

Report on the 2016 Conservation Work Parties in the John Muir Trust



Members and non-members can join our conservation work parties. They take place on John Muir Trust properties and on our partnership properties. Participants arrange their own food, travel and accommodation.

These events are designed to enable our members and others to:

- contribute to the practical work of the John Muir Trust on Trust and partnership properties
- learn about the John Muir Trust and partnership properties and how they are managed
- practice some of the skills of conservation management
- meet other members and John Muir Trust staff
- experience and have contact with wild places

"Do something for wildness and make the mountains glad"
(John Muir, 1892)

Overview



Processing seed in the Glenlude nursery

In 2016 there were 32 organised work parties planned (although three were cancelled before running and one postponed until 2017), plus a wide range of volunteering by individuals and groups such as the



Proud volunteers behind a dyke they are building on West Harris

John Muir Trust local members groups. The work parties were carried out mostly on Trust properties with six at the Trusts newest property **Glenlude** and five at its oldest **Li & Coire Dhorrcail**. The other Trust properties of **East Schiehallion, Sandwood, Quinag, Nevis** and the three **Skye** estates were also worked on. Visits were made to partners and like-minded properties including the **Coigach and Assynt Living Landscape project** that we are a member of, community owned estates that we have been involved with such as **Knoydart Foundation** and the **North** and **West Harris** estates as well as the likeminded estate of **Corrour** where the Trust has been assisting with the conservation management.

The number of work days achieved in the main programme was very similar to 2015 with almost two thirds of the volunteers only attending one work party for an average of almost 2.5 days but the keenest coming along to nine work parties spending over 21 days volunteering on them. 62% of the volunteers were male and 38% were female.

number of work parties attended	volunteers	days volunteering	average days/volunteer
1	109	258	2.4
2	15	83	5.5
3	13	96	7.4
4 to 9	13	222	17.1
	150	659	4.4



Cycle racks built half way out the Sandwood track

In 2016 there was 659 days of volunteering being donated by 150 different people in the main programme. That figure excludes the volunteering done by John Muir Award participants on Trust properties, and by Trust volunteers with their local groups away from Trust properties. It also doesn't include the ad hoc volunteering carried out at Glenlude. Here there were over seventy days of volunteering during ad hoc work days.

On average each work party had between 9 and 10 people on it, but due to the informal way that they are run (people look after their own travel and accommodation) people do drop in and out, usually to fit in hill walks or bags!

What was achieved?

- **Pathwork**
 - **Sandwood**; almost 2km of Bay path surface topped up with 6 new anchor bars built and extensive drainage added at the end of the track. We also assisted the Grazing's Committee at Oldshoremore to improve the path from the cemetery car park to beach
 - **East Schiehallion**; the built path was maintained along its length three times, and 15 metres completely rebuilt with 11 new anchor bars built, the



Beach cleaning at Sandwood Bay



Moving stone into place on Huishinis to Cravadale path (Isle of Scarp behind)

link path to Dun Coillich was cleared of bracken

- **Harris;** maintenance on the Leosaid, Laxadale and Huishnis/Cravadale paths. The latter also had around 55 metres completely rebuilt
- **Quinag;** built sections maintained twice
- **CALL partnership;** Little Assynt paths maintained twice, Suilven track drainage and surface repaired for 50 metres section, Tanera Mor - repairs to paths at Fuschia & Schoolhouse where 20 metres were rebuilt and a piped culvert added above

Rosslyn

- **Skye;** Blaven lower path maintained once with a few repairs
- **Nevis;** Steal Gorge & Upper Ben paths maintained once, 30 metre section of path rebuilt at Old Steall
- **Knoydart Foundation;** 500 metres section of Mam Li ditched and 5 metre section rebuilt on new route away from river.
- **Rubbish**
 - Beaches cleaned included 4 cleaned twice at **Sandwood** (Sandwood Bay, Polin, Dromin & Oldshoremore) also Inverie and Huishinis & Meavaig on **Harris**. Unusual finds included a TV set right out at Sandwood Bay
 - Mountain top rubbish is still a reducing problem on **Nevis** helped by an increased number of other groups helping out during the year but around 8 bags of rubbish were removed by work parties in the year
 - Used tree tubes at **Glenlude** were collected up to be sent for recycling
- **Invasives**
 - Rhododendrons were removed on **Knoydart Foundation** land by hand pulling
 - Non-native Sitka was removed from Culag Woodland (CALL) and large sections of ancient woodland on **Corrour** Estate
 - Gunnera was removed on **Harris** at Urgha & Ardvourlie
 - Pirri-pirri removed on Leosaid/Cravadale path on **North Harris**
 - Over 0.5 Ha of Gorse was cut by hand at Glencanisp in preparation for native woodland planting as part of the CALL project
- **Woodland**
 - Treeplanting, around 4,500 trees were planted mostly on **Li & Coire Dhorrcail** and also at **Glenlude**
 - Seed collection was carried out at **Glenlude** and for the CALL nursery
 - Thousands of tree tubes were checked at **Glenlude** with mesh extensions added or removed if the trees have outgrown them.

- Many days of work were carried out at the **Glenlude** nursery, processing seeds, pricking them out and weeding.
- Brushing/thinning was carried out on over 4 Ha of ground at **Glenlude**, in the Tign an Quay woodland on Tanera and in Culag woodland
- Brash Hedges covering almost 1.5 Ha were created at **Glenlude** in the “hidden ride” and further up the hill and all other ones were maintained
- Over 10,000 trees were weeded around (mostly of bracken) at **Li & Coire Dhorrcail**
- A tree nursery was built at Inbhir Dhorrcail with around 6 tons of stone removed and 5 tons of soil sieved to prepare the raised beds.



Sieving the soil in the new tree nursery at Inbhir Dhorrcail on Li & Coire Dhorrcail in Knoydart

- Deer and stock fences at **Glenlude & Li & Coire Dhorrcail** repaired and a solar panel installed on the completed electric deer fence at Glen Trolmaraig on **Harris**.
- **Monitoring**
 - Various species were monitored including mountain ringlet butterflies and water voles at **Nevis**, red squirrels and adders at **Glenlude**
 - Vegetation monitoring was carried out at **Glenlude**
 - 15 Bat boxes built for **Glenlude**
- **Estate management**
 - Drystone dyking, around 23 metres of walling at Bore/Scarista in **West Harris** & 5 metres on Tanera Mor (part of CALL project) were stripped down and rebuilt
 - Four cycle racks were built half way out the **Sandwood** track and the Blairmore end gate & signage repainted
 - The Blaven car park on **Skye** was partially resurfaced, cleared up and logs installed to demarcate parking bays.
 - A new bridge was built to the north of **Schiehallion** to aid in gathering sheep off the **East Schiehallion** estate
 - 100 metres of redundant fencing removed at Luskentyre in **West Harris**

Local Members Groups

The most active group again was the North East Scotland group. The Yorkshire Members group also held several work parties in the Yorkshire Dales. (See reports elsewhere on John Muir Trust website)

Photographs of activities in 2016

You can see photos of all of these work parties on the Flickr sites listed below



- Western Isles www.flickr.com/groups/westernislesworkparties/
- East Schiehallion www.flickr.com/groups/schiehallionworkparties/
- Glen Nevis & Ben Nevis www.flickr.com/groups/nevisworkparties/
- Glenlude www.flickr.com/groups/glenludeworkparties/
- Sandwood, Quinag and our partners in the Coigach Assynt partnership (CALL) www.flickr.com/groups/sandwoodquinagcallworkparties/
- Skye and Knoydart (including the Knoydart Foundation and Li & Coire Dhorrcail) www.flickr.com/groups/skyeknoydartworkparties/
- Local member group volunteers www.flickr.com/groups/2463314@N25/

All the photos in this report are taken from the flickr sites where you can see credits for photographers and descriptions of where they were taken.



Building a new section of path to Mam Li away from river (on Knoydart)



Rebuilding the path on East Schiehallion

<u>location</u>	<u>2016 dates</u>
Glenlude	26-28 Feb
Knoydart Foundation (Inverie)	7-12 Mar
Li & Coire Dhorrcail (Knoydart)	12-13 Mar
E Schiehallion	26-Mar
Skye	1-4 Apr
Glenlude	14-17 Apr
Li & Coire Dhorrcail (Knoydart)	15-17 Apr
Knoydart Foundation (Inverie)	25-30 Apr
East Schiehallion	6 May
Western Isles (North & West Harris Trusts)	9-13 May
Sandwood	26-29 May
Li & Coire Dhorrcail (Knoydart)	4-5 June
Ben Nevis	11-Jun
Quinag & CALL partners	13-17 Jun
Corrour Estate	18-22 Jun
Glenlude	23-26 Jun
Li & Coire Dhorrcail (Knoydart)	2-3 Jul
Glen Nevis	8-11 Jul
Li & Coire Dhorrcail (Knoydart) (cancelled)	9-10 Jul
East Schiehallion	30 Jul-1 Aug
Sandwood	3-6 Aug
Glenlude	10-13 Aug
Ben Nevis	20-Aug
Quinag & CALL partners	22-26 Aug
Western Isles (North & West Harris Trusts)	29 Aug-2 Sep
Nevis Partnership (Glen Nevis) (postponed)	9-12 Sep
Ben Nevis (cancelled)	17-Sep
CALL (Tanera Mor)	19-23 Sep
E Schiehallion	24-Sep
Li & Coire Dhorrcail (Knoydart)	1-2 Oct
Glenlude	27-30 Oct
Glenlude	12-13 Nov

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The programme for volunteering in 2017 appears at the John Muir Website at www.johnmuirtrust.org/support-us/volunteer/conservation-volunteering