



JOHN
MUIR
AWARD

wild places:
DISCOVER
EXPLORE
CONSERVE
SHARE

John Muir Award News Spring 2016

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

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www.johnmuiraward.org

#johnmuiraward

Conserve Audit 2015

“Exactly what do people do for the Conserve part of the John Muir Award?” someone asked, back in 2009. “Hmm, lots of stuff...” was my vague response. “We should find out more about the ‘exactly’ bit of that question, shouldn’t we...”

And so we developed a ‘Conserve Audit’ – a monitoring exercise - not only to create an accurate overview, but to show the breadth, impact and value of John Muir Award participation on wild places.

As groups concluded their John Muir Award involvement – having Discovered a wild place, Explored it, done something to Conserve it, and Shared experiences – we asked them to identify the type and amount of activity carried out to meet the Conserve Challenge. We then collated this diverse activity and summarised data nationally, by region, and by key themes. Our previous full year Conserve Audit, in 2011, had great value in demonstrating the difference that Award participation can make to wild places – not just for the John Muir Trust but for partners, funders, and everyone involved. So we decided to do another in 2015.

Activity took place in an extensive range of locations and across a rich diversity of habitats, from mountain landscapes and coastal plains to woodlands and school grounds. Data was captured to measure everything from invasive species control to surveying earthworms, and tree planting to litter picking.

The ambitions of the John Muir Trust – to protect, enhance and care for nature, so that our wild places are valued by and for everyone – offer an important context. It runs the John Muir Award, for free, to encourage people to share its vision. This recognises the importance of putting something back, and the benefits this can bring for people and for places. It’s about not just being passive in our enjoyment of the outdoors, but being ‘active conservationists’, as wilderness visionary John Muir urged.

To read the full details of the Conserve Audit summary document, see <https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/whats-new/conserve-audit-2015>

Get in touch if you’d like hard copies.

What did being ‘active conservationists’ look like in 2015?

36,200 days of Conserve activity

carried out by **33,488 participants**, valued at **£1.3million**



29,939m²

of **invasive species** cleared by

6,684 people

including rhododendron, non-native evergreen, Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed



5,421

people **made feeders** for birds, butterflies, red squirrels, ladybirds, hedgehogs, insects and bees

19,339

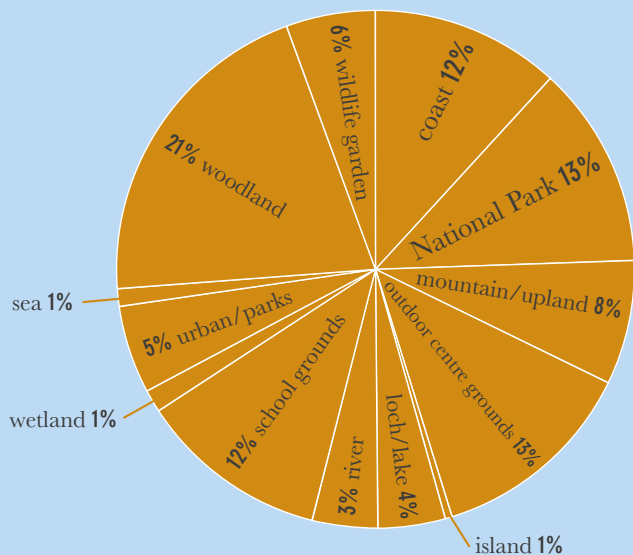
people cleared 8,442 bags of **litter** and **recycled** 1,162 bags



...and **lots more** besides.



Habitats activities took place in



“Wow! The figures are truly impressive. Thank you for collating and sharing them with us. Our connection with the John Muir Award helps us to enthuse more people about the benefits of getting involved with a citizen science project.”

”

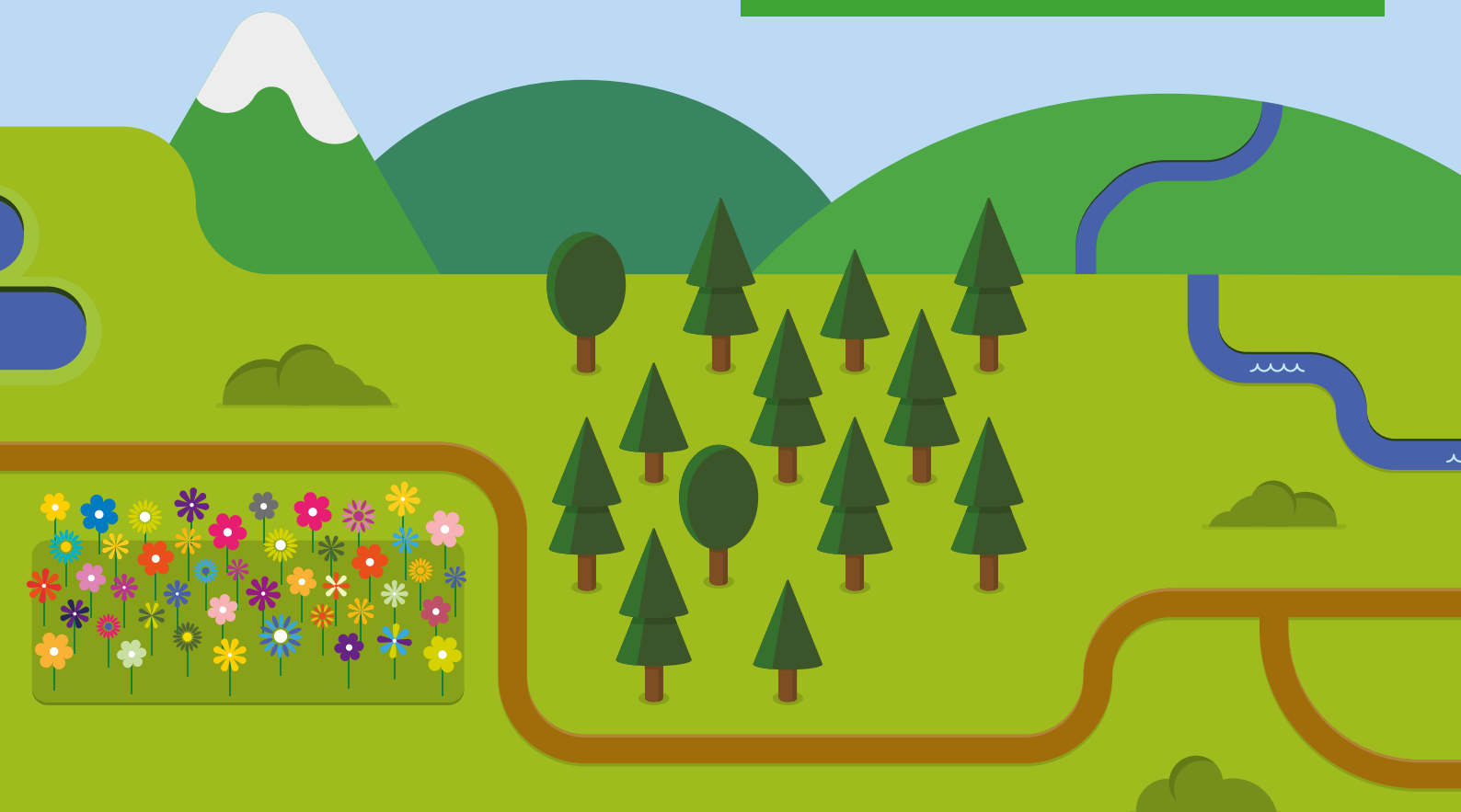
Dr David Slawson, Director,
Open Air Laboratories (OPAL)

“By getting actively involved in putting something back, John Muir Award participants are helped to realise their role in looking after the landscapes and wildlife within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park – contributing to Wild Park, our nature conservation strategy.”

”

Linda Winskill, Land Management
Officer, Loch Lomond & The
Trossachs National Park

The John Muir Trust would like to thank the hundreds of Provider organisations for contributing and enabling us to demonstrate the impact that the John Muir Award can help them to make.



Cardiff University helps celebrate 50,000th John Muir Award in Wales

Cardiff University student Isabel Negri became the 50,000th participant in Wales to achieve their John Muir Award at a celebration event hosted by the University's Wildlife and Conservation society.

Along with other members of the wildlife society, Isabel has been involved in a diverse range of activities including conducting bat surveys, identifying plants, clearing pathways to create wildlife corridors, building hedges to improve nesting habitats, sampling invertebrates, studying soil composition and planting trees. Most of the work was focused on Cardiff, though the group has also explored and photographed the Brecon Beacons. "It's encouraged me to become more aware of my surroundings and spend time out in the open, observing and better connecting with wildlife and nature," said Isabel.

Will Williams, a board member of the John Muir Trust since we introduced the Award in Wales back in 2000, said: "It was a great joy to see a student group use the John Muir Award in such an imaginative and creative way. The group has shown how getting



Trustee Will Williams and John Muir Award England and Wales Manager Phil Stubbington, with the recipient of the 50,000th John Muir Award in Wales, Isabel Negri, and Pro Vice-Chancellor Professor Patricia Price.

involved with nature can widen the horizons of students – especially those studying subjects not directly connected with the natural world. This is an important investment in the next generation of thinkers and decision makers."

Congratulations to the 50,000 individuals and the hundreds of schools, outdoor centres, Welsh-speaking groups, youth and adult services, Rangers and National Park teams – John Muir Award Providers - that have helped to make such a success of Gwobr John Muir. Full news item at <https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/latest>



John Muir Trust Appeals

Huge thanks to everyone who supported our John Muir Award Appeal last year, raising over £35,000 to help us keep running the John Muir Award for free. It was boosted by climber Andy Kirkpatrick donating an evening of his Cold Wars tour.

"Over the years I've tried to support individuals, groups and charities involved in the outdoors. Of these the John Muir Trust has always

stood out in my mind in terms of their ambitious breadth of scope, and focused and effective conservationism. Many such organisations focus on one thing. For me, the John Muir Trust is different, they are playing a longer game, not only safeguarding wild landscapes, but actively supporting adults and children to understand the nature of wild places. Ultimately, that's the way to protect these landscapes for future generations." Andy Kirkpatrick, Climber, Adventurer and Speaker.

Your ongoing donations and fundraising activities help keep the work of the Award free for those who enjoy and benefit from it. Support is welcome for all aspects of the John Muir Trust's work – see <https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/support-us/campaigns> for details.

We're especially grateful for the support from numerous funders and charitable trusts from across the UK, including Heritage Lottery Fund, Scottish Natural Heritage, The Robertson Trust and Gannochy Trust.

2015 Stats

As the John Muir Trust's main engagement initiative, the John Muir Award aims to be a leading UK-wide initiative for getting people involved in activity that promotes the value of wild places. How did we get on in 2015?

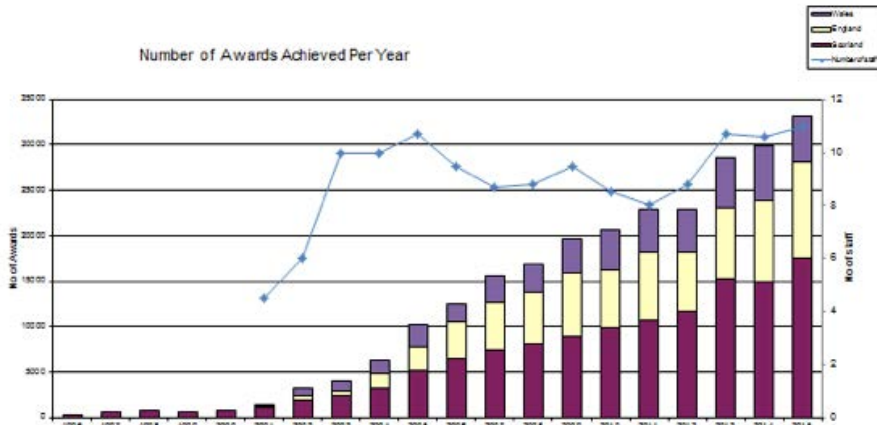
33,488 John Muir Awards were achieved, a **10% UK-wide increase on 2014** - our highest annual total. Activity in Scotland and England rose (by 17%, 20%) whilst dropping by 16% in Wales. We worked with 1214 organisations (Award Providers) during the year, up 5%.

Each year since the John Muir Award was launched, at least **25% of take-up** has been with individual participants from 'inclusion' backgrounds (see page 6). We work closely with a range of Providers to maintain this ratio as overall numbers increase, and continued to exceed this target in 2015 (**28%, 9,516 Awards**).

We maintained a fairly even 52% male to 48% female gender split. And whilst Award engagement is largely youth-focused (43% is with 10-11 year olds; 38% is with 12-16 year olds) there's significant involvement (13%) of adults aged 17 and above.

Of course, it's not all about numbers. It's about experiences. Find a wide range of case studies and stories via the John Muir Award In Action web pages.

Number of Awards Achieved Per Year



#JohnMuirDay

John Muir's (178th!) birthday was widely celebrated this year, and #JohnMuirDay was great for sharing on Twitter. Here's a selection...

Walkhighlands @walkhighlands

With John Muir Day approaching, Peter Pearson, chair of the @JohnMuirTrust, celebrates "John of the Mountains"

John of the Mountains
As we mark John Muir Day, walkhighlands.co.uk

17/04/2016, 18:11

Rob McDougall Photo @RobMcDougall

Happy #JohnMuirDay Here's a film about the man which I produced with @JohnMuirTrust
cdougall.com/johnmuir.html

David Lintern @selfpwr

happy birthday, John of the Mountains, and thanks for pointing out the joy #JohnMuirDay

THE JOHN MUIR DAY Celebrations
16-24 APRIL 2016

21/04/2016, 14:50

Charlotte Wallace @lochcharlie

Barefoot walking in the frosty grass...perfect way to connect with John Muir in this beautiful place #JohnMuirDay

21/04/2016, 09:32

SYHA Hostelling @syhahostelling

Today is #JohnMuirDay! Celebrating the Scottish-born naturalist, mountaineer, writer & conservation pioneer

#JOHN MUIR DAY

Scottish Book Trust @scottishbktrust

Happy #JohnMuirDay! Download our free graphic novel John Muir, Earth, Planet, Universe: bit.ly/JMuirNovel.

John Muir Trust @JohnMuirTrust

How many Muir-related missions can you complete this weekend? Free download at buff.ly/1SCvnZj #JohnMuirDay

Outward Bound Trust @OutwardBoundUK

Was John Muir, the yin to Kurt Hahn's yang? You can find out more about the legend that was here: ow.ly/4mWFB1 #JohnMuirDay

Kurt Hahn, John Muir: yin, yang
To mark John Muir Day, 21st April, we welcome...
outwardbound.org.uk

Developing Character in Schools

Schools across the UK recognise that building 'character' has a key role to play in raising pupils' attainment and aspirations, improving wellbeing and influencing their capacity to reach their full potential.

Many schools and other organisations use the John Muir Award in their approach to developing character. Its flexible framework – Discover a wild place, Explore it, Conserve it, Share your experiences – gives schools freedom to develop activities that reflect specific values and needs, whilst supporting whole school aims such as attainment, wellbeing, behaviour and inclusion. It can also contribute to achieving curriculum outcomes, helping to balance academic and non-academic learning.

"During these times in education, with increased pressure on children to perform academically, involvement in the John Muir Award is a breath of much needed fresh air. Its focus on practical learning and connection with nature, enjoyment and involvement in the outdoors is exactly what pupils should be experiencing. Definitely a highlight in our school year!"

Jonathan Humble, Class Teacher, St Oswald's Primary School, Kendal

"They flourished and rose to every new challenge with enthusiasm and confidence. We witnessed their increased curiosity, appreciation and engagement." **Amy Hukins, Deputy Head Teacher, Shirland Primary School, Derbyshire**

"We've seen that pupils who participate in the John Muir Award become more resilient, confident, responsible, reflective, better at goal setting and at being team players." **Sharon Clark, Depute Head Teacher, Donibristle Primary School, Fife**



To read more, and see examples of the John Muir Award and character development in action, look online at [Key Documents/Publications](#).

Photo: Ardroy Outdoor Education Centre

25% Inclusion – what does this mean?

Every year since 2000 at least 25% of John Muir Awards are achieved by people who are experiencing some form of disadvantage. We talk about this as 'inclusion' activity. But what do we mean, and how do we monitor and record it?

The John Muir Trust uses a broad definition of 'inclusion' to include anyone experiencing some form of disadvantage. This may be related to age, ethnicity, health, unemployment, literacy, economic poverty, disability or other factors. We work closely with Award Providers (organisations that run the John Muir Award) who tell us about their participants and whether they fit the above definition. We have moved away from talking about 'social inclusion' to fully support this broad definition, as some forms of disadvantage aren't due to social circumstance.

When recording inclusion numbers for John Muir Award activity, we take two broad approaches:

• Consider the nature of the organisation – is its primary focus to support people experiencing some form of disadvantage? If so, all participants are included (usually not staff/leaders). These organisations work with addiction recovery support, people experiencing mental health difficulties, alternative access to curriculum, employability programmes, criminal justice, people with learning and physical disabilities, and others. Community Learning and Development teams and charities working specifically with targeted groups in areas of multiple deprivation are also included.

• Record the percentage of pupils within a mainstream school setting who are identified as experiencing deprivation. To do this we use the percentage of pupils receiving 'Free School Meals' (from Government statistics) and apply this to the group/class involved in the John Muir Award. We also use Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and Neighbourhood Statistics data.

We're proud that every year the John Muir Award is used by such a diverse cross-section of society, and not only 'the usual suspects' who engage with the environment and volunteering. A 3 year research project by University of Glasgow and Glasgow Centre for Population Health concluded that "those in the poorest circumstances were much less likely to have visited wild places before their John Muir Award experience, and that perhaps this group was most positively affected by their experience".

We'd like to recognise the fantastic work of all the organisations that provide opportunities for people from all backgrounds to experience wild places through the John Muir Award. It's definitely a collaborative effort, positive partnership working in action.

Attainment and the John Muir Award in Scotland

Scottish Government describes attainment as a broad term, beyond a narrow definition of exam results or test scores: ‘the measurable progress which children and young people make through and beyond school, and the development of the range of skills, knowledge and attributes needed to succeed in learning, life and work’. This can be interpreted as the ‘attainment mix’.

At its best, this requires partnerships between a range of learning and engagement parties including schools, clubs and third sector organisations, as well as participants and parents.

Closing the ‘attainment gap’

An ‘attainment gap’ is frequently referenced, identifying a disparity in attainment levels of learners between different regions and socio-economic groups. Typically, it’s noted that those from lower-income homes fare significantly worse at all levels of the education system than those from better-off homes. The challenge is to address this inequality, raising attainment for all, and closing the attainment gap.

The **John Muir Award** is used across numerous sectors including schools (primary, secondary, special and independent), youth work, further and higher education, outdoor learning, training & employment, and health. In Scotland, the John Muir Award is delivered through more than 600 diverse partner organisations – as well as family groups – throughout these sectors, across all 32 local authority areas.

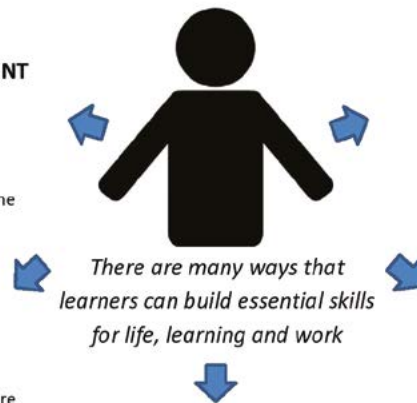
In a 2015 ‘How Good Is Our Third Sector Organisation’ survey of organisations that deliver the John Muir Award in Scotland over 73% agreed that ‘the John Muir Award helps the people we work with improve attainment’. Qualitative survey responses highlight a role in ‘providing opportunities to develop new skills which lead to improvement in self-motivation, self-confidence, self-esteem, sense of purpose’. Also, ‘John Muir Award achievement gives the chance to experience success – for the first time for many – and see that they are making a difference’.

PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT AND EXPERIENCE

- Volunteering
- Taking part in sports club
- Taking part in music club
- Caring responsibility at home

VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

- Hairdressing
- Early education and childcare
- Computer skills
- Sports and recreation



NON-VOCATIONAL COURSES AND EXAMS

- English and maths
- Geography
- History

ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

- Dynamic Youth Awards
- Duke of Edinburgh’s Award
- John Muir Award

ACHIEVEMENT SQA QUALIFICATIONS

- Employability
- Leadership
- Personal development

*Adapted by the John Muir Trust from The Accounts Commission ‘School Education’ report prepared by Audit Scotland (June 2014)

The Attainment mix in Scotland

A 2015 Audit Scotland School education report highlights the value of award schemes, such as the John Muir Award, that encourage and celebrate wider achievement ‘designed to allow pupils to develop skills for life such as self-management, problem solving, teamwork and communication. These are attributes that major employers value’.

Integration of the John Muir Award through formal and informal learning helps provide opportunities to build skills, recognise achievement, and gain real life experiences. These can be referenced in many ways, including pupil profiling, personal statements, job/college applications and interviews, all of which can move people towards positive destinations and employment.



Gairloch High School
Photo: Emma Smith

For more information see <https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/about/resources/624-attainment-and-the-john-muir-award-in-scotland>

Find out more via Key Documents/Publications web pages about how the John Muir Award relates to the National Curriculum in England and Wales and Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland.

John Muir Trust joins #iwill campaign



The #iwill campaign promotes the value of social action to young people. Through participation in the John Muir Award there's a significant contribution towards action for wild places, their communities and themselves. The Trust has pledged to continue to inspire social action from at least 100,000 young people over the next 4 years. <http://www.iwill.org.uk/pledge/the-john-muir-trust>

Your organisation can be part of the campaign too. Subscribe to the #iwill newsletter at www.iwill.org.uk and follow the campaign on Twitter @iwill_campaign

In May there is an invitation to nominate #iwill Ambassadors – a selection of 10-20 year olds across the country with different levels of social action experience.

In June there is “Share your Pledge” day planned, where partners can shout about their #iwill pledge, their progress, and youth social action in general.

“Our ‘Make a Difference’ tasks took on a new dimension when we linked it to the principles of the John Muir Award. Students became far more aware of the scientific, ecological and social implications of the conservation they were involved in and of the positive effect they were having on their local community.” Angela Owen, Class Teacher, Samworth Church Academy, Mansfield

Charter for Trees, Woods and People



People and trees are stronger together – but with unprecedented pressures from development, disease and climate change our nation’s woods and trees risk being neglected, undervalued and forgotten.

The John Muir Trust is joining the call, led by the Woodland Trust, for a Charter for Trees that aims to redefine the relationship between trees, woods and people. Over 50 organisations have joined the movement so far. Become a Charter Champion and ensure that your organisation or community is represented. The final charter will be launched towards the end of 2017 – the 800th anniversary of the Charter of the Forest.

As we all aim to connect people with wild places through the John Muir Award – wooded areas are the most popular locations for Award activity - it's natural to celebrate and value our trees and woodlands. You'll find ideas and resources on the Tree Charter 'Get Involved' web pages.

Share your tree story The Charter will be rooted in stories and memories that show how trees have shaped our society, landscape and lives. Share your story to help create a charter that reflects the true meaning of our trees and woods to the people of the UK. This is a great, collaborative way to share your John Muir Award experiences.

<https://treecharter.uk>



Photos: Rosie Watson and Graham Watson

It's Our World

Congratulations to the It's Our World art and environment initiative for attracting artworks from over 30,000 children and young people last year – including many from John Muir Award participants.



Image credit: The Partners

From Cornwall to the Shetlands, paintings, drawings, sculpture and photographs were uploaded to an online gallery <http://www.itisourworld.org.uk/gallery>, reflecting inspirations drawn from local neighbourhoods and the natural environment. The Gallery was presented as part of COP21 United Nations Climate Change Conference and is now being stored in perpetuity by The British Library as part of the UK Web Archives.



The John Muir Trust was delighted to receive a grant towards its volunteering work with young people at Glenlude from Captain Planet Foundation as one of the It's Or World legacy projects. <https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/latest/news/822-glenlude-helps-captain-planet-foundation-celebrate-25th-anniversary>

Two auctions – one live, one online - both hosted by Christies, raised well over **£128,800** to support the work of The Big Draw and Jupiter Artland Education Foundation. Generous donations of artworks from over 50 leading artists, including David Hockney, Andy Goldsworthy, Maggi Hambling, Antony Gormley, Peter Blake, Tracey Emin and Quentin Blake, reflect the status of this inspiring initiative and what it achieved in less than 2 years.

“ It has been such a great pleasure to work with The John Muir Trust who have been actively involved in It's Our World from the very start and in so many ways. Firstly, by helping to develop the online resources to inspire participants to get outdoors and explore wild places. The Trust was also instrumental in adding many inspiring artworks to the Online Gallery. Schools, children and young people from as far afield as Cumbria, Edinburgh, Skye and Orkney created artworks to share a view of their local wildlife and environment. Subject matter celebrating wildness ranged from sweeping landscapes to bluebells and basking sharks. In light of their support in so many ways, we are especially delighted that there will be a sustainable legacy from our collaboration through the grant awarded by The Captain Planet Foundation to plant native woodland in the Scottish Borders at Glenlude.”

Patzi Shepperson, Director, It's Our World - promoting sustainability through art.

Year of Adventure 2016

Throughout 2016 Visit Wales and the Welsh Government are encouraging people to experience adventure throughout the country.

See how the John Muir Award links to Year of Adventure 2016

<https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/about/resources/842-wales-year-of-adventure-and-the-john-muir-award> and share your experiences on social media using #FindYourEpic and #JohnMuirAward. There's a comprehensive 'Content Guide' download here <http://www.visitwales.com/yoa-guide>.

And every summer, the UK's annual National Parks Week celebrates some of the UKs most stunning, treasured landscapes – showcasing all that's good about our most special countryside and the activities you can take part in there. Share all your Adventures in National Parks using #NPAdventure. National Parks Week 2016 runs from Monday 25 to Sunday 31 July and this year's theme is 'Adventure'. Watch out for more information via our ebulletins nearer the time.

Blwyddyn Antur 2016
Year of Adventure 2016



Cantilever stone, Glyder Fach, Snowdonia National Park. Photo: Nigel Sheppard

Teenage explorer meets 'John Muir' on the John Muir Way

Scotland's newest long-distance walking route provided the perfect setting for an encounter between two wild-spirited adventurers from opposite ends of the age spectrum when 16-year-old Zeki Basan from Speyside met 178-year-old John Muir from California.



Zeki meets 'John Muir' on the John Muir Way

Zeki – whose Yosemite adventure film 'In the Spirit of Muir' and tipi-based home life has created a recent PR buzz – met up with renowned John Muir impersonator Lee Stetson as part of a new film project exploring the John Muir Way.

Lee has been in Scotland during April and May to mark John Muir's influence on the creation of the US National Park system, which is celebrating its centenary year. Zeki was recently awarded the John Muir Trust's Bill Wallace Grant to support his adventure along the 134-mile route.

See <https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/latest/news/871-teenage-explorer-meets-john-muir-on-the-john-muir-way>

Young Scot Environment Award honour for newt expert



A still from Callum's Awards video

Thirteen-year-old Callum Ullman-Smith, from Kyle of Lochalsh, Ross-shire trod the Edinburgh International Conference Centre red carpet in late April – as a Young Scot Awards finalist.

Callum, who achieved his John Muir Conserver Award in 2015, was nominated by the John Muir Trust and shortlisted for Young Scot Environment Award in recognition of his passion, commitment and enthusiasm for biodiversity conservation.

A specially commissioned two-minute film showcases how Callum spends his spare time helping to enhance the coastal environment around his Highland home. It highlights his ground-breaking research of newt populations unusually found in brackish and salty water, and his connections with the Highland Seashore Surveyors Group, and the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust.

See <https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/latest/news/872-highland-newt-expert-shortlisted-for-young-scot-environment-award>

Alpkit Foundation helps people 'Go Nice Places, Do Good Things'

Alpkit has established a charity called the Alpkit Foundation to help young people overcome obstacles that prevent them from getting outdoors. Applications from John Muir Award groups are welcome! A simple form can be found here: www.alpkit.com/foundation#apply.



Help could be in the form of:

- £50 to £500 cash to individuals, schools and organisations to go on trips that otherwise wouldn't be viable; e.g. a cash grant to a school to fund transport costs
- Providing discounted equipment to individuals, schools and organisations at discounts that wouldn't be commercially viable without support
- Supporting education programs e.g. grants for expedition First Aiders or Mountain Leader Training that wouldn't otherwise be possible
- Supporting conservation projects e.g. grants to help rewild woodland

Please mention the John Muir Award in your application. The Foundation is focused on helping young people which includes school age groups as well as under 25s, with the nature of support appropriate to each group.

Alpkit designs and sells technical clothing and equipment for enthusiasts of outdoor activities including climbing, mountaineering, mountain biking and trekking. The John Muir Trust is delighted to be working with Alpkit to support The Alpkit Foundation.

www.alpkit.com

Religious & Moral Education through Outdoor Learning

Joe Walker, Senior Education Officer for Religious & Moral Education with Education Scotland, took part in a year-long mentoring programme during 2015, linking with the John Muir Trust. The aim was to gain a deeper understanding of what Outdoor Learning looks like in practice in his curriculum area, and to share his perspectives with colleagues.

In an interview (edited below, [full version online](#)), Joe shares his thoughts on the role of Outdoor Learning in education, connections with spirituality, and the relevance of John Muir.

Is there a place for the outdoors in the modern school curriculum?

Very much so. Outdoor Learning is embedded in Scottish Education. Education Scotland is committed to supporting practitioners in providing the highest quality learning and teaching experiences, indoors or outdoors. Outdoor Learning covers a range of contexts and experiences for learners - whether that's in the school's own grounds, places nearby, or in more remote wild places.

And in relation to Religious & Moral Education (RME)?

RME is concerned with assisting learners to understand themselves and their place in the world. This also means helping learners consider their relationship with the natural world and their responsibility for it. Key to RME is reflection on the meaning and nature of things, and on the whole concept of interrelatedness. Learners examine values and the complex issues involved in making moral decisions. As a result of this, they will be likely to consider their actions – how do their beliefs and values lead to actions, and what are the consequences of these actions for themselves, others and the natural world. RME is there to support learners in investigating, exploring and understanding, and acting upon their understanding.

“ *The key thing about John Muir is that he was a man of great conviction. He saw nature not as something to be tamed and controlled but as something which could help us get in touch with our deepest thoughts and beliefs.* ”

Do figures like John Muir appear in RME teaching?

The key thing about John Muir is that he was a man of great conviction. He saw nature not as something to be tamed and controlled but as something which could help us get in touch with our deepest thoughts and beliefs. He viewed nature as not something 'out there', but something that we are intrinsically linked to. I think he reminds us of the important connections between life

on earth and how important that is when so often it seems that the focus is on the divisions in our world. For me, one of the key features of RME is its ability to help learners explore our shared humanity. This can be achieved through examining the lives and beliefs of a range of figures, including people such as John Muir.

What changes have you seen in education in recent years?

I think one of the key changes is that education has moved to a much more exploratory process. It is about developing the skills of investigation, analysis, exploration, enquiry and reflection – and what we do with the knowledge, skills and understanding we have. For me, curriculum for excellence [in Scotland] frees up learners and practitioners to focus on skills, attributes and the mechanics of learning – allowing these qualities to be developed in a variety of contexts as best suits learners and practitioners.

Why has the John Muir Award become of interest in your work?

All of the Senior Education Officers at Education Scotland are committed to supporting Outdoor Learning through their own curricular areas. I have seen a number of examples of the John Muir Award in action, and it is good to see young people engaging with the outdoors in a variety of contexts. I still think there's room to expand learning in and through the outdoors across a wider range of contexts though – we have to ensure that outdoor learning is meaningful and appropriate and not artificial: just doing something outdoors which you can equally well do indoors does not, for me, make it outdoor learning.

For an Education Scotland resource exploring how high quality learning and teaching in Religious & Moral Education (RME) can be delivered through Outdoor Learning, see <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/rmethroughoutdoorlearning.asp>

“ *Being outdoors helps learners to consider their own relationship with nature and develop respect for it and their place in it. It can help learners to understand that 'the environment' isn't something 'out there' but is something that we are part of.* ”

SIGN UP TO 30 DAYS WILD



Can you do something wild every day for a month?

Join in with this great initiative from The Wildlife Trusts – and make it part of your John Muir Award. Feel happier, healthier and more connected to nature by doing something wild every day for 30 days this June. No matter where you live – from an urban jungle to a windswept mountain – wildlife and wild places are all around, waiting to be discovered.

Sign up to receive your inspirational pack, containing Random Acts of Wildness cards – bitesize bits of wild inspiration and more.

Include 30 Days Wild in your John Muir Award Proposal – using Random Acts of Wildness to find out more (Explore), make a difference (Conserve), and let others know (Share).

Sign up to #30DaysWild today at www.wildlifetrusts.org/30DaysWild

Above image and cover image courtesy of Katrina Martin.

See Kat's wonderful blog and images from 30 Days Wild 2015 at <http://www.katrinamartinphotography.co.uk/#!/blog/cd1n>

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