

JOHN MUIR TRUST

JOURNAL

65 AUTUMN 2018

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- 20 Chris Packham's UK Bioblitz comes to the Scottish Borders
- 22 Celebrating adventurous female role models in the outdoors



Reshaping the land

Rewilding our island

JOHN
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FOCUS BRINGS REWARDS

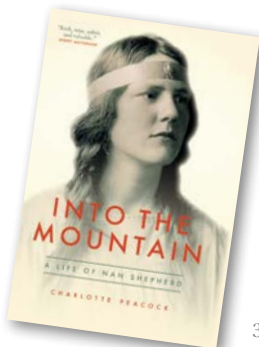


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COVER: THE EURASIAN BEAVER – A SYMBOL OF REWILDING ON OUR CROWDED ISLAND, DANNY GREEN/NATURE PICTURE LIBRARY

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From the Chief Executive

THIS IS the third issue of the *Journal* that I have contributed to and, as always, we have a great selection of features, including an excellent spread on women and the wild by Coralie Hopwood (p22), plus an evocative homage to Sandwood Bay from Romany Garnett (p10) to mark the 25th anniversary of our acquisition of the property.

We also have an important piece from trustee Chris Townsend (p14) that explores the theme of rewilding. Chris's focus is on the specific cultural and political challenges we face in trying to restore natural processes on an island where our large predators were driven to extinction long ago.

Of course, the issue of wildness has always been at the heart of what the Trust is about, but we must

continually figure out what that means in practice and, where necessary, revise and update our approach in the light of changing circumstances. Over the past few months, we have been working on a new document, *Wildness and Wild Places*, which sets out our key values, policies and priorities. This, in turn, will form the backbone of a wider corporate strategy which is founded on three aims: inspiring and engaging people; conserving and protecting wild places; and

rewilding, or repairing, damaged landscapes.

In the meantime, we are making strong progress. The decision by the Scottish Government in the spring to refuse consent for two major developments at Caplich in Sutherland and Culachy near Loch Ness was a major success for the Trust and marked a further milestone in wild land protection, although as John Low's piece on Glen Etive (p26) points out, we must still remain vigilant.

One of the beauties of setting things down in writing is that it forces you to think about the detail and encourages others to respond. To be effective in what we do, we need first to get our own thoughts in order. During the process of developing our *Wildness and Wild Places* policy, we've had to confront alternative sets of values, including from those who fear that the concept of wildness could run counter to the interests of those who live and work in or around wild landscapes.

Our conclusion is that we need to do more to reassure people that wildness is a potential ally that can improve the quality of human life and help regenerate local economies. We also want to continue delivering the message that there is more that unites us than divides us, and that by working

together we can help build a better future for many rural communities.

We have always resisted the idea that people don't belong in wild places - with the principle of forging partnerships with local people written into the very earliest documents published by the Trust in the 1980s. The challenge now is to turn those ideals into reality across the diverse range of properties we manage, from Sandwood Bay to Glenridding Common.

Recently, I have been reading some little-known works on wildness, including a series of essays published in 2017 by the University of Chicago. I was particularly struck to find that in the languages of most native peoples in the Americas, there is no word for 'wild'. This is because their culture and relationship with place is such that they do not require the separation of people and nature.

It is sometimes, misleadingly, argued that humans are now a 'keystone species'. The term is generally used to refer to species that have a positive impact on the ecosystem, helping to create, maintain and shape habitats and landscapes. The presence of keystone species protects ecological diversity and maintains the harmonious balance of nature that is the result of millions of years of evolutionary adaptation.

Humans, on the other hand, with the aid of technology, have evolved to a level capable of changing the natural environment so rapidly that all other processes and species are left far behind. Unless we are willing and able to constrain our demands and curb our habits, we run the risk of irreparably damaging the natural systems that provide us with food, clothing, shelter, clean air, fresh water and much more besides.

For some people, outdoor recreation is merely a 'frivolous' activity with no useful value to wider society. But aside from the economic benefits that outdoor recreation brings, especially to sparsely populated areas, it also provides a vital bridge between people and nature. Those who walk in the woods, climb in the mountains, swim in the rivers, run in the hills, or participate in other outdoor activities are far more likely to understand and protect our natural systems. It's no accident that the author of the rewilding article in this issue is also a veteran mountaineer and explorer.

As we have learned from the life and writings of John Muir himself, discovering nature is the first step on the journey towards protecting and conserving it. So, enjoy this issue of the *Journal*, and let's continue discussing how to broaden support for the work we do in bringing people and nature closer together. □

Andrew Bachell



Spotlight on Glenridding Common

MUCH has been achieved as the Trust approaches the end of our first year managing Glenridding Common on behalf of the Lake District National Park.

In common with the rest of Britain, the Lake District basked in a long, hot, dry summer that allowed us to make good progress with our survey of wildlife. This included the first breeding bird survey at Glenridding. We have a large mountain ringlet colony here – which, because of the warm weather, were flying a month early this year – so we were able to carry out a survey of this species of butterfly, too.

With volunteers from the local community, we held a training session on the propagation of arctic alpine flora, helped by ongoing seed collections, including of rare species, that we carry out on the crags.

We've also had lots of activity around footpath maintenance and repair. Three days of joint activity involving a John Muir Trust and Fix the Fells work party ended with a day on the summit 'stone scattering' and seeding to discourage walkers and sheep, and to encourage natural vegetation to re-establish itself on eroded areas of the Helvellyn plateau.

We've been maintaining the drains on Helvellyn using a combination of contractors – to tackle small areas of pitching and erosion control – along with Fix the Fells volunteers and Trust staff to carry out routine clearance activity.

As part of the Landscape Leaders Training initiative organised by Friends of the Lake District, we took 14 leaders onto Glenridding Common, where we discussed upland land management, the special qualities of commons and the wider work of the Trust. These leaders will, we hope, have learned some useful tips and information which can be put to use in future guided events.

As part of the Great Cumbrian Sweep, we carried out a litter pick around Red Tarn, collecting three bin bags of items largely associated with wild camping (some of which was pretty unpleasant), along with tissue and other items blown down from the summit of Helvellyn.

We now need to communicate strongly the important message that anyone wild camping at Glenridding Common should take great care to ensure that they leave behind no rubbish and that they dispose of human waste appropriately. Otherwise, they should stick to campsites.

In other developments, thanks to the Patsy Wood Trust, we've been able to purchase a vehicle. It has John Muir Trust logos fitted on the bodywork, so as well as helping us get around more efficiently, it should also help raise awareness of the



Work party on the summit of Helvellyn (main); litter sweep by Red Tarn (below)

PHOTOGRAPHY: PETE BARRON

existence of the Trust in Glenridding and the wider Lake District.

Finally, we can report that we are now discussing leasing an office space in Glenridding village as a base for our land staff. Having our own space where we can hold meetings and be available for anyone who wants to drop in to find out more about our work can help us become closer to the local community and visitors to Glenridding.

Pete Barron
Glenridding Common manager

With thanks

Thanks to the kind generosity of the ALA Green Charitable Trust, we have been able to employ Isaac Johnstone (pictured in white T-shirt) as apprentice conservation officer at Glenridding Common, plus two other young people (Izzy Filor at Schiehallion and Nathan Berrie at Glen Nevis) and a further to be appointed on Skye.



Wild land amendment to Scottish Planning Bill

MSPs on the Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Communities Committee are now voting on amendments to the Planning (Scotland) Bill.

The Trust has been working with MSPs advocating amendments to strengthen protection for nature and wild land. We also want communities and environmental campaigners to have equal rights of appeal, similar to that of developers, where impacts are significant.

In a sign of progress, the Bill is already being shaped by active campaigning for better environmental and social outcomes. One MSP, Alex Cole-Hamilton, has lodged Amendment 322 to strengthen protection for wild land. And planning minister Kevin Stewart – who is in charge of the Bill – has tabled a number of amendments that take into account a range of views that have been expressed during the consultation process. This includes a 'purpose for planning', which refers to sustainable development and community empowerment.

With a final debate in Parliament due to take place later in the year, Trust members and supporters still have an opportunity to influence the Bill.

Please contact your MSPs asking them to support those key amendments described above, or write directly to Kevin Stewart MSP, the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning. Visit johnmuirtrust.org/keepitwild for more information, or contact mel.nicoll@johnmuirtrust.org, 01796 470080.



Visual impact of transmission infrastructure

THE Trust has in the past worked with industry regulator Ofgem on a scheme which allows energy companies to bid for funding to reduce the visual impact of transmission infrastructure in National Parks, National Scenic Areas and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

More recently, the Trust has contributed to proposals by SSE to reduce the visual impact of transmission lines within the Loch Tummel National Scenic Area, close to the Trust's property at Schiehallion and the Heart of Scotland Forest Partnership project.

This will involve measures such as painting steel towers and replacing sections of straight-edged conifer plantations with broadleaf woodland. Other projects bidding for the pot of money are being developed within Scotland's two National Parks and other National Scenic Areas, as well as by Scottish Power in the south of Scotland and National Grid in England and Wales.



In brief

Hill tracks

Poorly constructed vehicular hill tracks in the uplands are a concern because of the landscape and environmental damage they produce. In recent years, their numbers have risen sharply. A major report has now been published by the Scottish Environment LINK hill tracks campaign, supported by the Trust and Mountaineering Scotland. Find out more at johnmuirtrust.org/hilltracks

Repowering of wind farms

The Trust has responded to a Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) consultation on the impacts of repowered wind farms on nature. Repowering refers to applications to replace end-of-life windfarms with a new development, generally with bigger turbines. SNH has proposed that when repowering applications are submitted, the 'baseline' – the visual depiction of the site – should show "the expected restored state of the site". Energy companies are arguing instead for a baseline assessment using photographs which show the existing windfarm. The Trust believes it is vital that the SNH proposal is accepted.

Consultation responses

With Brexit focusing attention on future environmental policies in the UK and devolved countries, the Trust has responded to two key consultations. The UK consultation *Environmental Principles and Governance after EU Exit* has since been partly superseded by a commitment from Westminster to nine environmental principles enshrined within the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018. In addition to endorsing these principles, the Trust called for a more holistic planning and land use strategy to be overseen by a statutory, independent, multi-disciplinary committee. In Scotland, the Trust has contributed its views on a discussion paper from the Scottish Government on *Developing an Environment Strategy for Scotland*. We supported its commitment to four EU environmental principles – polluter pays, preventative action, tackling pollution at source and the precautionary principle – and suggested that it be supplemented with a fifth 'integration principle' to ensure that environmental protection is taken into account in all spheres of public policy and activity.



Obituary – Richard Ellis

THE Trust has learned with sadness of the death of Richard Ellis (pictured), a long-standing member and, together with his wife Grace, a stalwart of the Edinburgh local members' group. They had recently moved to Lincoln after some 42 years together in Edinburgh. Local members will have happy memories of Trust events in the couple's rather unusual Jordan Lane home.

Richard was something of a renaissance man. After early years in Africa, he was brought up in south-west England, later training in teaching and in speech and drama. No stranger to the stage himself, his true calling was in training in communications skills, and after moving to Scotland in 1974 he lectured at colleges in Edinburgh and Glasgow. In addition to wide-ranging consultancy work he enjoyed a long relationship with the Church of Scotland as its lecturer in speech & communication.

Richard's interests and commitments were wide, and he gave sterling service to many other organisations, including National Trust for Scotland, the English Speaking Board, Morningside Community Council and Pipedown – the campaign against Muzak.

Richard's outdoor interests included cricket, hill walking, golf (he was a great hickory exponent) and even litter picking.

His many friends and colleagues at the John Muir Trust and the other organisations he supported will miss Richard's wise counsel and encouragement greatly. Richard is survived by Grace and their children, Charlie and Victoria.

Keith Griffiths

Staff and patients from Glasgow Children's Hospital at Schiehallion



PHOTOGRAPH: GLASGOW CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL CHARITY

Mountain joy for child cancer patients

FOR the fourth year in a row, patients, family and staff from the Schiehallion Unit of the Royal Children's Hospital in Glasgow visited the mountain which inspired its name this summer.

Despite the dreich conditions, over 60 attended, with half the group climbing the mountain, while the rest participated in other activities at the basecamp.

The expedition to the top of the Fairy Hill of the Caledonians was the first Munro for 16-year-old Katie, who was diagnosed with leukaemia last October and will be on medication for the rest of her life.

Another to tackle the mountain was 13-year-old Abigail, who has battled all her life with severe health problems, including undergoing a heart transplant,

and more recently a cancer diagnosis. This courageous girl managed to climb a sizeable part of Schiehallion together with her mum, dad and younger sister.

Those unable to tackle the trek instead enjoyed a range of activities including fire lighting, tree planting, den building, face painting and arts and crafts.

"Schiehallion holds a special place in the hearts of all those families whose loved ones have been treated here – and the unit itself was named over 20 years ago in recognition of the steep uphill journey for children battling cancer," commented Douglas Samson, spokesperson for the Glasgow Children's Hospital Charity.

"We had another memorable day and are once again grateful for the support and assistance of the John Muir Trust."

Members needed to help shape the Trust

FIVE trustee places become vacant on our Board in 2019. Any member is welcome to stand. Being a trustee is a way of helping shape the work of the Trust, and contributing skills and knowledge to areas of work from conservation and lobbying government to financial management. While the Board of Trustees needs a wide range of skills, we would particularly welcome interest from younger people; women; members based in the Scottish Highlands; members with an interest in our campaigning work; and those with experience of charitable income generation (especially fundraising). We ask that potential trustees complete a nomination form, sign the Code of Conduct declaration and return both with a 300-word statement and photo. Deadline for nominations: 12pm, Monday 3 December. Visit johnmuirtrust.org/trusteeecall



Duncan Macniven visits Quinag during the recent Inchnadampf trustee meeting



PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN MUIR TRUST

Launch of the partnership: Iain of Woodland Trust Scotland (2nd from left) and Rab from the Scottish Wildlife Trust (3rd from left) with representatives from the other Heart of Scotland Forest partners

Heart of Scotland Forest partners

In our final partner profile piece, Scottish Wildlife Trust and Woodland Trust Scotland explain why they are committed to a project to link woodlands across Highland Perthshire

THE Scottish Wildlife Trust's Keltneyburn meadow is one of the best grasslands in Perthshire. Designated as a site of special scientific interest for its wildflower interest, it has eight species of orchid. The organisation also owns 8.5ha of the nearby gorge which forms part of a designated Special Area of Conservation to protect the mixed ash woodland on the steep slopes.

The protected site extends above and below its area of ownership. The Scottish Wildlife Trust's long-term aim is to gain management agreements for the whole of the designated area within this gorge, which is part of the woodland corridor in the Heart of Scotland Forest Partnership area that sits between Loch Tummel, Loch Rannoch and Loch Tay.

Reserves Manager North East, Rab Potter, says the partnership was a natural fit: "We had been working with the John Muir Trust and Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust, sharing volunteer effort, and were keen to be involved in an exciting landscape-scale project in this area.

"We hope that the partnership will continue to work together beyond the timescale of the current phase of the project, as plans and ideas develop. As well as looking at management agreements, we hope to encourage additional partners to get involved in the Heart of Scotland Forest."

Woodland Trust Scotland has also been involved since the launch of the project in

summer 2017, as a non-land-owning partner. Its outreach officer, Iain Moss, has providing the John Muir Trust with practical help planting trees on the East Schiehallion slope – as well as filling in grant funding applications.

"The land we are planting on is roughly 90ha of rough upland grazing/heather," explains Iain. "Our vision is for the whole strip to naturally regenerate with woodland, made possible by new, electric off-set fencing which will exclude sheep and deer from the site. We hope that, in time, the amount of native woodland cover will dramatically increase over the project area and will be sustainably managed for years to come.

"We also hope that the cooperative working of the partnership will act as a pilot to show other like-minded partnerships that good communication and a whole project-led focus can achieve real outcomes." □

Further info
For more on the partnership, visit johnmuirtrust.org/heartofscotland

Bay of plenty

Famed for its glorious coastline, the Sandwood Estate has now been in the Trust's care for 25 years. Together with conservation managers past and present, **Romany Garnett** reflects on the Trust's time managing this magical place



PHOTOGRAPHS: BECKS DENNY, IAN BROWN/LE ROY



A LIGHT breeze strokes the marram grass as the transient light reveals intricate patterns on the undulating dunes. Sandwood Bay is a place that still has that special something. Perhaps it is the shifting, mile-long stretch of pinkish sands and the wild Atlantic rollers that pound the coastline? Or maybe it's the starkness of the blanket bog that gives a feeling of vastness and of something else not quite so tangible?

You can feel the emptiness while hiking the four-mile track that winds through peat bogs and clumps of heather on its way to the bay. Scattered along the path are lochans, inviting and mysterious, before the landscape unfolds first to reveal the sandy loch from which Sandwood took its name – from the Norse *Sandvatn*, meaning sand water – before the bay itself opens out like a theatre. The surrounding cliffs offer seclusion and almost sanctuary – with the 240-foot-high sea stack Am Buachaille (the herdsman) standing separate from the horizontal cliffs.

Situated on the edge of a great landmass, this is a place far away from it all; just a few miles south of Cape Wrath, Sandwood Bay is close to the most northerly tip of mainland Britain. Even in the 17th Century, a map describes the area as one of 'extrem wilderness' where wolves were thought to roam.

And this year marks 25 years of the John Muir Trust's ownership of the wider Sandwood Estate. When it first came up for sale, founder member Denis Mollison remembers its huge appeal

among early trustees and members. "I wondered at the time, when we were considering many other properties, whether it not being in a large-scale mountain area might have meant some would think it not for the Trust," he recalls. "But it became plain that Sandwood had elements of near-universal attraction with its scale, remoteness and oceanic exposure."

Denis's key memories of the purchase of Sandwood include revisiting with his then 11-year-old daughter to take photos that he thought might be useful for fundraising. Those photos were then used to illustrate a description of the property which he wrote in January 1993.

He recalls one of the first trustee meetings following the purchase of Sandwood in September of the same year. Held at Kinlochbervie Hotel, it was attended by Prince Charles, patron of the Trust, eight trustees and two members of staff. The aims were clear: to protect the beautiful area; work with the community; use volunteers for practical conservation work; and maintain the access road but to limit its use to pedestrians and agricultural access only. The meeting was followed by a walk, a picnic lunch and, for some, a swim.

LOCAL COMMUNITIES

One of the key reasons for purchasing Sandwood was that the Trust wanted to work closely with local communities. Then, as



Slice of heaven: Sandwood Bay in all its glory; Sandwood's three property managers to date (from left), Will Boyd-Wallis, Cathel Morrison and Don O'Driscoll

now, the estate is under crofting tenure. "That was a big selling point," recalls Will Boyd-Wallis, currently head of Land Management and Conservation at Cairngorm National Park Authority, but who had been the Trust's first property manager for Sandwood, taking on the role in September 1995.

At a recent gathering of all three of Sandwood's property managers, Will sits alongside Cathel Morrison - to whom he handed over the reins - in the garden of the current manager, Don O'Driscoll. Also present is Becks Denny, who married Will soon after they moved to Sandwood. An ecologist, Becks has maintained the detailed seabird monitoring at Sandwood - work which contributes to national data - ever since the couple left the area in 2001.

Don puts the kettle on for the occasion. From the very beginning, the emphasis was on working together with crofters. Walkers were made welcome and there weren't as many deer back then. Will remembers wheeling stuff in with wheel barrows to avoid damaging the ground with vehicles. "The job has changed a hell of a lot," he recalls.

The highlights of his time at Sandwood include creating a woodland scheme, setting up the seabird monitoring, building

"You can feel the emptiness while hiking the four-mile track that winds through peat bogs and clumps of heather on its way to the bay"

a fank, drystone dyking, and footpath work on the Sandwood track, followed by a successful Countryside Premium Scheme at Oldshoremore.

Many of these schemes involved grant funding that incentivised crofters to seasonally graze certain areas to encourage wildflowers and prevent erosion. Such grant schemes provided a sound example of how crofting and conservation could come together and be compatible.

The gains from working together in this way are huge. As Will explains, marram grass was planted at Oldshoremore and Oldshorebeg to reduce erosion, with the area between Oldshoremore and Sheigra now one of the best examples of flower-rich machair on the Scottish mainland.

Designated a Special Area of Conservation, the machair here is home to more than 200 different species of plants, including globe flower and moonwort plus eight different types of orchid. The machair is also an important feeding ground for rarer birds such as skylark and twite.

Out to sea, Risso's dolphin, porpoise, minke whale and orca are all often sighted, while the sea cliffs attract fulmars, kittiwakes, guillemots, razorbills, puffins and shags. Further inland it's



PHOTOGRAPHS: KEVIN LLELLAND

possible to spot kestrel, golden eagle, peregrine falcon, merlin and plenty of buzzards.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

In 2001, Will was proud to hand over to Cathel Morrison, who served as property manager at Sandwood until 2012. A local crofter and shepherd, Cathel had an intimate knowledge of the whole area, and knew everybody. "The meetings could be quite fraught but interesting and it was a bundle of fun doing the management plan," he says with a wry smile.

Cathel is grey-haired now, but still agile and working his flock of sheep. The conversation quickly turns to wildlife. "Seen any *Bombus distinguendus* recently?" Cathel asks Don, referring to the great yellow bumblebee. The species is one of the rarest in Britain and is now restricted to machair in the north Highlands and islands.

Close encounters with rare fauna and flora are among Cathel's fondest memories of looking after the estate - from stumbling across a red-throated diver's nest to finding a rare arctic lichen, *Siphula ceratites*, when out with experts.

He also remembers well the volunteer work parties. "I think what they achieved was incredible ... sometimes a 20-30-foot stretch of dyke," he says. Often, members were retired and worked in miserable weather. Cathel remembers a romance springing up during one work party and was delighted with news that the couple later married.

As the tea and memories flow, it is apparent that Sandwood is a place that gets under the skin. It's also a place with a rich human history - with evidence of past inhabitants often washed up or

unearthed in the dunes. A Neolithic arrowhead was once found on the access track, as was a semi-submerged fragment of a Pictish cooking pot.

Meanwhile, Will recalls finding a message in a bottle from a whaling ship in the 1960s which had sat in the sand for 40 years, while Cathel once found "three beautiful Pictish pebbles" when out monitoring in the dunes one day, although "nearly broke them by accident".

Vikings once raided this coastline, and it is easy to imagine their longboats hauled up on the beach at Sandwood Bay. At other times, Christian monks owned the area and later the bishops. Meanwhile, prolonged feuds between clan gentry and neighbouring earls often ended in financial difficulty, with dispossession of land a recurring theme.

Tales of hardship are similarly common. Tenants scraped a living on reduced grazing as they were cleared for sheep farming on the estate, while potato famine brought terrible suffering, with many crofters emigrating to Canada. The ruins of a settlement close to the bay are a poignant reminder of the clearances in the 1840s. It is a place where history seeps into the present, eroding normal divisions of time and space. Becks Denny believes "the historical side really gets to people".

And it's not just the history of Sandwood that touches people. According to the folklorist R MacDonald Robertson, a local crofter called Sandy Gunn claimed to have seen a mermaid sunning herself on the rocks in 1900. When Will first moved to the area, people still talked of mermaid sightings and various ghosts, although he never witnessed anything supernatural at first hand.



Sandwood scenes (clockwise from main): Sandwood Loch; Don O' Driscoll, the current property manager; deep within the dunes; the long walk in is a key part of the Sandwood 'experience'

PRESENT DAY

Today, Don O' Driscoll, who has lived in Kinlochbervie for 30 years, manages both Sandwood and the Trust's property at Quinag, also in Sutherland. Sandwood is a place that he will never tire of. "What we have here is precious and wonderful," he says.

In recent times, Sandwood has become increasingly popular among more intrepid visitors, which itself brings different challenges. "We've seen many changes in recent years," explains Don. "Sheep numbers have gone down, deer numbers have gone up and, since the economic crash a decade ago, staycations have risen with many more people coming to the area. And now we have the North Coast 500 [a hugely popular new coastal touring route]."

As Mike Daniels, the Trust's Head of Land Management, adds: "We will always work with local and crofting communities, maintaining the wildness and beauty of the bay by sensitively managing visitor numbers. Sandwood truly is a gem, but one whose very popularity threatens its beauty."

In terms of day-to-day tasks on the property, the focus remains on community work and helping crofters negotiate what Don feels is a flawed grant system. "It is unwieldy, geared towards bigger schemes, hard for individuals to process, and not designed for smaller landowners like crofters, although a moorland management scheme was submitted last year."

Meanwhile, volunteer work parties continue to tackle the problem of plastics in the sea with regular beach cleans, while a new Coastal Community Fund project aims to maximise local benefit and awareness of the bay. The project includes path improvements to prevent erosion, an upgrade of the toilet block to help it cope with

increasing visitor numbers, plus interpretation to encourage people to behave responsibly while in the area – with an emphasis on taking litter home and keeping dogs under close control. Local schools are involved through John Muir Award activity, while there are also guided walks for locals and visitors alike.

Will Boyd-Wallis remembers that when the Trust bought the estate the importance of "the long walk" was promoted. Don adds "now everyone is racing around quickly rushing out to Sandwood". Instead, he hopes that visitors will slow down and enjoy this special place.

Once at the bay, the dunes soften the landscape, and walking their tranquil depths it is possible to leave worldly cares behind. It is worth taking time to watch as the sun's rays slant on the waves as they curl and break onto the shore, and letting the sharply-clean air fill the nostrils.

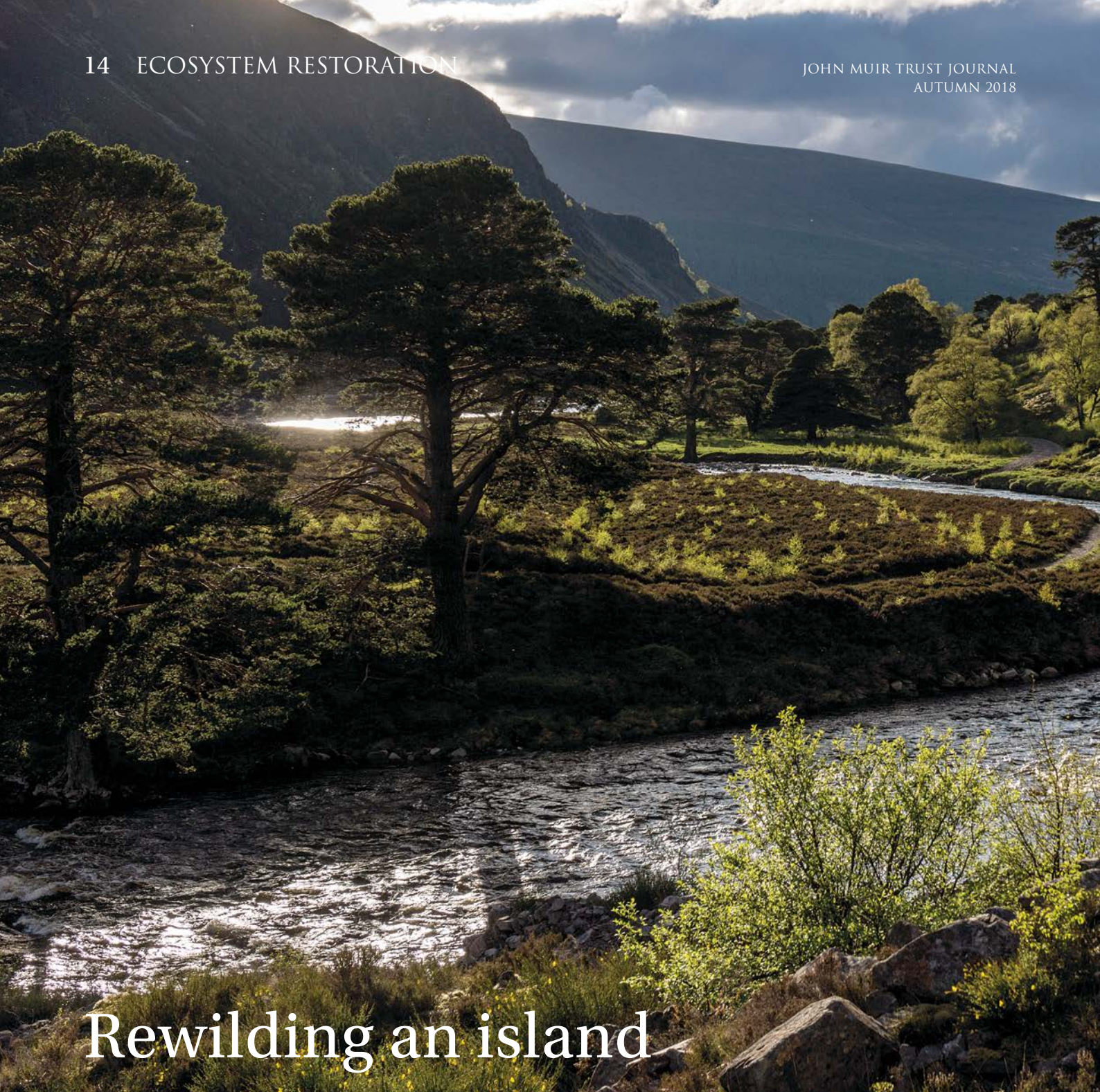
And as the clouds shift overhead and moments slip into hours, it is possible in this far corner of the land to come closer to elemental qualities that are eternal. As Will says, downing the last of his tea, "there are not many places like this now". □

Further info

For much more on the Trust's Sandwood property, visit johnmuirtrust.org/trust-land/sandwood

About the author

Romany Garnett is the Trust's Conservation Officer for Sandwood and Quinag



Rewilding an island

Chris Townsend explores the concept of rewilding and what it might mean when translated to Britain

REWILDING has become an emotive and controversial word in recent years. To some it is wonderfully positive – a call for the restoration of glory to wild places – while, to others, it smacks of elitism, exclusion, and a serious threat to countryside access and ways of life.

So, what does rewilding really mean when applied to Britain, and when disentangled from overblown desires or fears? In the mass media, it's often used to mean the reintroduction of big predators such as wolves and bears – nothing like a story about such animals to send a frisson

of fear through people and provoke a strong reaction.

This comes in part from its origins in the US where it was first used by conservationist Dave Foreman, one of the founders of the Wildlands Network, to mean the conservation and expansion of ecosystems big enough to support large predators. In the US, though, there are still large wilderness areas, many already with bears, wolves and mountain lions.

The situation is very different on a small, quite-heavily populated island with no real wilderness, and only remnants of natural

forest. For comparison, the land mass of California is more than twice the size of mainland Britain, but with only two-thirds of the population. Alaska, meanwhile, is more than eight times the size, but is home to just 750,000 people. Such figures reinforce why we must think differently.

NATURAL PROCESSES

In Britain, rewilding can only mean the restoration of natural processes to wild places, small and large. It is, I think, the final part of a conservation strategy that begins with preservation – preventing the continued destruction or degradation of an area – and then continues with restoration: the repairing of damage. It is then that renewal of the land can begin, allowing nature to restore itself. For me,



A place reborn (clockwise from main): trees of all ages in Glen Feshie, Cairngorms; a fox caught on camera; work party, Duddon Valley

PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS TOWNSEND

Snapshot England: Duddon Valley, Lake District

The Duddon Valley is one of the more secluded of the Lake District's valleys. It is also one of the most wooded, with a series of ancient oak woodlands that snake down the valley all the way to the coast.

When, in the 1930s, the Forestry Commission planted a 600-hectare area with non-native conifers, it wasn't a popular decision. More than 70 years later, the Forestry Commission decided to restore the entire plantation to native habitats of oak and birch woodland, bogs and open ground. This initiative is a historic opportunity to create one of the largest semi-natural woodlands in the Lake District.

Non-native trees such as Sitka spruce are gradually being removed and replaced with species such as oak. Some areas are regenerating naturally, and we have seen holly, willow, birch and rowan all return to the forest, with associated benefits for native wildlife.

The area is known to support rare mammals such as dormice, otters and red squirrels, while birds such as great-spotted woodpeckers, jays and bullfinches are now increasingly being seen.



Practical restoration activities are a major part of the project, with the John Muir Trust involved from the very beginning when Trust member Dominick Spracklen first created the partnership with the Forestry Commission. Since then, Trust members, local residents and school groups have contributed hundreds of days of volunteer work.

Volunteer days are the second Sunday and fourth Tuesday of each month (except July and August) and run from 9.30am to about 3.30pm. We also have a residential weekend coming up in October.

John Hodgson, Hardknott Forest Project Officer



PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN HODGSON

that's really what rewilding means.

The result of rewilding should be a healthier environment with greater biodiversity, which benefits everybody. An increasing number of studies show how important nature is to people's mental and physical health. Rewilding is not just for an elite, it's for everyone. We are part of nature, not apart from it; the health of nature is also our health.

Sadly though, what many people regard as a healthy natural environment is damaged and degraded. The concept of shifting baseline syndrome explains this. Each generation tends to assume that the state of the natural world they grew up with is the norm. This can result in keeping places in a poor condition or even trying to return them to that condition.

This is a natural reaction. I remember first visiting the Lake District as a boy and thinking of it as a huge, natural wilderness, so pristine and perfect. Then I discovered the Scottish Highlands and thought I'd found paradise (I sometimes still feel that!). Only after returning from spending half a year walking through the magnificent wild forests and mountains along the Pacific Crest Trail in the Western US did I notice how bare our hills and glens were, and how few trees grew in the British hills. Why weren't they there?

I'd read about the Caledonian forest in the writings of Frank Fraser Darling, but it was only once I'd seen the glorious forests in the Sierra Nevada and Cascade mountains that I started to understand what we had lost.

“Once forests start to regenerate and spread, the richness of the fauna and flora rapidly increases”

Knowing how damaged much of our wild land is could be dispiriting. The great American conservationist Aldo Leopold wrote in *The Sand County Almanac*, published in 1949 decades before the term rewilding had been invented, that ‘one of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds. Much of the damage inflicted on land is quite invisible to laymen.’

Today, I think we have more cause for hope than in the 1940s. More people do understand the damage that has been done. Educating the others is a key task though. To support rewilding, people need to understand why it’s necessary. Shifting baseline syndrome again. If you think the land is as it should be then you are unlikely to support moves to change it.

FORESTS FIRST

In Britain, I think rewilding starts with forest restoration. In this sense it’s only a new name for something that began many years ago. One of the key figures in this was the late Dick Balharry, former Chair of the John Muir Trust, when he was warden at Beinn Eighe, which became Britain’s first national nature reserve in the 1960s. He continued this work at Creag Meagaidh National Nature Reserve in the 1980s. Both are now home to healthy, regenerating forests.

Since then – as the case study snapshots elsewhere on these pages demonstrate – forest restoration has increased around the UK. These include the Trust’s own Li and Coire Dhorrcail on Ladhar Bheinn – the property won a Scotland’s Finest Woods Award in 2015 – as well as at Nevis, Quinag, and East Schiehallion.

Elsewhere, the RSPB at places like Abernethy Forest in the Cairngorms, various Woodland Trust estates throughout the UK, and private estates run for conservation such as Glen Feshie all have flourishing forest regeneration. Then there’s the work of Trees for Life in places like Glen Affric and the Borders Forest Trust with the Carrifran Wildwood. The Forestry Commission, once a main cause of the destruction of natural forests, is allowing some forests to recover.

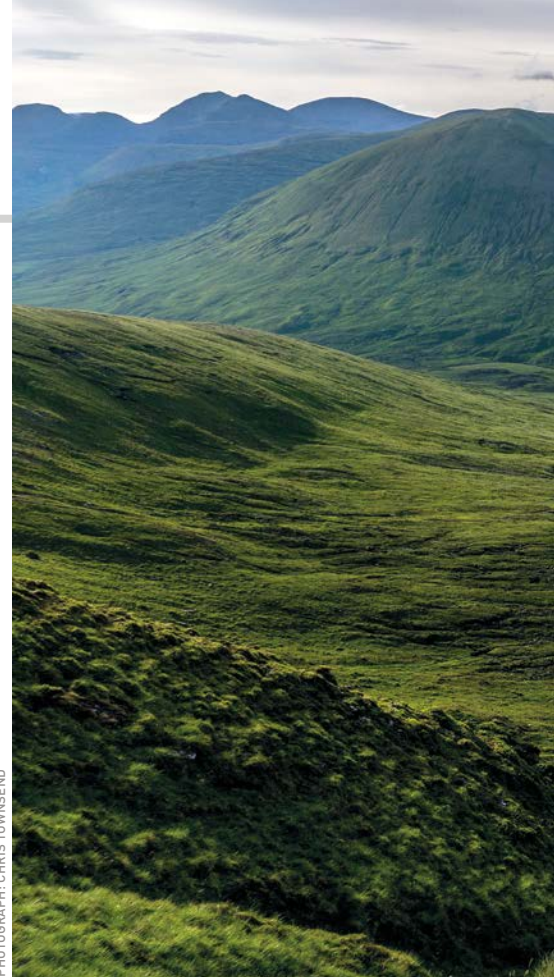
Meanwhile, in the Lake District, the Wild Ennerdale project is particularly interesting with its vision ‘to allow the evolution of Ennerdale as a wild valley for the benefit of people, relying more on natural processes to shape its landscape and ecology.’ That last phrase could be a definition of rewilding itself.

Wild Ennerdale is also a partnership of different bodies, public and private, and local people. This is important. Rewilding

needs the support of communities and a wide range of organisations. It should grow out of places rather than be imposed from outside. That means rewilding may be a slow process in some areas, but local support is essential if it is to be successful in the long run. If it takes time to gain that support, then we just need to be patient.

Once forests start to regenerate and spread, the richness of the fauna and flora rapidly increases. Walk through a new forest and see the wide variety of undergrowth and the number of birds, then compare it with the barren silence of a treeless valley.

This was the case at Creag Meagaidh, where high numbers of sheep and deer led to a bare, degraded landscape. Since it became a nature reserve in 1986, and over-grazing came to an end, a healthy new forest has emerged.



PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS TOWNSEND



PHOTOGRAPH: SIMON AYRES

Snapshot Wales: Cambrian Wildwood, Cambrian Mountains

Cambrian Wildwood (Coetir Anian in Welsh) is a project to restore wild habitats and species across part of the Cambrian Mountains. Co-ordinated by Wales Wild Land Foundation, work is currently focused on Bwlch Corog – a 140-hectare upland site acquired specifically for the project in partnership with Woodland Trust.

In the medium term, the project area will be increased to around 3,000 hectares through acquisition and partnerships with neighbouring landowners. Longer term, the area of wild land could continue to increase in the light of opportunities.

At Bwlch Corog, the vegetation is dominated by purple moor grass, with smaller areas of ancient woodland and bracken with patchy tree cover. Habitat restoration, in the form of blocking around 12kms of drainage grips, will restore blanket bog and wet heath. Woodland expansion will be achieved through natural colonisation, boosted by targeted planting.

Reintroductions of missing native animals began with a herd of wild horses (pictured), which have a crucial role grazing and browsing vegetation. Studies are being completed for reintroduction of red squirrel and water vole, while all other native animals, except the large carnivores, will also be considered for reintroduction.

Following initial establishment of near-natural conditions, the ecosystem will be allowed to develop as wild land according to the dynamic interplay of natural processes. Herbivore numbers will be managed to favour an increase in tree cover.

The project includes a significant educational and public engagement element involving schools, youth camps, and a volunteer work programme. With significant funding due later this year, Cambrian Wildwood is set to make a major impact on local wildlife and on opportunities for people to connect with wild nature.

Simon Ayres, Cambrian Wildwood



PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN HODGSON

Back from the brink (clockwise): regenerating woodland by Quinag; overgrazed, treeless terrain in the Fannichs; tree planting at Hardknott in the Lake District



PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS TOWNSEND

“The deer have become bold and I often see them out in the fields far from the nearest trees, even in the middle of the day”

ISLAND CHALLENGE

However, we have a problem in Britain – that of being an island. Pine martens, red squirrels, badgers and other animals that are already here will happily move into new forests. Birds can arrive from overseas, but mammals can't. In mainland Europe, predators such as wolves, bears and lynx are gradually increasing their territories. They can't reach Britain, though.

Such apex predators are not just important for directly controlling the numbers of grazing animals by hunting them, but also by the impact they have on their behaviour, keeping them moving so they don't overgraze an area, and keeping prey animals out of areas that could be traps. This concept, known as a trophic cascade, was first described by Aldo Leopold when he noted overgrazing by deer after wolves were exterminated in parts of the US.

Of course, we don't have wolves, but we can mimic their behaviour. In popular areas, this happens by accident. In the Cairngorms, the paths through Glenmore Forest up to the Ryvoan Pass are walked regularly, often by large numbers of people. I've never seen any deer or even signs of deer there. Forest regeneration is extensive.

In the woods around my home just to the south, there are roe deer. Until a decade or so ago, our neighbours had dogs that often roamed free. Seeing deer was very rare and I never saw them outside the forest. But since the dogs went, the deer have become bold and I often see them out in the fields far from the nearest trees, even in the middle of the day. Over time, they have learnt that it's safe to do so.

Trees for Life has an interesting scheme called Project Wolf at its Dundreggan Conservation Estate in the Highlands. The scheme sees teams of volunteers walk through the woods in the evening, night and early morning to disturb the deer and give seedlings a better chance of survival. I think this is a fascinating idea that could be used elsewhere.

Until the climate is right for the return of wolves, which I think is a long time in the future, culling deer, removal or reduction of sheep numbers, fencing woods, and schemes like Project Wolf are the only ways to ensure forest regeneration. This, in Britain, is rewilding. □

About the author

Chris Townsend is a veteran walker, mountaineer, outdoors author, and trustee of the John Muir Trust



PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS TOWNSEND

Trees advancing up the hill at Creag Meagaidh National Nature Reserve

Snapshot Scotland: Glen Nevis, Lochaber

In the east of Glen Nevis rests the hidden Coire Guisachan (which translates as Coire of the Small Firs), with its steep, glacially-formed walls and meandering river. Gaelic speakers would be forgiven for imagining it to be full of Scots pine – traditionally referred to as 'firs' – but instead it is a treeless place.

Oak for construction, Scots pine for fencing, hazel for firewood, birch for hand barrows, alder for roofing, ash for shinty sticks, bark for leather and the rest for charcoal – this is what became of Glen Nevis's once rich native woodland. Add high numbers of livestock and deer to the deforestation and it is clear how Glen Nevis became a shadow of its former self.

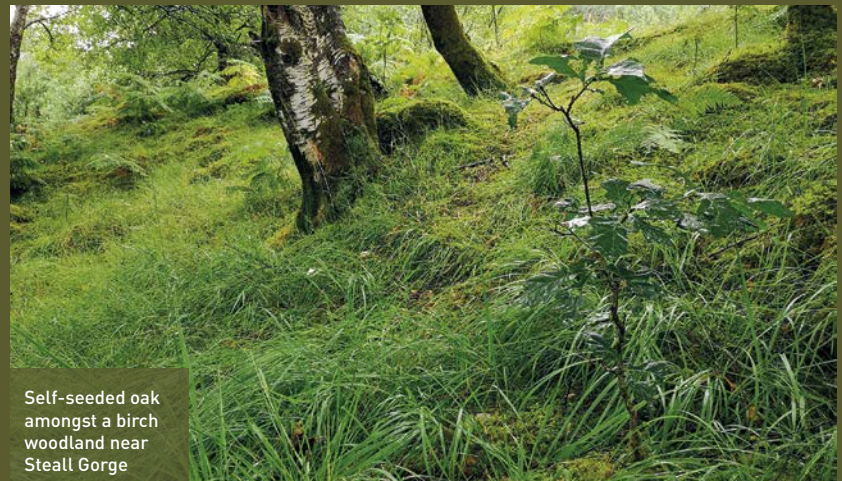
Fast forward to the present day though and this picture is changing. Through the work of the current land owners and managers, Glen Nevis is being steadily reforested. Alongside the

Nevis Landscape Partnership, the John Muir Trust has promoted the growth of native woodland to recreate habitat for red squirrel, pine marten and, potentially, Scottish wildcat, which once roamed the area. By reducing sheep grazing and managing deer numbers, Glen Nevis has a chance to recover. Already, pioneer birch communities have started to flourish.

Patience is the key management tool in this form of rewilding. Humans instinctively look for tangible results and it is always tempting to plant trees. However, the current method in Glen Nevis takes a more philosophical approach which will yield results that take place naturally over the decades to come.

In time, Coire Guisachan may once again live up to its name.

Nathan Berrie,
Nevis Conservation Officer



Self-seeded oak amongst a birch woodland near Steall Gorge

PHOTOGRAPH: NATHAN BERRIE

Inhabiting nature

PHOTOGRAPHS RAVI AGARWAL

Alan McCombes profiles Ravi Agarwal, an acclaimed Indian artist and environmental campaigner with whom the Trust recently worked as part of a research residency

GROWING UP in the vast, cosmopolitan city of New Delhi, Ravi Agarwal's early sense of landscape was formed during family visits to his ancestral home in the deserts of Rajasthan. "Nature was always somewhere out there," he recalls.

But it was only when he reached his teens that he began to discover the birdlife along the industrial riverbank of the city. "A white-tailed wag-tail, a winter visitor to the tropics, was the first on my checklist," recalls Ravi.

Ravi's engagement with the urban wild deepened as he unwittingly became involved in a successful campaign to save an ancient 8,000-hectare forest in the middle of the city. It took him "to the innards of city politics, the media and the courts - and to the people of the city who marched with us in protest. In fact, it changed my life, transforming me from an engineer to an environmental activist".

He began to realise that nature was not just "out there", but all around. "It was not only the trees in the morning air, the falcon or the hare, it was also waste, dispute, ritual, myth, biodiversity and culture," he remembers. "Almost everything I could think of had an involvement with land and landscape."

In our increasingly urbanised society, Ravi is acutely aware that nature is under threat as never before. "Urban settlements have always been carved out of natural surroundings," he says. "But as the size of urban clusters has grown manifold, concrete jungles have taken over natural ones. Cities have a large ecological footprint far exceeding their boundaries, which creates stress on both nature and humans."

As an artist, campaigner and writer who also serves on high-level policy committees, Ravi is interested in listening from the ground up - to the opinions of people who live at the heart of the natural world. For three years, he has explored the shorelines of the Bay of Bengal, working with small-scale fishermen.

"It has taken me on a journey through time, from the ancient Tamil cultural landscape to the local politics of modern development," he explains. "I couldn't help but think of distant conference halls where climate change documents are negotiated, but without the small fishermen ever being present. Large trawlers routinely clean the distant horizons of anything that moves, leaving almost nothing for the small fisherman who

goes to sea in his little wooden boat.

"But importantly, the fisherfolks do not describe the sea in the same way as I do. For them it is not an aesthetic object, but a lived reality of economics, survival and myths. The idea of nature is complex - even though it underpins our existence and our economies, it is still treated like an outsider instead of an everyday reality."

It was with these thoughts, says Ravi, that he came as an artist and environmentalist to the Scottish Highlands. Ravi's visit took him to the far northwest together with Sandwood and Quinag Land Manager Don O'Driscoll, as well as to Pitlochry and Schiehallion where he met other Trust staff.

He became aware of the Highland Clearances, mass deforestation, overgrazing and the extermination of large predators. "It reminded me of similar displacements of people in the Indian sub-continent for dams, the clearing of forests for mining, and large predators on the edge of extinction. There is a common story of violence against nature.

"With data-sets of the Anthropocene revealing that we are on the tipping point of ecological disasters, I believe action has to be taken on many fronts. Science, policy and activism all have a big role to play. However, often missed is the voice of the artist. While modern science informs us better than ever before, it is not enough.

"We need to jointly question not only our consumption and distribution of resources, but also how we think of nature itself. I feel the need to open the dusty covers of what we have discarded over the past 500 years. Only our wisdom as a species can guide us." □



Ravi Agarwal at work

Further information

The Trust's work with Ravi Agarwal included partnering with Edinburgh Printmakers which is currently showing Ravi's debut UK exhibition, *Nādar/Prakriti*, as part of the Edinburgh Art Festival. The exhibition runs until 20 October. edinburghprintmakers.co.uk

About the author

Alan McCombes is the Trust's Communications Editor

Bioblitz in the Borders

As part of a 10-day Bioblitz in July, naturalist Chris Packham visited 50 sites around the country to gather comprehensive data sets designed to indicate the state of wildness and nature in the UK today. **Kevin Lelland** was delighted to join staff, independent experts and volunteers when the project stopped at the Trust's Glenlude property in the Borders

PHOTOGRAPHS: KEVIN LELLAND



MONDAY 16 JULY 2018

8pm

It's official. Chris Packham's Bioblitz 2018 is underway. A group of us gather near Glenlude's polytunnel for a photograph. As we assemble, there's a flash of blue, black and white, accompanied by a loud 'rat a tat', as at least two birds disappear into a clump of conifers. "They make a racket," says Karen Purvis, the Trust's Glenlude Land Manager, confirming that we've just seen the latest family of jays to occupy this woodland setting.

Karen, with the support of colleague Dr Liz Auty, has lined up an impressive array of naturalists to join us across the next 24 hours. It's a testament to the fact that, under Karen's direction, Glenlude has gradually built a reputation as an inspirational place for people as well as nature. This has been achieved both through the sensitive introduction of native tree species at the property, plus Karen's openness in welcoming people from all backgrounds to become part of the journey.

8.30pm

Liz is about to become rather busy. The 30 or so amateur and expert naturalists taking part will bring their findings for her to verify and then enter into a master list. In 2011, Liz conducted the first plant and habitat survey at Glenlude. "We're part of a UK-wide bioblitz, but we're also excited to gauge whether Glenlude is any wilder than when

we first took it on in 2010," she explains. "That was Sheila Bell's - the woman who gifted us the property - vision and it would be good to see we're doing that."

9pm

I've joined local volunteer Richard Thompson. As daylight starts to fade, he talks bats. Richard tells us we're most likely to come across pipistrelles tonight, either common or soprano, but perhaps we'll also get a noctral (recently recorded in the Tweed Valley), or a daubenton hunting across the Glenlude ponds, which "sound like fingers tapping on a match box".

10.15pm

It's dusk. We've made our way to the northern end of the property where it meets the road to Innerleithen. It's all quiet on the bat front. We take it in turns with the heterodyne receiver, keeping our eyes to the sky looking for movement, adjusting the frequency ring trying to capture an echolocation call. Finally, the frequency is dialled-in - a common pipistrelle. Now they start to take flight.

11.30pm

Bat activity has been high, but species count low - just one. We're not disheartened. We return via the road to the main entrance at Glenlude and are met by the eerie glow of a UV light. It's a moth trap - with plenty of lepidoptera attracted by its fuzzy brightness. We have one last flurry of bat-detecting activity in the neon haze

above our heads, but the species count remains at just one.

Midnight

I fall into my tent, set my alarm and am asleep almost instantly. I'm pitched near the stone wall sheep fank that was recently rebuilt by Trust volunteers. It's dark and the night is remarkably still.

TUESDAY 17 JULY 2018

8am

Teyl de Bordes has gathered last night's moths into pots. A farm manager from Selkirk, he has been mothing for seven years. He started recording with the aim of doing grant applications but got the bug, so to speak. With 33 species so far and a few more to identify he tells me. "Nothing hugely rare," he says. "For a site like this, it's an appropriate mix."

He starts to show me some of the finds: silver wire, treble-bar, and foxglove pug, which only lives on foxgloves found in woodland clearings. "The Victorians used to find caterpillars and raise them," adds Teyl. "They would identify species in a way that we rarely do now. It's a skill that is being lost."

11am

Andrea Hudspeth, Scotland Officer for the British Dragonfly Society, shows a group how to ID dragonflies and damselflies at the Glenlude ponds. Despite the overcast conditions, they've found five species of

“We’re part of a UK-wide bioblitz, but we’re also excited to gauge whether Glenlude is any wilder than when we first took it on in 2010”



Life at every turn (clockwise from main): Northern Brown Argus; members of the team by the polytunnel; Chris Packham with Glenlude Land Manager Karen Purvis; 400 species were recorded in 24 hours



damselflies in the vegetation, including large red damselfly and emerald. It's only been adults so far, but they might move onto some dipping in a while.

“Dragonflies are declining in general, although some species are doing better than others,” she explains. “We’ve got quite a few species coming up over the border. A few years ago, the azure damselflies we’ve seen quite a few of today wouldn’t have been found in Scotland, but now they are colonising.”

Recording is increasingly important, she adds: “Scotland has so much upland habitat, places can be difficult to get to. We have black holes where we don’t know what’s there, and that could mean there’s many more species of dragonfly in Scotland that we haven’t picked up on.”

2pm

Karen Purvis keeps the coffee and cake coming. She is pleased to see like minds working together. Three ornithologists, who have just met for the first time, head out together. “I could see them getting along straight away, talking their own language,” she says. “They’re all smiling, happy and away to explore together.”

2.30pm

Sarah Eno, a recorder for the Botanical Society of the British Isles in Selkirkshire and Roxburghshire, is nearby, her head in a plant identification book. Having shared her knowledge in the morning with a Trust member and regular volunteer, they are

now making certain that tawny sedge and meadow oak grass – two species previously unknown at Glenlude – can be added to the growing list of species on the property.

3.30pm

Back out on the hill, I look for the two lichen experts that have joined us from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. Dr Chris Ellis and Verity Brosnan are just about to pack up for the day when I reach them amongst a stand of rowan and aspen. “The lichens have been pretty good today,” says Chris. “We’ve got a good list, and right at the end of the day Verity found this *ranolina fraxidia*.”

Chris points to a long, pendulous lichen hanging somewhat like an octopus from a branch. “It’s very pollution sensitive,” he explains. “When we had lots of sulphur dioxide pollution and acid rain it became extremely rare, so it’s really nice to see quite a big population of it in these trees.” Both are delighted with their day and are confident of reaching 50 species in total.

6.50pm

Chris Packham arrives, and flatters the John Muir Trust, saying we’re “one of the more forward looking eNGOs”. We head over to the Phoenix Forest, planted over the past six years by participants on the Recovery Through Nature programme run by the drug and alcohol charity, Phoenix Futures Scotland. There are filmed interviews with John Hall from Phoenix Futures, as well as Karen and Andrew

Bachell, Trust Chief Executive. The discussions range from health and well-being to community-based rewilding and the need for a more joined-up approach to landscape-scale restoration.

8pm

Time’s up. The surveying ends. Chris Packham addresses all those gathered and thanks us for our efforts. One goal of the Bioblitz is to investigate the extent to which wildlife species are under threat. “It is time conservationists came together, unified to think about the bigger picture,” he says. “We’re not going to agree on everything, but if we agree on 60 or 70 per cent that’s enough. There are things we can do today that will have an impact tomorrow.”

Throughout the event, Karen has told people “everything’s a bonus” and that we can all spot something new. I’d hazard a guess that everyone, expert or not, has also learnt something new over the past 24 hours. I’ve certainly left thinking that I’d like to know more about moths, and bats, and lichen and ...

Overall, the Bioblitz at Glenlude uncovered more than 400 species, including several that we didn’t know existed at the property. It seems this little part of the Borders is wilder than we thought ... and is on an upward trajectory. □

About the author
Kevin Lelland is the Trust’s Head of Development and Communications

Women in the wild

Coralie Hopwood considers the need to celebrate female role models in the outdoors

I HAVE always felt more comfortable outdoors. My earliest memories are entwined with smells, sounds and the physical experiences of getting stuck in trees, hiking and grumblng up mountains, and playing in woodlands along the coast where I grew up. It was apt then that I began my working life labouring in tree and land teams, sharing with colleagues the sense of freedom and satisfaction that came from this practical, satisfying contact with nature.

Later, as I moved into outdoor learning and mental health roles, it was a privilege to see children and adults develop revelatory connections with the natural environment. Wild places offered refuge and safety, where time slowed down and people stepped away from the challenges of daily life, drawing perspective and strength from their surroundings.

I am certain that a chance to develop one's own relationship with the natural world is fundamental to being human. It supports us to thrive and recognise our place in an intricate web of life, counteracting the damage done if we find ourselves cut off from it. As Nan Shepherd wrote so beautifully in *The Living Mountain*: "... simply to look on anything, such as a mountain, with the love that penetrates to its essence, is to widen the domain of being in the vastness of non-being".

Access to the natural world, beneficial in so many ways, should be available to all. However, throughout my working life, this has not been reflected in what I've seen. At the start of my career I was always the only female on the team and faced interesting manifestations of other's discomfort about it.

Later, more males than females were referred into the outdoor provision and

therapeutic services I worked in, while gender-based decisions regularly led to boys being offered Forest School places and girls getting signed up for health and beauty.

A 2015 Sport England study discovered that there is still a 65 per cent to 35 per cent split in male to female participation in outdoor activity, with the typical profile of an 'outdoors participant' being male, white and middle-class. But things are slowly improving. It is noteworthy to report that equal numbers of males and females achieved their John Muir Awards across the UK in 2017. But more needs to be done.

FIRST ENCOUNTERS

Engaging girls early is key. Those exposed early to outdoor experiences are more likely to choose an active, outdoors lifestyle for themselves. However, evidence shows that girls begin to

respond to the gender stereotypes around them from a young age. A 2018 publication by the Institute of Physics found that: "Young people are susceptible to gender stereotypes from a very early age. Many children self-select out of certain activities or spaces based on their observations of what is appropriate".

"By the time girls are at high school it can be too late," comments Georgina Roche, Youth Development Officer at John Muir Award Provider, Durham Agency Against Crime. "They've lost their confidence with traditional outdoor activities."

The visibility of relatable role models is particularly crucial. Research published in 2018 by Microsoft showed that having a relatable role model meant that more than 50 per cent of the 11,000 women and children

Wild reading

There is a wealth of nature and adventure writing by women. Below are a few suggestions to get you started:

- *Dare to Do: Taking on the planet by bike and boat*, Sarah Outen (2016)
- *Abundant Beauty: The adventurous travels of Marianne North, Botanical Artist*, Marianne North/ Laura Ponsonby (2011)
- *Honouring High Places*, Junko Tabei (2017)
- *The Living Mountain*, Nan Shepherd (2011 reissue)
- *Around the World in Seventy-Two Days*, Nellie Bly (2014)
- *Going It Alone*, Rahawa Haile (2017)
- Plus, online biographies of remarkable women at theheroinecollective.com



interviewed could imagine a career in a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) field, compared to only 15 per cent of those who had none. This does not just affect participants, but also teachers. In their 2017 study, Denise Mitten and colleagues discuss the 'Invisibility Cloak' which shrouds women's contributions to teaching and research, noting "... histories of outdoor and environmental education and current practices tend to document the efforts and achievement of men - especially white men - whereas the many contributions of women are infrequently recorded or celebrated".

But those role models certainly exist (see sidebar), with a proliferation of websites, articles and campaigns that highlight the past and present contributions of women in the outdoors. The prevalence of caring responsibilities and generally lower incomes affect women's access to wild places in very specific ways. The likes of Force of Nature, Get Out Girl, Women in the Wild, Women's Adventure Expo, and the Outdoor Women's Alliance provide online platforms where women acknowledge this, challenge the status quo and offer mentorship to others. Another, A Mighty Girl, targets younger girls with examples of adventurers, 'environmental heroes' and trailblazers.

However, even when we have good access to the outdoors, girls and women are socialised from birth to be careful, be quiet, not trust strangers, and never set out alone. We are taught that beauty and demure behaviour is desirable in a woman and that unkempt, wilderness-dirtied strength is not. But we have the same potential for wanderlust as any man. Every girl and woman should have the chance to experience the joy of the outdoors and choose how to explore it.

And if families are unable to provide this for the young, then institutions must step up. They must ensure that lazy stereotyping does not deny girls and women the right to find their place in nature by actively promoting role models and offering new ways to participate for those who aspire to a life outdoors. □

About the author
Coralie Hopwood is Inclusion Manager
for the John Muir Award in England

Profile: Mary Ann Hooper

Mary Ann Hooper grew up in Vermont, USA in the 1950s. Well used to exploring the 40 acres of land around her home, she was already confident in the outdoors when she left her small community for university. Although not officially permitted to join the Harvard Mountaineering Club due to her gender, thanks to more enlightened peers, she became a de facto member and went on rock and ice climbing trips.

She recalls these excursions as the most important part of her time at Harvard - including one when she met her future British husband. After a year volunteering in Tanzania, she moved to the UK with him and began work as a journalist. As her husband's job moved, Mary Ann followed, leaving her own job, as was commonplace in the 1960s. She retrained as a social worker after settling in Manchester, also becoming involved in women's liberation.

Alongside the demands of raising a family, she made frequent climbing and hiking visits to the Lake District.

Decades later, having devoured "heaps" of books by women embarking on exciting adventures, she was inspired to set off on one of her own - travelling across America by bike in 2008. Mary Ann recounts this journey in her recent book *Across America and Back: Retracing my Great Grandparents' Remarkable Journey*, published by University of Nevada Press. I asked her about the journey:



PHOTOGRAPH: MARY ANN HOOPER

Did you worry about travelling alone?

I grew up assuming I could do things, so I did them. Travelling alone as a woman you find some cultural norms work for you and some against you. It's up to you how you deal with it.

Why this journey?

I had no caring responsibilities anymore, was divorced, had retired and so had time available. I hoped to write a book and also wanted to express my concern about climate change in some of the choices I made on the trip, and the impact it is already having on the places I visited.

What advice would you give to other women thinking of making a similar journey?

Go for it! Be sensible, use your knowledge and skills to make judgements. I have often reflected that the risks I might be taking by getting on my bike are far outweighed by the benefits of doing it.

Who has inspired you?

Anne Mustoe, who was the headmistress of an independent school until her early 50s, left her job and started cycling around the world at the age of 54, with no cycling experience. She wrote several books about her travels. Another is Dorothy Pilley Richards who, in 1921, was a founding member of the Pinnacle Mountaineering Club, and part of the team that made the first ascent of the northwest ridge of Dent Blanche in 1928. As her great-great nephew Dan Richards wrote, 'Dorothea was [...] to be groomed for a life of top-end housewifery, but promptly rebelled ...'. And, of course, John Muir!

Loving life outdoors: (from left) Romany Garnett, John Muir Trust; Pammy Johal, Backbone CIC; Clea Warner, National Trust for Scotland



PHOTOGRAPHS: JOHN MUIR TRUST; BACKBONE CIC; NTS

Three of a kind

Coralie Hopwood speaks to a trio of inspiring women about their experiences of working in outdoor environments

I'M LUCKY to meet a variety of wonderful, wild women through my work, and always find it interesting to learn more about their motivation, experiences and aspirations when it comes to making the outdoor landscape more accessible to all.

Here, I speak with three women who all work in slightly different outdoor spheres. **Romany Garnett** (top left) is Conservation Officer for the Trust's property at Quinag. Her role incorporates practical conservation, environmental education and community liaison. **Pammy Johal** (top middle) is the Founder and Operations Director of Backbone CIC, which provides outdoor opportunities for marginalised groups, particularly women from ethnic minorities. A passion for wild open spaces has taken her on numerous expeditions worldwide.

Finally, **Clea Warner** (top right) is General Manager of the North West at National Trust

for Scotland, managing properties such as Culloden, Glencoe, Glenfinnan and Inverewe Garden. She's also a keen hill walker, skier and wild swimmer.

What inspired you to work in the outdoors?

Romany: I can't work indoors. It's too hot and artificial, with too many people. I need to be in the fresh air, so I've always looked for work outside. I was inspired to work in conservation and land management because I see a real opportunity to make a difference, protecting what we still have and ensuring the next generation love it as much as I do.

Clea: I'm inspired by the knowledge that everything we do protects and conserves the places we manage for future generations. I'm motivated to use my skill set to create a sustainable future for the organisation. I also believe in promoting shared values to all, whether it be staff, stakeholders, or volunteers.

What motivates you day to day?

Pammy: Every day I see people go 'wow'

about the outdoors and that's it ... one 'wow' has a HUGE impact on the community. It can change whole families and lifestyles. If they love this place, they will want to do something to protect it. I love to introduce people to conservation and volunteering. It has so many spiritual and physical benefits.

Romany: I am motivated by the landscape around me, being in it and caring for it. Also by the people I work with and sharing enthusiasm. If more people understand and care [about places] then the world would be safer and better protected.

Have you encountered barriers or challenges in your work?

Clea: I started work straight from school and did all my studies whilst working which was hard and not the traditional way of progressing. People tend to study first. However, it has never held me back. I got great practical experience from the outset and I have never felt my gender to be an issue.

Pammy: The biggest barriers are misconceptions. A misconception from



Opening doors: Backbone CIC helps ethnic minority women and girls access the outdoors; enjoying outdoor learning at Muirkirk Primary, East Ayrshire



PHOTOGRAPHS: BACKBONE CIC, JOHN MUIR AWARD

communities is that the outdoors is for big, burly, white men. A misconception from the industry is that it must treat Asian women like glass. Right now, there are ethnic minority women gagging to do this stuff, but they don't know how to. We take them by the hand. We find out where they are and go to them, invite family members to come and see that we work in a safe, respectful environment. We do all the leg work which is not easy, but that's the investment that is required.

How do you view the current state of diversity within outdoor professions?

Pammy: It's diabolical! The industry still lacks people from marginalised communities, specifically those who did not have access to opportunities growing up. This means a lack of role models for those communities and a lack of diversity in the environmental arena. We have held many free consultations about improving access and I am appalled by the lack of response there's been to them. The outdoor sector is supposed to encourage people out of their comfort zones, yet it

remains firmly in one of its own. Our partnerships with the National Parks and the John Muir Trust have been great though, with genuine commitment to promoting greater inclusion.

Romany: There is becoming more of a mix, although when working with schools and children outdoors, most of the teachers are female. Deer meetings are male-dominated, as are stalking, hunting and deer management generally. There is more of a mix of outdoor professionals, although there are still more men. There are some successful female instructors too but rock climbing, mountaineering, caving is often still male dominated.

How can we give more women access to positive outdoor experiences?

Clea: We need to start early. Encourage girls and women to get involved via schools and other learning channels and be clear about the huge variety of roles available (it's not all about being a ranger and being on the hill). Roles can be very flexible and adaptable which fits in well with childcare and other responsibilities, too.

Romany: Encourage girls to be active from a young age so that it becomes normal to them. By the time they are young women it is almost too late. Give them opportunities to get outside safely. Forest School is really good, encouraging girls to be outside in any weather. Sometimes girl-only groups are beneficial as, if boys are around, girls can stand back and let them take over due to a lack of confidence.

Pammy: For some communities having a women-only space is vital, or women can't join in. Our idea is to build women's expertise, confidence and capabilities, so they can use them as they choose to in an integrated world. □

Further info
John Muir Trust, Quinag,
johnmuirtrust.org/trust-land/quinag
National Trust for Scotland,
nts.org.uk
Backbone CIC, backbone.uk.net

About the author
Coralie Hopwood is Inclusion Manager for the John Muir Award in England

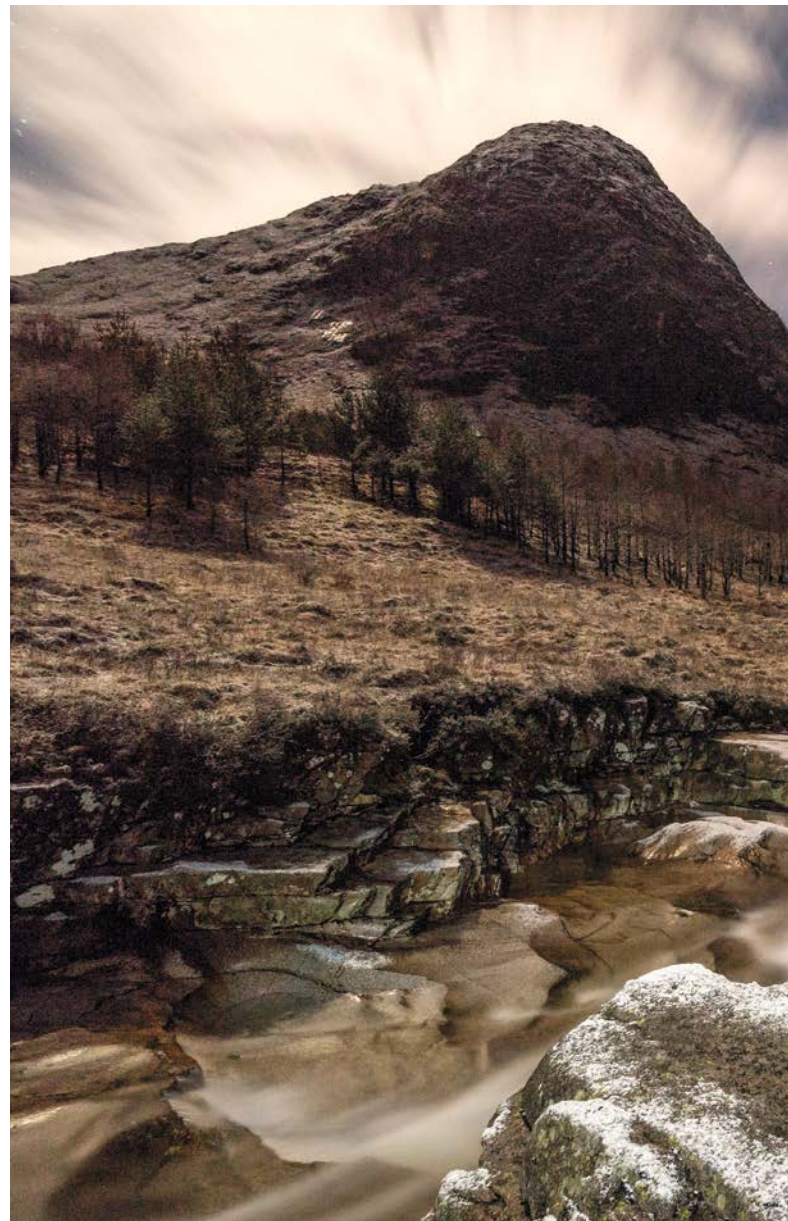
River wild

Following a recent visit to the area, the Trust submitted an objection to three of seven applications for hydro schemes along Glen Etive. Policy Officer **John Low** explains why

THE LAND to either side of Glen Etive encapsulates the rugged beauty of Highland Scotland's scenery. Iconic mountain tops such as Buchaille Etive Mor and Ben Starav, cascading waterfalls which feed the River Etive, wide-open spaces and spectacular views all contribute to the sense of wildness in a narrow glen that featured in the James Bond film *Skyfall*.

Glen Etive is 14 miles long, with an unclassified, single track and dead-end road that runs southwest from the A82, near the Kingshouse Hotel in Glencoe. It is surrounded by Wild Land Area (WLA) 9, Loch Etive Mountains, as identified by Scottish Natural Heritage in 2014. Earlier this year, proposals came forward for seven run-of-the-river hydro-electricity schemes for the glen – four to the northwest of the road and three to the southeast. The latter three would be located within WLA 9.

The Trust's policies state that, where resources allow, any development that could impact on wild land should be evaluated, preferably by visiting the area, as well as by scrutinising the application documentation. The documentation can include planning papers, Environmental Impact Assessments, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments, Construction Management Plans, Analysis of Cumulative Impact, details of Mitigation and Reinstatement, and consideration of Zones of Theoretical Visibility. This can run to thousands of pages of information.



Until recently, the biggest threat to wild land in Scotland has tended to come from onshore wind farms, but we are now seeing a growing number of applications for small-scale hydro schemes to beat the deadline for the end of feed-in-tariffs in 2019. This subsidy has helped the development of small-scale renewable projects, which the Trust rarely objects to. However, because of the special qualities of this part of Scotland, which is within a National Scenic Area and partially within a WLA, the Trust's policy team decided to visit Glen Etive to assess the potential impact of so many hydro schemes in such a concentrated area.

MULTIPLE FACTORS

The weather was kind to us, with early rain and cloud clearing just as we entered the glen, allowing uninterrupted views of the awe-inspiring scenery. We had to bear in mind the fact that wild land can be experienced in a variety of ways: walking, climbing and mountain biking right in the heart of the landscape. But, for some, particularly those who are physically unable to get around on foot, especially on difficult terrain, the rugged scenery can only be experienced and enjoyed by viewing it from the single-track road.

Neither the floor of the glen nor its northern slopes are defined as wild land because of the existence of the road, plus extensive plantation forestry and their associated tracks. Swathes of this



Allt a' Chaorainn is one of three sites in Glen Etive where the Trust has opposed proposals for a hydro scheme

A view from Europe

It's not just in Scotland where hydro schemes are an issue. In southeast Europe, campaigns against the cumulative impact of hydropower have reached new heights with international clothing firm Patagonia backing a campaign called Blue Heart to oppose 3,000 hydro projects across the Balkan peninsula between Slovenia and Greece.

The proposals have provoked fierce local opposition because of the potential impact on the environment, culture, local identity and water systems. For generations, a multitude of rural communities in the Balkans have relied upon the region's free-flowing rivers and crystal-clear streams.

The European hydro schemes, financed by global banks, are on a different scale from those developed in Scotland and could, says Patagonia founder Yvon Chouinard, "destroy the largest and last untamed river in Albania, drive the already threatened Danube salmon to extinction in Bosnia and Herzegovina, jeopardise the survival of the critically-endangered Balkan lynx in Macedonia, and displace communities across the region". Find out more at blueheart.patagonia.com



PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID LINTERN

forestry have been clear-felled recently, leaving huge areas of unattractive, scarred and brash-covered hillside.

In contrast to the north side of the glen, which is already seriously affected by large-scale human activity, the WLA on the other side of the glen remains relatively unspoiled. Consequently, we judged that the three proposed schemes to the south of Glen Etive would have a significant visual and physical impact.

As such, the Trust has objected to the applications for hydro schemes at Allt Mheuran, Allt Ceitlein and Allt a' Chaorainn, principally on the basis of the damage to the landscape that would be inflicted upon this popular WLA. Each would involve the introduction of permanent new tracks, powerhouses and related works in a part of Glen Etive where there is currently very little visible evidence of human development.

It is the Trust's view that the three developments would individually and cumulatively introduce significant visual intrusion across the area – especially in combination with the other proposed developments to the north. The most incongruous physical and visual feature of the development would be the access track. Currently, the whole experience of driving along the glen road

“Our assessment is that any potential gains claimed by the developers will be far outweighed by the loss of a valued area of wild land”

when looking to the southeast is one of wildness with little presence of modern features.

Although the Trust is objecting to just three of the seven applications, we believe that the entire scheme – developed by Dickens Hydro Resources Ltd on behalf of the landowner, Dalness Estates – will make no more than a negligible contribution to

government targets for greenhouse gas emissions reduction.

While the Trust supports these targets, our assessment is that any potential gains claimed by the developers will be far outweighed by the loss of a valued area of wild land with scenic qualities that attract visitors from around the world.

Nor will this combined development contribute significantly towards achieving the Scottish Government's target of generating 100 per cent of gross electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2020. Minimal energy gains must be balanced against the national importance of this local landscape. As John Muir once said: “Not blind opposition to progress, but opposition to blind progress”. □

About the author

John Low is the Trust's Policy Officer

Path ways

Alan McCombes reports on the end of the road for two major pathwork projects in Skye and Assynt

THE COMPLETION of two major footpath projects by the Trust has provided a much-needed boost to the infrastructure of Skye and Assynt, where visitor numbers are growing rapidly.

For two years, Trust staff, volunteers and contactors have worked tirelessly to upgrade eroded footpaths on Glen Sligachan and Suilven, backed by hundreds of thousands of pounds of investment in both of these Highland tourist hot-spots.

The Skye Wild Ways path project was spearheaded by Glenelg-based footpath expert Donald Mackenzie and the Trust's Skye Conservation Officer Sarah Lewis. It combined major remedial work at a number of locations between Glen Sligachan and Loch Coruisk with intensive training sessions to teach student groups and local people the skills and techniques of path repair and maintenance.

Apart from highly-skilled work carried out by specialist contactors, a further 88 people participated in 22 days of work. These consisted of 58 students from the local campus of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and from the Scottish Rural College, plus another 30 local crofters and members of community land trusts interested in gaining specialist skills.

The work was spread over a number of locations, including the Glen Sligachan to Loch Coruisk route; the Elgol to Camasunary path; a steep 433m stretch of Beinn Dearg Mheadhonach; and the scenic loop path at the Allt Daraich gorge between Sligachan and Glamaig. The gruelling work included helicopter airlifts of materials at three separate sites.

"It's been a great experience working with the John Muir Trust over these past two years and helping put something back into Skye," comments Donald MacKenzie.

"Maintaining upland paths in the storm-lashed West Highlands is a never-ending cycle – a bit like painting the Forth Road Bridge – but some of the most severely eroded paths to the south of Sligachan have been restored to a robust condition and should be good for a few years to come.

"It's also been great working with students and volunteers and to help equip them with skills and techniques that will hopefully help them to find work in the future and to stay in the Highlands."

On behalf of the Trust, Sarah Lewis expressed appreciation for the work led



PHOTOGRAPH: HEATHER MCNEILL

Donald MacKenzie working with UHI students on Skye

"Maintaining upland paths in the storm-lashed West Highlands is a never-ending cycle"

by Donald over the past two years. "We've been lucky to have someone with Donald's skills, expertise and patience working on what has been a great project for the local community and for the magnificent landscape in this part of Skye.

"Visitor numbers to the island are multiplying year-on-year, so this project has been an important contribution to the infrastructure of the island, with total investment in the project amounting to £263,255. Our commitment to the 60km of footpaths we manage on the island will continue undiminished – and so too will the important relationships we have forged locally over these past two years."

Meanwhile, the Trust has also just completed the second and final phase of the restoration of the Suilven footpath on behalf of the Coigach Assynt Living Landscape (CALL) project and the

community owners of the mountain, the Assynt Foundation.

"The work carried out by ACT Heritage over the last two years has created a solid but natural-looking path that now stretches 1.6km from the Glencanisp vehicle track to the foot of Suilven," explains Chris Goodman, The Trust's Footpath Officer.

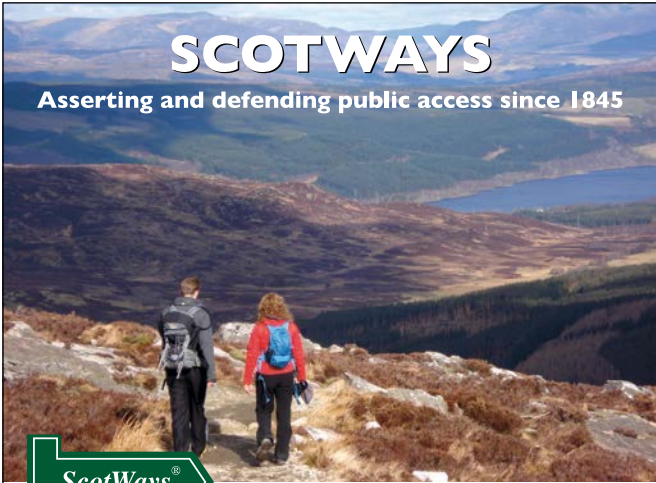
"Meanwhile, Arran Footpaths worked on the steep north side of Suilven, building pitching and constructing cross drains to protect steep sections of the path from being gullied by water running down the soft sandstone soils."

The Trust would like to express its sincere thanks for funding support for these projects from The Heritage Lottery Fund, Brown Forbes Memorial Fund, Scottish Mountaineering Trust, Kestrelman Trust, Hugh Fraser Foundation, Jeremy Wilson Charitable Trust (Skye), Scottish Natural Heritage, the European Outdoor Conservation Association and the Scottish Mountaineering Trust (Suilven). □

About the author
Alan McCombes is the Trust's
Communications Editor

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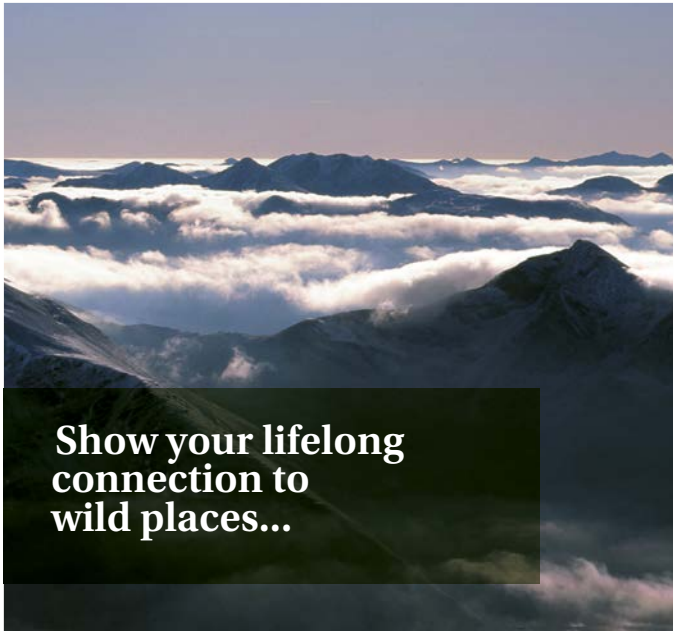
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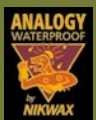
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Return to Knoydart

An old 1992 work party photograph planted an idea that came to fruition this summer. Long-time Trust member Yvonne McCrone talks to **Nicky McClure** after her poignant return to the 'Rough Bounds'

IT WASN'T the emotive words on the front of our Knoydart Appeal leaflet (pictured) that first caught Yvonne McCrone's eye when our members' mailing landed back in autumn 2015. It was a picture. A photograph from 1992 of Viv Halcrow and herself planting trees on the 'bare' land the Trust was managing in Knoydart, brought back memories of Yvonne accompanying the Trust's first conservation officer – Andrew Thompson – on an early work party there.

Now over 80, Yvonne dug out her photograph album, talked to friends and together they incubated a plan to revisit the trees she planted a quarter of a century ago in Li and Coire Dhorrcail. Three years later, on one of this summer's hottest afternoons, the plan was hatched. We caught up with Yvonne and her four friends in Arnisdale, just as they disembarked from the Silver Fox after visiting the Trust's land together with our Skye and Knoydart manager Ally Macaskill.

Introducing her friends, Yvonne explained they met through the Fife Mountaineering Club (FMC). Also a member of the Trust, Jean, the club's secretary said: "Yvonne is the only one who has been to Li and Coire Dhorrcail before. We'd been up Ladhar

Bheinn at different times, but not involved in tree planting."

"It was lovely to return and see the tree growth. I like the natural look, and the irregular way they are regenerating"

Yvonne brought out her photo album and the pictures prompted vivid memories of the 1992 work party – memories that she was only too happy to share.

"The photograph from the appeal leaflet shows Viv and me planting pine seedlings on a ridge above Loch Hourne while the others worked on footpaths," she explains. "I still wear that hat!"

"We walked nine miles in from Kinlochhourne and stayed in an almost derelict house. A fine-looking house in its day, but Viv and I – the only females – were allotted a bedroom where half the floor had collapsed into the living room below.

"The seed for our young trees had been collected from the tops of mature pines in Knoydart – my photos show Andrew collecting it – and sent to a tree nursery, before the seedlings were returned a year or so later for planting."

And Yvonne was staggered to see what changes had taken place since that early trip. "Twenty five years on, I am amazed to see the changes. Not only the variety of native trees planted and some regeneration, but also the marked line where heather is flourishing below the line of the old fence. So much more cover for birds, mammals and of course insects, many of which we experienced first-hand!

"It was lovely to return and see the tree growth. I like the natural look, the irregular way they are regenerating. You don't expect to see solid native woodland.

"Looking up to the ridge with binoculars, we could see two groups of healthy looking pine trees which could have been over 20 years old – all part of a natural looking woodland, including birch, willow, rowan, hazel and so on. I'd be happy to claim one group of pines as our contribution to the planting!"

"My friends in FMC and I enjoyed the trip enormously and are





All change (clockwise from main): Yvonne savours the view today; Andrew collecting seed in 1992; Yvonne (right) and Viv planting 25 years ago

PHOTOGRAPHS: JEAN HENDRY AND YVONNE MCCRONE



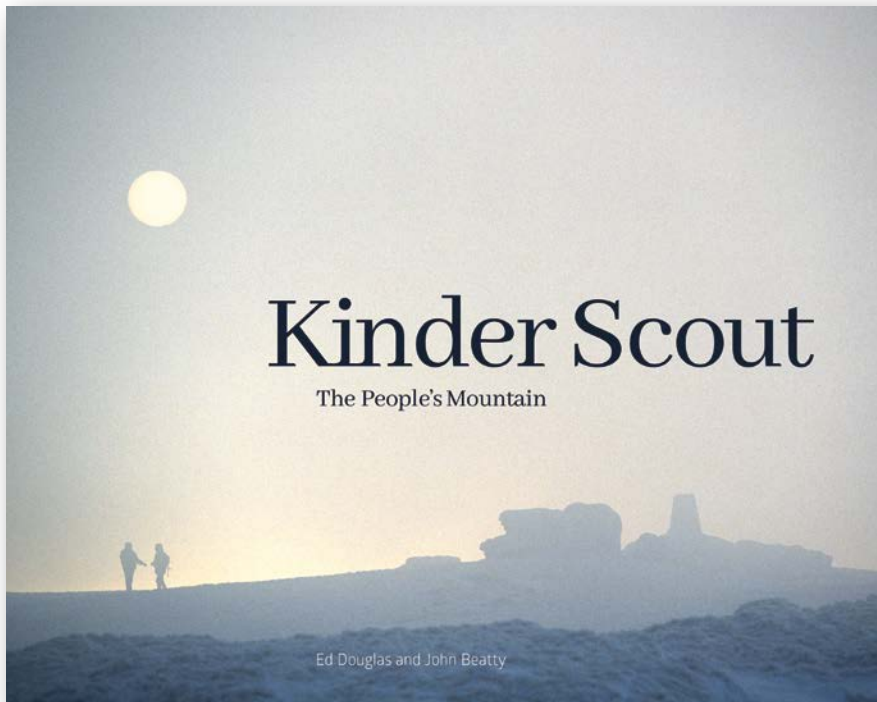
grateful to Ally for his willingness to show us his patch and answer our questions. The boat trip was a real treat on an idyllic day.

“Having reread the autumn 2015 Journal article headlined Upland rising, which covered Dr Helen Armstrong’s paper *The Benefits of Woodland: Unlocking the potential of Scotland’s Uplands*, and seen the potential of Coire Dhorrcail, I now have a dream: that the regeneration of native woodland across the Scottish Highlands could eventually help to repopulate glens such as Coire Dhorrcail; and that my great grandchildren, or their children, might someday have the opportunity to live in an upland environment such as the Trust’s land in Knoydart where, by then, people could be establishing small rural enterprises – who knows!

“The more organic way of life is not for everyone, but in 90 years’ time changes in communications and geographic mobility could make such things possible for those who choose it.” □

Share your own wild moments at johnmuirtrust.org/wild-moments

About the author
Nicky McClure is the Trust’s
Communications Officer



*Kinder Scout –
the People's Mountain*
by Ed Douglas and
John Beatty

David Lintern delights in the marriage of words and pictures in this exquisite portrait of a much-loved landscape

THERE'S MORE than one hill competing for that subtitle these days, but right from the opening pages this book stands head

and shoulders above and outside the hyperbole. It's a collaboration between *Alpine Journal* editor and biographer Ed Douglas and the photographer John Beatty, and between them they have produced an exquisite biography of this much-loved and sometimes maligned landscape. For the authors, Kinder deserves that subtitle because it is a landscape we have completely terraformed over millennia. In short, it's a mirror, not a church.

Douglas lays bare a dense web of social and environmental history that has written itself onto the place. Kinder's history is shared with the development of

Manchester and Sheffield, the Industrial Revolution and the labour movement. He walks us through the landscape chapter by chapter, drawing out the opposing forces at play and the ghosts that still haunt the plateau; farming, military aviation, the beginnings of the controversial driven grouse shooting industry, and the subsequent battles for access and conservation that form the cornerstones of modern British outdoor culture.

The writing and research is scholarly but the turn of phrase and sleight of intellect is increasingly that of the climber-poet; nimble and liquid. Ed tests his holds meticulously early in the book but isn't afraid to go for the odd dynamic move in later chapters.

Beatty's photographs are the perfect counterpoint to Douglas's exhaustive research, and document Kinder's many faces, often with an unnerving intimacy. Many of the images are imbued with an eerie stillness and shot in soft or diffused light. Unlike so much contemporary landscape work, it's not about the photographer or the technology and the compositions are never forced – instead, our eyes are opened, the place is allowed to come to us.

There are a variety of styles covering documentary, landscape and adventure, but to focus on style here misses the point entirely. This project is about substance. It's a quietly astonishing and important piece of work, and one which everyone with an interest in our upland history should get hold of. It's certainly a book I know I will return to for many years to come. □

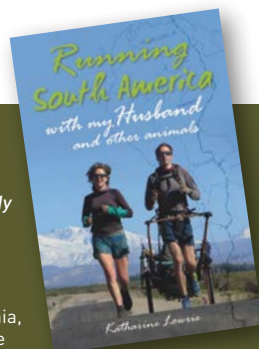
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About the reviewer
David Lintern is an outdoors writer,
photographer and photo-guide

Others we like

Running South America: With My Husband and Other Animals, Katharine Lowrie

This is a story about running marathons back-to-back for 15 months across a frozen Patagonia, through deserts, hurricane force winds, and the biggest rainforest on earth to reach the Caribbean Sea. Katharine and David Lowrie push their bodies and minds to become the first to run the length of South America, giving a voice to the wildlife and wildernesses they



adore along the way. Part funded by the Trust-managed Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant, this adventure highlights the fragility and vulnerability of wild places, while celebrating the hospitality of the communities encountered, and the restorative benefits of our natural world. Reviewed by Toby Clark. £19.99. whittlespublishing.com

Wilderness Wars, Barbara Henderson

This is one of the best books I have ever read! At first I wasn't sure, but after a couple of pages I was hooked. It is about a (nearly) 13-year-old girl called

Em who goes on a boat to a deserted island called Skelsay with her family and lots of other families. The idea is to build a luxury holiday resort. Em meets a boy called Zac and they become friends. But things start to go wrong. Nature starts to fight back! Can they make the adults believe them before it is too late? Barbara Henderson has done a super job creating this book and has inspired



Into the Mountain: A Life of Nan Shepherd by Charlotte Peacock

Mel Nicol immerses herself in a meticulously researched biography of Nan Shepherd

ROBERT MACFARLANE has done much to encourage a new audience for Nan Shepherd's *The Living Mountain* – famously published in 1977 more than 30 years after it was first written. *Into the Mountain*, a meticulously researched biography by Charlotte Peacock, gives us the story behind the book and takes us as far beneath the skin of Nan the person as we can expect to get.

It includes extensive and illuminating extracts from private correspondence with a host of acclaimed writers of the day, including Hugh MacDiarmid, Neil Gunn, Inverness-born novelist Jessie Kesson and Agnes Mure Mackenzie.

I naively assumed this book would mainly focus on the mountain experiences that drove Nan Shepherd's poetry and writing. But while this book couldn't have been written without reference to and discussion of mountaineering and her experiences in the Cairngorms, the action mainly centres on Aberdeen where she lived all her life.

Into the Mountain has greatly enhanced my understanding of the era in which she grew up, the culture of Aberdeen and the north-east, the position of women in society at that time, and Nan Shepherd's own immense contribution to the education of women through her work as a lecturer.

A further thought-provoking aspect for me was the exploration of the challenges for writers of the Scottish Modernist genre of staying true to local dialect with all its diversity and subtle nuances – so vital to

communicating aspects of landscape and weather – while also striving to be accessible to a wider UK readership.

I was fascinated too by her perhaps surprising struggle to put into words the profound experiences and sensations that are part of being out in the hills. Like Nan, the mountains have given me countless intense experiences, but because I have rarely attempted to communicate these in writing it was interesting to read how hard she worked to 'articulate those movements of being so that they were translated out of themselves and into words.'

We learn that 'Nan was concerned right up to the end with the difficulty of translating felt experience into language' and that 'her focus from 1934 onwards [was] to translate felt experience into words so that it moved in the blood for the reader, just as Neil Gunn's writing did for her.'

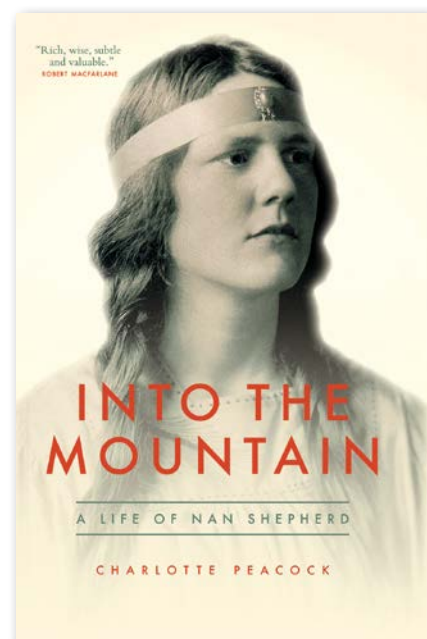
There is a poignant and sensitive description of the last years of Nan's life, as she stares out at Clachnaben from her care home window. The author reflects on how Nan seemed able to 'walk out of her body and into her mountain.' She quotes a letter received by Nan from Jessie Kesson in which the novelist writes: 'I know you do more than look. You know the feel of it beneath your feet, the sting of its rain on your face – you breathe the hill smells.'

Interestingly, Charlotte Peacock had never climbed a mountain until she was inspired to do so to mirror Nan's own quest of self-discovery. And although this is her first book, it is testament to her skill that, on turning the last page, I am now re-reading Nan Shepherd's *The Living Mountain*. I feel sure it will be with much greater sensitivity than on first reading some years ago. □

£20.00

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About the reviewer
Mel Nicoll is the Trust's
Campaigns Co-ordinator



me to write more of my own stories. I would definitely recommend it to my friends. So, go ahead, start reading it now! Reviewed by Becky Auty [aged 13]. £6.99, cranachanpublishing.co.uk

Waymaking: An Anthology of Women's Adventure Writing, Poetry and Art, Edited by Helen Mort, Claire Carter, Heather Dawe and Camilla Barnard
This new, creative anthology of women's prose, poetry and artwork about wild places, adventure and landscape aims to help redress the balance of gender in outdoor literature and raise more women's voices above the standard 'conquering landscapes' narrative. The 50 contributors, including

climber Hazel Findlay, Alpinist editor Katie Ives and author Bernadette McDonald, each delve into their



own personal connection with the outdoors and relate stories of adventure, self-discovery and inner strength, from hiking in the Lake District and mountain biking in the Scottish Highlands, to ocean swimming in Turkey and sky racing in Nepal. The range of voices shows that the 'female' experience of the wild is, as Melissa Harrison writes in the foreword, "simply the human one; which is, like humans, infinitely varied." It is a collection to savour – dip in and be inspired.

[Half of the royalties from this book go to the John Muir Trust, with the other half to Rape Crisis.] Reviewed by Daisy Clark. £17.99, v-publishing.co.uk



PHOTOGRAPH: LWIMAGES

Helen Mort

Described by Britain's Poet Laureate Dame Carol Ann Duffy as 'among the brightest stars in the sparkling new constellation of young British poets', Helen Mort stars in a new film shot on location at Quinag and on the Sandwood Estate. **Kevin Lelland** finds out more

When did you write your first poem and what was it about?

I used to dictate poems to my (long-suffering) mum before I could hold a pen and she would write them down for me. I'm told the first of these was a piece about a train! So, I've always been interested in movement, rhythm and landscape.

What do most well-written poems have in common?

I think they communicate a sense of urgency – you get the feeling that the poet absolutely had to write it down.

Tell us more about the film you've just been involved in creating?

This summer I was lucky enough to travel to Assynt to make a film about how remarkable wild places – like the land protected by the John Muir Trust – influence my writing. I ran and walked up Quinag, visited the beach at Sandwood Bay and wrote a new poem about my experience called *The Wild In Me*. I've been going to Scotland with my family ever since I was young and I'm a keen Munro walker too, so I always feel at home in the hills, particularly in North West Scotland.

What else are you passionate about?

In no particular order: gritstone climbs, loch swimming, dogs, equality, Marmite.

What book are you reading right now?

I usually have several books on the go at the same time. Recently, I've been re-reading Andrew Michael Hurley's thrilling, spooky novel *The Loney*, but I've also been revisiting Norman MacCaig's poetry after my trip to Assynt: MacCaig wrote evocative, spare poems about his obsession with North West Scotland, about our problematic urges to 'possess' landscape and the enduring way it possesses us.

What does the next year or so have in store for you?

My partner and I are expecting a baby in November, so I'm really looking forward to the challenges and joys of parenthood and to taking our little boy up some mountains in a backpack once he's born!

Congratulations! And how about professionally?

I am also publishing my first novel *Black Car Burning* in spring next year: it's a story about trust, risk, rock climbing, love

and the aftermath of the Hillsborough disaster, set in Sheffield. I've been working on it for about six years now, so the thought of it being in the world is incredible. Finally, I've started work on a non-fiction book about the special relationship between dogs and mountains. I've been meeting search and rescue dogs, interviewing mountaineers and I'm off to Switzerland soon to find some St Bernards! ☐

Further information

Helen is a five times winner of the Foyle Young Poets award. Her debut collection, *Division Street*, was published in 2013 and was shortlisted for several literary awards. A keen rock climber and trail runner she recently co-edited *Waymaking* – an anthology of creative output by women inspired by wild places, adventure and landscape (see p33).

See Helen's new film at johnmuirtrust.org/thewildinme

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

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