free-heel Skiers.

We've got everything but the kitchen sink. (That's what the stream is for).

At Tiso we know you'll need the right gear whether you're climbing the Inaccessible Pinnacle or going for a stroll in the Cairngorms. Because we like to test the gear that we sell in the only way we know. Out there. We know what it's like to bag your first Munro and we've fallen in more streams than you could imagine. So when you leave the store you'll have the best advice and the right gear.

Geared up for you
tiso.com

Tiso
The Outdoor Specialist

Visit your nearest Tiso store or shop online at tiso.com

teko for **nepal**

At teko we take our environmental responsibilities seriously. We want all outdoor communities to enjoy our organic merino wool, organic cotton or 100% recycled Polyester socks.

The teko for Nepal programme ensures that demonstration socks used in shops are sent to Sherpas and porters in Nepal. Now while they're working in the harsh terrain of the Himalayas, their feet stay protected.



For further info on teko socks please call 0131 317 0200

CONTACTING THE JOHN MUIR TRUST

GENERAL ENQUIRIES
EMAIL: admin@jmt.org
TELEPHONE: 0131 554 0114

For the following people and departments, contact:
Pitlochry Office, Tower House, Station Road, Pitlochry PH16 5AN
TELEPHONE: 01796 470 080
FAX: 01796 473 514

or use the individual details below
Stuart Brooks, Chief Executive
EMAIL: chiefexec@jmt.org
TELEPHONE: 01796 484 934

Alison Russell, Head of Finance & Administration
EMAIL: finance@jmt.org
TELEPHONE: 01796 484 932

Andrew Campbell, Head of Land Management
EMAIL: landmanagement@jmt.org
TELEPHONE: 01796 484 939

Helen McDade, Head of Policy
EMAIL: policy@jmt.org
TELEPHONE: 01796 484 939

Mike Daniels, Chief Scientific Officer
EMAIL: CSO@jmt.org
TELEPHONE: 01796 484 937

For the following people and departments, contact:
Edinburgh Office, 41 Commercial Street, Edinburgh EH6 6JD
TELEPHONE: 0131 554 0114
FAX: 0131 555 2112

or use the individual details below
David Picken, Development Manager
EMAIL: development@jmt.org
TELEPHONE: 0131 554 0114

Rob Bushby, John Muir Award Manager
EMAIL: rob@johnmuiraward.org
TELEPHONE: 0845 458 2910

Existing membership enquiries
EMAIL: membership@jmt.org
TELEPHONE: 0845 458 8356

New membership enquiries
EMAIL: promotions@jmt.org
TELEPHONE: 0131 554 0114

www.jmt.org

JOURNAL 48, SPRING 10

Editor: Richard Rowe
EMAIL: journal@jmt.org

Design and production: Various Creative
EMAIL: ask@various.uk.com

This Journal is printed on Revive 100 Uncoated stock, a recycled grade paper containing 100% post-consumer waste and manufactured at a mill accredited with ISO 14001 environmental management standard. The pulp used in this product is bleached using an Elemental Chlorine Free (ECF) process. We use a litho print process using vegetable-based inks and a local printer, Woods of Perth, who have excellent environmental credentials, achieving environmental standard ISO 4001 in 2007 and the FSC and PEFC standards in March 2008. If you would rather receive your publications from the John Muir Trust electronically, please email membership@jmt.org

The John Muir Trust is a Scottish charitable company limited by guarantee. Registered office: Tower House, Station Road, Pitlochry PH16 5AN
Charity No. SC002061
Company No. SC081620



JOHN MUIR TRUST LANDS AND PARTNERS

OUR LAND PARTNERSHIPS:

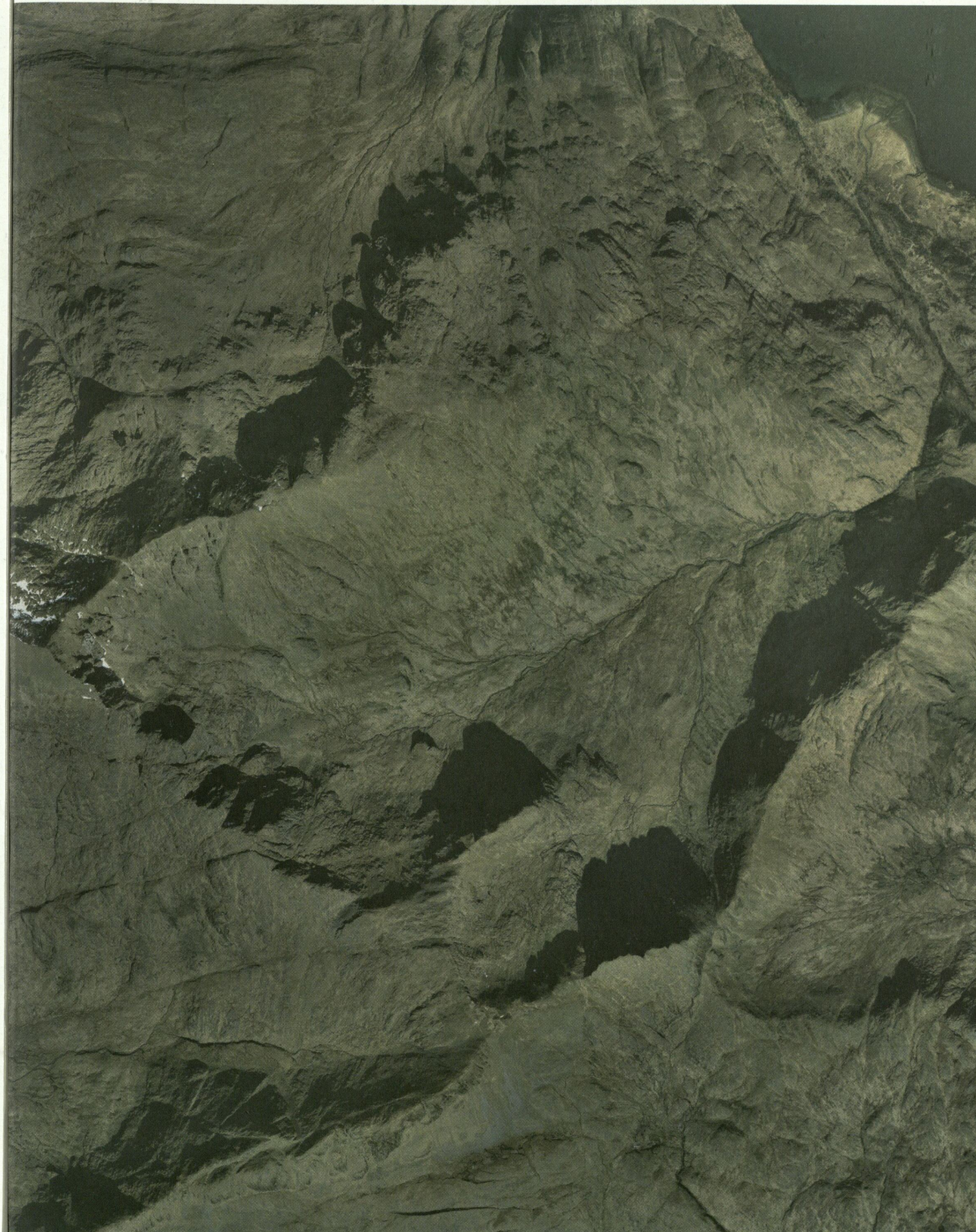
- 1 Assynt Foundation
- 2 Borders Forest Trust
- 3 Galson Trust
- 4 Knoydart Foundation
- 5 Nevis Partnership
- 6 North Harris Trust

OUR EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS:

- 7 Cairngorms National Park Authority
- 8 Cumbria Youth Alliance
- 9 John Muir Birthplace Trust
- 10 The Outward Bound Trust
- 11 YHA (England & Wales)
- 12 OASES (County Durham)

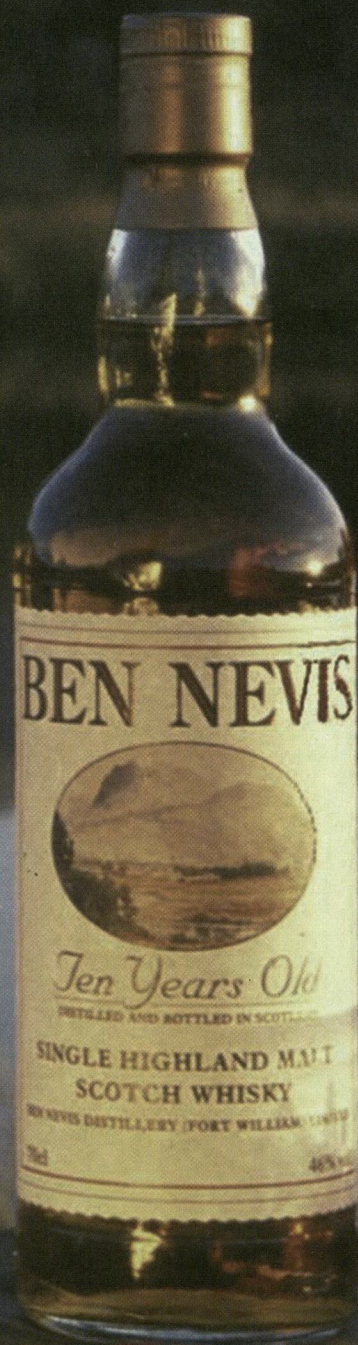
Photography (aerial shot shown right)
KNOYDART: Pockets of snow highlight the northern slopes of the ridge running from Stob a Choire Odhair to the summit of Ladhar Bheinn (1,010m). To the east of Ladhar Bheinn the Allt Coire Dhorrcail gathers water from the steep and barren upper slopes of Coire Dhorrcail (steep south-east slopes emphasised by shadowing in the picture) and flows down through maturing native woodland, established by the Trust, into Loch Hourn at Inbhir Dhorrcail just west of Barrisdale Bay. This spectacular area of wild land has been protected by the Trust since 1987. Find out more at www.jmt.org

Skyview posters published by Globalmapping Ltd.
Aerial photography supplied by getmapping.
Copyright XYZ Digital Map Company.
www.xyzmaps.com



Dram, fine, splendid

...need we say more!



BEN NEVIS DISTILLERY (FORT WILLIAM)LTD,
Lochy Bridge, Fort William, PH33 6TJ
Tel: 01397 702476 • Fax: 01397 702768
E-mail: colin@bennevisdistillery.com

www.bennevisdistillery.com