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Issue #113

Scottish Countryside Rangers Association Magazine

connecting
people
&
nature



August 2019

A view from the Chair

In this edition of Scramble we explore the theme of connecting people and nature, a function at the core of what you do as countryside rangers and related professionals.

Can there be much debate about the importance of this role ? I do wonder if our public see things a little differently nowadays. For example, to provide the opportunity for a first-hand experience to see Red Squirrels (other cute mammals are available), the unthinking customer reaction now is to reach for the nearest digital device, record it and, with a few more taps of the thumb, turn it into a virtual event. Is that a connection ? It may well be their path to 500 likes from virtual followers, but does it embrace the knowledge, understanding and enthusiasm you convey face to face ? Once you've seen your carefully crafted wildlife experience re-modelled by a snapchat filter what stops you running off, screaming over the horizon ?

As ever, when addressing such challenges, your creativity and inventiveness always triumphs, this edition records some excellent examples where these new social norms are overcome and hopefully provides you with a little more inspiration for your own front line engagement.

The role rangers have in facilitating a connection with nature is also one recognised by our politicians and media commentators. There is little quibble this aspect of our work is regarded as important. The difficulty lies in the value society attaches to this function and the need to address the costs against available fiscal resources. The proverbial rock and a hard place. SCRA continues to engage with politicians and with government agencies, and is seeking ways to secure due priority for your profession at a national level. Many of you have good connections with your local political representatives. They love the good news stories you generate - work with community groups, promotion of the local area, events and activities. It is entirely possible they are not aware of the significant challenges faced by our profession. There is now a need to be bold. Our petition to the Scottish Parliament, the SCRA survey and associated evidence submitted to the Public Petitions Committee, are all a matter of public record.

It won't do any harm, and will probably do some good, if you make your local political representatives aware of this matter and bring the issues to their attention. While your local circumstance may be sensitive, you are only drawing their attention to the national situation. It is then up to them to join the dots for the local picture.

George.

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Become a SCRA Member

Your help will support the work of Scottish Rangers. There are various categories

- Full Membership (£35)
- Supporter (£35)
- Concession (£17.50)
- Team membership (prices vary)
- Affiliated Organisations (£85)
- Ranger Manager (£35)

SCRA provides National/ Regional Training and delivers the Scottish Ranger Award, the Scottish Junior Ranger Award, and the Wildlife Champion Award for Children

As a member you will receive regular updates via email, SCRA web site and its Facebook Scramble online. SCRA Archives through Looking Back-Looking Forward Facebook page. Membership form is available on the SCRA web site.



**International
Ranger
Federation**

The International Ranger Federation (IRF)

Provides a global network with Rangers from around the World

- Sharing knowledge and expertise
- International and regional training programmes
- Providing much needed equipment for rangers in developing countries
- IRF assisting the Thin Green Line Foundation through raising funds to support widows and families of Rangers who have been killed in carrying out their duty in protecting the world's most in endangered species
- In 2018-19 - 150 Rangers were killed in the line of duty making it one of the most dangerous professions in the World
- IRF also has regional sections around the World and Scotland is within IRF Europe

SCRA Merchandise



car stickers - £2.00 each



Mugs £6.00 each + £2.80 postage



key Ring £2.00 each



SCRA & IRF metal lapel badge £3.00 each



DVD - 100 scrambles, £10.00 each

Nature connectedness of conservation volunteers

Maggie McCallum Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park

In spring 2018 I was working on a project about conservation volunteering for a distance learning course at SRUC (Scotland’s Rural College) (https://www.sruc.ac.uk/courses/51/countryside_management_msc). Many volunteers responded to my on-line questionnaire covering environmental attitudes and behaviours. I want to say a big thank you to those who spread the word about my study among your volunteers and to let rangers know some of the results.

There is much current interest in nature connectedness and its implications, and reviewing the academic literature was fascinating.

Study participants and questionnaire

Sources were reviewed to arrive at the questionnaire items. Three scales were used:

Environmental Scale	Sample statement
Environmental attitude	‘maintaining biodiversity is a major environmental challenge’
Pro-environment behaviours	‘I use energy efficiency measures’
Nature connectedness	‘I take notice of wildlife wherever I am’

Background information such as age and frequency of volunteering was requested and volunteers were asked why they participated. The reasons for volunteering used in the questionnaire took account of volunteer motivation theories and previous studies.

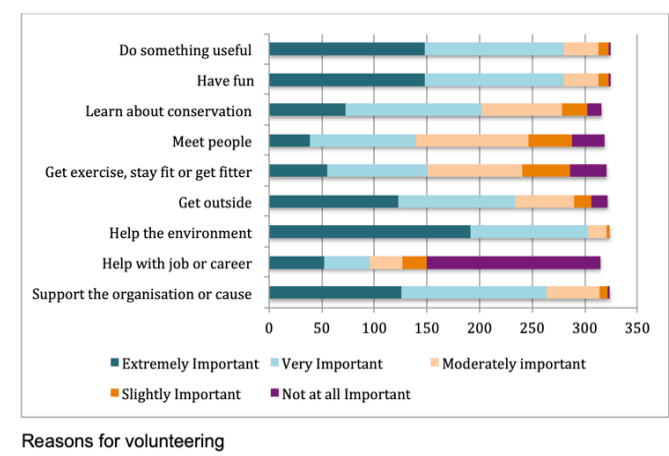
The respondents helped at Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, RSPB, Woodland Trust, country parks, Scottish Wildlife Trust and other

organisations. The self-selected participants did habitat management, species monitoring and public engagement tasks.

Highlights of the findings

- 31% of the 327 respondents volunteered for more than one organisation
- 66% were longer term volunteers of one year or more
- 70% volunteered at least once a month
- The gender split of respondents was similar to that of the Scottish adult population
- Both age and qualifications of respondents differed significantly from the Scottish adult population – the respondents were predominantly in the 45-74 age range and 71% were qualified to degree level or above (cf 30% for Scottish adults).

Why do people volunteer in conservation ?

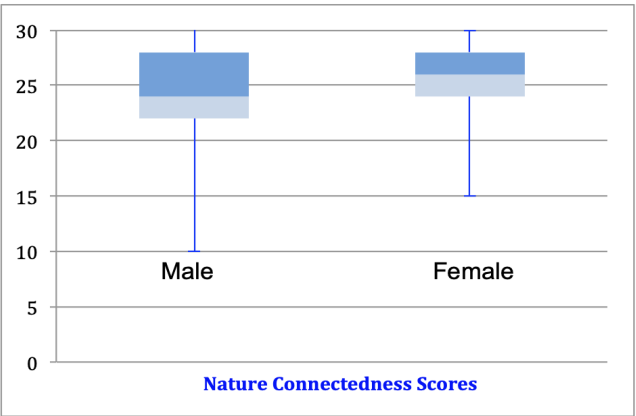


The results shown are broadly similar to those of other studies. One reason for the low importance of ‘help with career’ could be the age profile of respondents. Additional reasons given included ‘spreading awareness of conservation’ and ‘giving something back’, with a smaller number referring to ‘learn new skills’ and ‘health and wellbeing’.

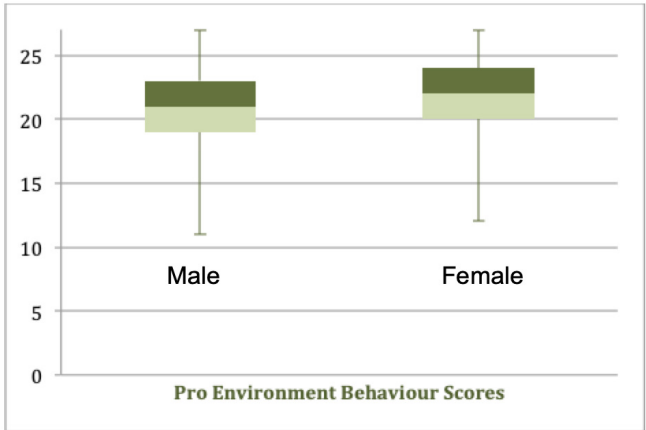
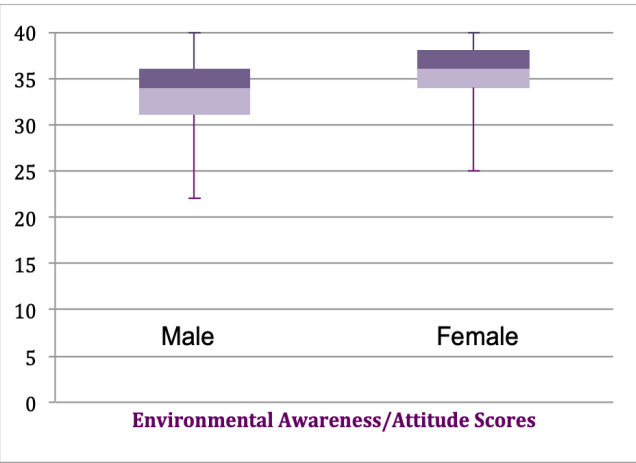
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Environmental attitudes and behaviours, and nature connectedness

The volunteers’ overall scores were bunched at the high end of the scales used. The respondents were highly connected to nature compared to the scale originators’ samples from the general population. The other scales explored issues such as attitudes to biodiversity loss, sense of responsibility for the environment and actions taken towards environmental goals. All three scales showed significant difference between male and female responses, females being consistently higher scoring than males.



Nature connectedness scores of males and females



Pro-environment behaviour scores of males and females

Female scores showed less variation than those of males, indicated by the vertical lines on the three graphs.

Comparing frequency and duration of volunteering with environmental scores was inconclusive overall. The only significant difference was in an unexpected direction: higher scores on attitude and nature connectedness were associated with less frequent volunteers. Comparisons of age and environmental scores showed no significant differences.

Looking at correlations among the scores on the three scales, there was a lot of ‘scatter’ and relationships were weak to moderate, so it is not possible accurately to predict the value of one of the scale scores from the value of another.

Responses showed that volunteers related strongly to nature and were concerned about issues such as biodiversity loss. They were willing to make changes in their own lives, although among low carbon behaviours, personal transport was a challenge.

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Volunteers having their say

Additional comments entered by volunteers described their experiences (generally positive), with a few words of advice for the organisations. Some examples:

- life enhancing experience...
- The tasks need to be well planned, thought out and have a conclusion
- important to encourage young people to take part in volunteering

Conclusion

Respondents were distinctive in age, qualifications and commitment. Additional work such as a study of a group of volunteers over time could further explore the links between conservation volunteering and environmental attitudes and nature connectedness.

Environment was important to the respondents, and may well be what attracted them in the first place, but that was matched by the desire to be useful and by enjoyment of the volunteering. Volunteer organisers therefore require to structure involvement to fulfil those desires in order to retain and build their volunteer support.

Completing the study reinforced some things for me: volunteering is important to how we live our lives and conservation volunteers are a pretty special bunch of people !

Some references:

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4. Nisbet, E. and Zelenski, 2013. The NR-6: a new brief measure of nature relatedness. Frontiers in Psychology, 4, article 813.

Rangering on Canna and the Benefits of Twitter

Gillian Gibson and Michael Butler, NTS Rangers, Isle of Canna

The Isle of Canna is one of the Small Isles and currently has a population of 18. We moved here in January 2018 to take up the NTS ranger role as a job-share. As to be expected the ranger role is varied due to the nature of island life. We spent the first year learning many of these island tasks on the job. Now we have got to grips with everything and explored the island to find its wildlife and what makes it special (everything really!) our focus is on visitor engagement and raising the profile of the ranger service. Just over a year ago we created a Twitter account for the Canna Ranger Service (@cannarangersnts) that would focus on the natural heritage, wildlife and ranger events Canna has to offer. Although our follower count is still relatively small it is a key communication tool for us for a number of reasons.

For visitors, past and potential, it is a way to find out more about our events programme and wildlife on the island but crucially it is a simple and effective tool for communicating with us, whether it is a tweet about what they have seen or a direct message asking for more information. Through Twitter we can showcase the highlights of the varying seasons and can help potential visitors to visualise what they may see during their stay including eagles, puffins and moths. It also means they have, in a way, already met us before setting foot on island, know how to find us and what events are planned during their stay. It is a great way to stay in touch with other NTS staff and properties. Being on a remote island means it is harder to meet colleagues so Twitter provides a way of keeping up to date with what other NTS staff are up to whether it's natural heritage properties such as Mar Lodge, our NTS archaeologist or Collections staff. Outside of NTS it is a fantastic way to see what other ranger services are doing, helping us feel inspired and sharing ideas. It is also great to keep updated on what is happening on other islands whether island life or wildlife, as each island has its unique character and, for most visitors, Canna is not their first island.

It has been a fantastic way for us to connect with birders locally and throughout the Highlands to see what is nearby but crucially what birds have been recorded on Canna historically. Bob Swann is part of the Canna Ringing Group who last year celebrated 50 years of seabird ringing on the island. In the past month we have had Yellowhammer and Tree Sparrow on our bird feeder. Within an hour of putting this on Twitter Bob was able to tell us that the last official record for Yellowhammer was 50 years ago and 30 years ago for Tree Sparrow - fantastic facts that not only excite us but can be confirmed and retweeted on our Twitter instantly!

Twitter has also been a fantastic means of communicating with the small cruise companies that visit Canna. Interacting regularly with them hopefully shows that we are very grateful that they have chosen Canna as one of their destinations but also means it is not just us shouting about how magical Canna is! On their Twitter accounts they help showcase Canna using photos taken by their guests and guides and recording wildlife sightings, especially whales and dolphins. This will go to a wider audience that are hopefully future visitors. This summer we are trying out specific Twitter campaigns to help increase our audience. In May we did a Slow Adventure on Canna A-Z featuring a different activity each day. In June we linked up with 30 Days Wild to help promote our natural heritage as part of a wider national campaign and in July we set ourselves the challenge of reducing our single use plastic which we have documented on our Twitter account, set in the context of marine plastic pollution - one of the key issues we face on islands.

For a remote island social media really does play a huge role in raising awareness of our natural heritage and reaching potential visitors but crucially also provides a key communication tool that helps us feel a little less remote! Please give us a follow at <http://twitter.com/CannaRangersNTS> and say hello.

Connecting People and Nature

Kirstin McEwan Scottish Natural Heritage

Connecting people and nature is a key step to improve Scotland's state of nature, enhance biodiversity and address the current climate emergency and so has formed the basis of the current Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) corporate plan. Our "Connecting People and Nature" plan for 2018-22 sets out our vision for Scotland's nature and landscapes and is built around four interdependent outcomes, these are: to ensure more people across Scotland are enjoying and benefiting from nature, that the health and resilience of Scotland's nature is improved, there is more investment in Scotland's natural capital and its management to improve prosperity and wellbeing, and that we, as an organisation, transform how we work to achieve these targets.



Inspecting lichens on a glacial erratic on the An Caber ridge at Ben Wyvis National Nature Reserve. ©Lorne Gill/SNH

While there are many ways our work connects people and nature, we wanted to highlight several key projects which showcase the hands-on efforts of our teams and the differences they make.

Green infrastructure is greenspace and water that uses the natural environment to provide environmental and quality of life benefits and our green infrastructure projects make it easier to enjoy and connect with nature in our towns and cities.

In sites with high levels of deprivation we see the results of these projects on a daily basis. Work around Maryhill and Hamiltonhill in north Glasgow are good examples where a transformation of the former industrial area bordering the canal is delivering big benefits. Amongst the noticeable improvements are a barrier-free path and boardwalk network, mountain bike trail, disabled access fishing pegs, re-designed gateway entrances, viewpoints, and canal pedestrian bridges linking various communities, this all puts a focus on making it easier to connect people with nature.

Grey infrastructure has given way to green at Middlefield in Aberdeen where an area developed for housing in the 1930s has undergone an ambitious regeneration project, delivering a green transformation which includes wildflower meadows, cycle and foot paths and areas for outdoor learning.



School pupils at Linnvale Primary School during a lesson in their local greenspace ©Carol Guthrie

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A common strand of all our green infrastructure work is demonstrating what nature can do for people, from simply coaxing them to spend more time outdoors to delivering wider benefits such as helping to deal with potentially catastrophic flooding issues as we tackle climate change. A strong green focus makes a huge difference to residents and communities in terms of health benefits, economic opportunities and, of course, connecting people with nature.

The Learning in Local Greenspace project is a great example of how we are aiming to connect the next generation with nature and therefore value it. The project target is to work with 100 schools serving some of the most disadvantaged areas of Scotland to have access to quality greenspace for outdoor learning by the end of 2020 with the help of partners. Outdoor learning is important for physical and mental health, can help raise attainment and, through using their greenspaces, schools can improve biodiversity and access of these spaces.

We assess the perceived barriers to outdoor learning at each school, enable the school to develop a bespoke action plan to overcome these and support the school to deliver this. The emphasis is very much on trying to increase the frequency of outdoor learning in a local greenspace and embed this in the school so they can continue to develop their outdoor learning into the future. Working towards a strong project legacy, there are also online resources freely available for any school to use including Beyond Your Boundary – easy steps to learning in local greenspace. A series of case studies and films will also encourage others to use local greenspace as an extension of their school.



An example of Green Infrastructure along the Forth and Clyde canal, Glasgow ©Lorne Gill/SNH

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As well as school age children, engaging young people also remains a priority within SNH. Since 2015, we have partnered with Young Scot to create and support a strategic co-design panel of young people aged 13-24 from across Scotland to explore ways of increasing young people's engagement with Scotland's biodiversity. Our collaborations through ReRoute – Scotland's Youth Biodiversity Panel, ensure young people's opinions and relationships with nature are incorporated, where possible, into our wider work. In particular we are putting young people at the heart of key decisions around preventing biodiversity loss in Scotland and, by ensuring youth voices are heard, we hope to engage young people on a wide range of topics related to Scotland's natural environment. The project encourages and empowers young people to engage with and take care of nature and provides key policy recommendations so we can ensure more young people are connected to, appreciate and benefit from their natural environment. By involving young people in the decisions we all take about our environment we can inspire interest and participation in the future of Scotland's nature.

Volunteering also plays a vital role in connecting people not only to nature but to potential future careers in the environmental sector.



Our co-design panel of young people, ReRoute, during an outdoor meeting ©Young Scot/SNH

We currently have over 200 people volunteering with us on a long-term basis, carrying out a wide range of tasks covering everything from habitat surveying to event assistance. By facilitating hands-on learning and experiences outdoors, volunteers learn new skills and gain knowledge on all aspects of our work ensuring there is something to spark everyone's interest. As well as facilitating our own opportunities, promoting partner projects helps us maximise the chances for people to get involved and guarantees there are options for everyone with informal and occasional citizen science days to long-term residential roles. Those who volunteer with us, even for just a few hours, get a glimpse of the ways they can make a difference and appreciate the hard work and dedication of those working in nature roles. By supporting and promoting the benefits of volunteering to nature and to individuals who gain skills, meet new people and gain the health benefits of green exercise, we hope that outdoor and nature-based volunteering helps people connect to nature and make it part of their lives.

Through these great projects and activities, and the many more we are involved in, we help people care about nature and the quality of the local environments where they live, work and play.



Conservation volunteers during a Bioblitz day near Stirling ©Lorne Gill/SNH

Cairngorms Nature BIG Weekend 2019

Lucy Ford Conservation Engagement Officer, Cairngorms National Park Authority.

Over the weekend of 10th – 13th May the 6th annual Cairngorms Nature BIG Weekend event took place across the Cairngorms National Park. Supported by 10 ranger services, 6 private estates, 17 private businesses and 18 organisations and projects a programme of over 100 events were on offer.

Ranger services are a key partner in making the BIG Weekend a success and this year they put on a great variety of events to encourage people to get out and enjoy nature.

The Balmoral Rangers, Glyn and Fiona, held a behind the scenes estate tour, highlighting the work that goes on behind the scenes of the Queen's highland estate to manage for biodiversity as well as people. Highlife Highland Ranger, Saranne Bish got up early and took visitors to experience the wonder of a black grouse lek. Capercaillie fun was to be had in Carrbridge by Emma the Community Ranger highlighting the wonder and growing the love of these magnificent birds.

In Braemar the National Trust for Scotland Rangers worked with the local community to build a community bird hide, for locals and visitors to enjoy for years to come. The local primary school is now looking after the bird feeding station at the hide, creating a great connection for the children to the wildlife in their local community.

Getting schools involved in the BIG Weekend is a key objective to the event, encouraging those new faces to come and experience and connect with nature. Every year the ranger services across the park help in the delivery of

the Cairngorms Nature Art Competition. School children from every school in the Cairngorms National Park are invited to produce a piece of art work, this year highlighting something that they love about the lochs and rivers of the Cairngorms. We had over 200 entries and the standard of creation was fantastic.

Balmoral rangers held a ranger for the day event with local schools in their area to give a taste of what being a ranger really means and the work it entails. The children had a fantastic day with hands on activities and experiences.

In Glenmore we organised a Rural Skills Day on the Monday with over 220 children attending. We had around 15 activity providers giving the children experiences in forestry, game keeping and land management, bridge building, wildlife identification, recreation, health and wellbeing. This event was supported by ranger services and a range of private estates, local businesses and education establishments.

Eight volunteering events took place from community nature spaces litter picks, to hide building and wildlife recording opportunities. The Cairngorm volunteer rangers helped deliver some of these activities alongside the ranger services.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the ranger services for helping make the BIG Weekend such a great success and look forward to continuing working with them to help engage people with wildlife, encouraging them to get involved.

Interpretation - Still Going Strong?

Nic Bullivant

Huh – so what?

We all know that getting involvement from the great British public is key to addressing many issues that confront us but we still come across people who are somewhere on the “unconnected” spectrum.

From our earliest days as rangers we should have it drummed into us that connecting our places with people – the users, the potential users and the funders – is essential to the well-being of those places. This applies to country parks, coastal trails, nature reserves and bigger designations too.

We can try to communicate by signs: No this; No that; No the other...; and try to enforce them. But how about something more positive? Some interpretation perhaps? Well, yes. **Well-delivered interpretation is a great tool for rangers.**

The US National Park Service agrees and so did our own late, great, Don Aldridge, for example. Don published important texts on the Principles of Interpretation and summarised them in “a popular account of earlier (unpopular) works” published by the Council of Europe entitled The Monster Book of Environmental Education. He illustrates his point with a nature trail at Tonto, Yellowstone. The narrative is a litany of information. You might well say “So what?” This approach misses the significance of the place, because Tonto used to be important to the Salado, Native Americans remarkable for the way they adapted to the desert environment.

Interpreting the plants at Tonto in a way that brings out the human significance helps to connect the visitor to the people that used them and to the plants themselves - plants that produce building timber, pins for needlework, awls for shoemaking, a coffee drink and a jelly or preserve.

What’s the point?

Site interpretation is usually there to manage visitors more effectively, though educating them. The idea is that they then use their understanding and attitudes to make well-informed choices about what they do. It could be about where they have their barbecue, whether they let the dog run around or swim in the river. It can be the ‘multiplier’ rangers need to spread the message they are trying to put over without them being there in person all the time. **Interpretation doesn’t just happen. It needs to be planned to make sure it is relevant to the place, the visitors and appropriate for the organisation providing it.** To paraphrase Don further: select a theme and the best places to tell it; relate it to the visitors’ experience; then select the appropriate medium to communicate it. Interpretation grabs people’s attention, gives them something they didn’t know already and leaves them with a different – hopefully more agreeable – attitude to what is being interpreted.

Site interpretation can be about particular issues relating to the site: “We are cutting back rhododendron, even though you like it, because...”, but there are limits to what it can achieve. Some audiences and the challenges they bring are more prone to being solved by interpretation than others.

What Rangers do

Rangers take people outside and help them understand past environments or peoples, such as the Ice Age or the time when the place was a coal mine or an exclusive playground for the rich. Of course this means that the ranger has to know the place inside out and we’re famous for that. **Rangers can make great interpreters.**

There is usually an audience available (no people, no rangers). Formal events are great but hard work to organise. Events programmes can have pitifully low attendance but some services have established well-supported events that locals look forward to every year (Spring Surprises, at Balmacara, for instance).

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Knockan Crag, National Nature Reserve - a great example of properly planned interpretation by SNH. A sculpture of the rocks of the crag draws you onto the path leading to a carefully sited, well-designed building telling the story of the significance of this site to our understanding of geology , and then to the Moine Thrust itself. All images: copyright Lorne Gill/SNH

Interpretation by rangers doesn’t have to wait for an event. It could happen any time. If you are talking to a neighbouring farmer, casually drop in that rhododendron are poisonous to honey bees, and to his sheep. See what reaction you get! Or talking to the local youngsters that ditch was the furthest north the Romans came before they got tired of the hassle and dug in.

Rangers’ interpretation is usually in the sub-genre Site Interpretation. Interpretation can also happen in Museums and Botanical Gardens though the objectives are different.

Historical trends

During my ranger career I thought interpretation was “a good idea” and something we did as a matter of faith, and it became a habit and a badge of office. After 40 years, I am convinced it is more than all these. **Interpretation is the main way most rangers carry out their environmental protection, environmental education, and communications strategies.** In this time, interpretation has moved from being a “public good” accessible to all to an “optional extra” to be sought out and, importantly, paid for. This has been partly justified by the proposal that, if something is free, it is not seen as having a value (to the public or to the provider). The practicalities of charging for guided walks, however, have sometimes not been cost-effective when the remote ranger had to make a long round-trip to the nearest bank to deposit the cash collected.

It’s not a new phenomenon to see interpretation cheek-by-jowl with a commercial facility such as a gift shop, and for one to increase in size at the expense of the other. In some places you may not now even be aware that there used to be interpretation. **The tools of interpretation and people’s expectations and preferences change through time. A major trend has been in technology.**

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Interpretive sign, Farr Glebe, Bettyhill, Sutherland Credit: Ruth Grant

Can we play with media yet?

There is always the temptation to play with media but there are several stages to go before selecting the medium. How often has someone said “We have a trail – better write a leaflet”? Er – hello? Is it a leaflet, or panels, signal-arms, in-ear sound track or a live interpreter you need ?

The media has run away with us. I used to hear “Oh – everyone has a smart phone, we should have a trail using them” - except for the ones who haven’t, or who arrive when it’s not working, or who just want to get away from techie stuff for a bit. There’s nothing so time-fragile as expensive interpretive installations. Rangers are much more adaptable, easily updated and they can answer questions. What other interpretive medium answers most of the visitor’s questions straight away ?



New technology, The Settlement House, Reykavik Credit: Ruth Grant

There are many other on- and off-site media. So many that it is tempting to design them into facilities before appreciating properly how they are going to work. Architects have spotted the opportunities as a way of making a facility more grandiose and more lucrative and have convinced many developers that they need “an exhibition” or “a museum” before the developers realised they needed one, or what they would do with it.

Where are we doing this?

Visitor facilities are often somewhere between on-site and off-site. At Glenmore you can go into a room to find out about the forest. Then you can go out into the forest with the ranger. The advantage of the room is that it is a concentrated experience and can take you when no ranger is available. At least it’s at Glenmore. There is a section in the National Museum of Scotland about Cairngorm. It’s very well done but it’s in Edinburgh; very much off-site. Perhaps finding out about Cairngorm in Edinburgh saves you the trouble, expense and fossil fuel use of going there. Perhaps you would never have gone at all and it has raised your understanding of Scotland which is what NMS is about. All these facilities can be accused of dipping into “edu-tainment”, or “learning for fun”, irrespective of need.

The elephants in the room rarely get a mention (global climate change, plastic pollution, over-population and over-use of resources) because if behavioural change for conservation is what interpretation is (can be) about, these subjects probably have even more significance than important and popular topics such as alien species invasion, archaeological conservation, cultural heritage and so on. There is a danger of banging on about these real worries at every opportunity and turning people off. Nevertheless these issues have become much more visible in the last few decades.

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What to do next ?

It’s always inspiring or at least illuminating to see examples of interpretation at work in Scotland or further afield. Many employers have an ASVA card which is intended to promote exchange visits and sharing ideas between visitor attractions. Take the family or friends to an interpretive facility to see what they do.

In the contexts where rangers work there is nothing to beat friendly co-operation and visiting between neighbouring ranger services. It’s always good to find out what public events the ranger service is doing and to join in as a participant. There is a lot to be learnt from viewing other services’ interpretation in visitor centres and leaflets.

There is an enormous bibliography of environmental interpretation from an American perspective by the Journal of Interpretation Research in volume 8 no. 2 (2003) online at <https://www.interpnet.com/nai/docs/JIR-v8n2.pdf>. To this must be added at least three by Don Aldridge: Principles of countryside interpretation and interpretive planning (HMSO, 1975) (also e-book ISBN : 0118801562); Guide to countryside interpretation (HMSO, 1975), Monster Book of Environmental Education ISBN 0 86094 84 5).

Interpretation can come into everything rangers do. In writing ‘Cairngorm Ranger’ I tried to make every chapter interpretive so that not only the ranger but Cairngorm itself would engage and could be understood better by anyone reading it.

I am very indebted to the encouragement provided to rangers by the Countryside Commission for Scotland and the interpretation training they offered. While interpretation is still out there and still crucial it is not so easy to find out about it. Perhaps we need some more training courses?

Nic Bullivant worked as Senior Ranger in Fife at Lochore Meadows Country Park in 1977 – 1989, at Kelburn Countryside Centre, Ayrshire and at Cairngorm from 1997 – 2017. With his wife, Judith, he ran Highland Interpretation Ltd and Highland Countryside Services and he was also Project Officer for the Inverness Countryside Around Towns project in 1993 – 1997. His book Cairngorm Ranger is available directly from him, price £20 plus p&p.

Family Fresh Air Club

Laura Jane Blackie Dundee City Council Countryside Ranger Service

Fifty years ago I was a scruffy little urchin, living in one of Dundee's most deprived areas, and regularly getting the sharp edge of my mother's tongue for coming home at the end of the day either muddy, soaked, missing various items of clothing/sandshoes or carrying a dead frog in my pocket. Sometimes all of the above.

What changed ? I don't honestly know but it has. Now many urban kids and even their young parents have absolutely no connection with the wild places we took for granted.

There exists a kind of generation gap where today's young adults have themselves missed out on the intuitive benefits of 'playing' outdoors. As a result, perhaps now young parents, they often completely lack the skills and confidence to take their children beyond restricted urban or indoor play and learning activities. This can be turned around with the right support however. Early years learning about nature and physical activity outdoors can make a life-long change for the children taking part but it's not always as easy as it sounds. Passively suggesting people should spend more time outdoors in nature isn't enough when you're living with a combination of poverty, health inequalities, and social or cultural isolation.

Family Fresh Air Club (FFAC) takes a simple and yet innovative approach to tackling a wide range of current and future barriers to equality and inclusion amongst some of Dundee's most deprived communities (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2016 Most Deprived 20%). By working in a unique partnership with Community (Adult) Learning & Development workers the FFAC team crosses barriers by combining 'green



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health' activities with a programme of professional support for ongoing adult and family learning. This unique and highly successful project was designed and developed within Dundee City Council (DCC) and is now recognised nationally as model for employing cross-service teamwork to tackle deep-rooted problems in deprived urban communities.

DCC's Countryside Ranger Service has long served the people of Dundee, connecting our citizens with greenspaces and nature as well as helping to promote access and responsible use of the outdoors. Countryside rangers are outdoor professionals with the knowledge, skills and social sensitivity to make possible lasting connections between people and the local natural world around them. However it has not always been possible for us to specifically target younger urban families experiencing social, economic, health, language or cultural barriers, as well as - and this is important - a lack of confidence in taking their families out into the 'wilder' outdoors without additional support. These people are missing out on the well established health, learning and social benefits gained by green exercise

Community Learning and Development workers know their communities very well. They have a channel already open to exactly these families but lack the knowledge and training, and often the confidence to lead groups in outdoor learning.

By teaming up these two seemingly diverse services FFAC has created a completely new concept in supported outdoor learning. Young parents learn that it is possible to confidently take their children to all the places they may have otherwise avoided. They learn there are many excellent nature sites around Dundee, most if not

all of which are free and easily accessed by public transport. They learn that season and 'poor' weather need not mean staying indoors. It's important to not underestimate the social pressures on young parents. "Will people call me a bad parent for taking my child to the beach in January? What if someone sees my child with mud on her clothes and twigs in her hair ?

Each FFAC programme is a series of five weekly supported visits to a variety of local greenspaces. Visits lasts for approximately 2.5 hours and include a nature walk, healthy snack and ranger-led nature activity, e.g making wild bird feeders, planting native tree saplings etc. The 'healthy eating' message is gently promoted and the inclusion of a short guided walk promotes simple physical exercise.

Participants are collected by minibus from a central point in their community. They are encouraged to leave buggies and prams behind. Appropriate child booster seats are available for use in the minibus, along with protective all weather outerwear and footwear. There is no cost to the participants and no-one should feel excluded because they can't afford to purchase the necessary items.

Feedback from participants is continually evaluated to see what works best, what has the most impact, and which activities are likely to have the longest-lasting effects, for example, the simple act of planting a tree sapling with their child.

continued.....

Benefits gained by participation in the programme were described by parents as increased confidence, improved exercise and fresh air, access to learning opportunities for them as adults, increased appreciation and knowledge of nature, greater feelings of community, increased opportunity for social, physical and language development of the child, and improved mental and physical health of the caregiver. Families told us they often return to the sites at a later date with other family members.

Participants were grateful and proud to have completed the programme, as demonstrated by the willingness of one parent to come along with Komal Pawar (Community Learning and Development worker) and myself when we were invited to showcase FFAC at SNH's Parliamentary Event 'Urban Nature – Get Connected' at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh in 2017. We were finalists for a DCC Outstanding Service and Commitment Award and won a national Bronze COSLA award in the Tackling Inequalities and Improving Health category in 2018.

Since 2014 FFAC has reached young families living in thirteen of the most deprived areas of Dundee. We continue to roll out the programme across Dundee with ongoing support from Scottish National Heritage in the form of financial assistance as part of the wider Dundee Green Health Partnership.

So what's next? With the continued support of SNH we aim to deliver FFAC in all areas of Dundee and it is my hope that others will do the same across the whole country. We're also excited to be designing a similar project specifically for refugee families in partnership with DCC's English for Speakers of Other Languages team.

The multiple and long-lasting benefits gained by regularly spending time in natural outdoor spaces should be available to all. Family Fresh Air Club helps achieve this aim. I look forward to seeing the return of the 'scruffy urchin' and happy, healthy families from all backgrounds out discovering and enjoying the green and wild places around our city. Although ideally with fewer dead frogs in their pockets.



snippets

50 years of

Rangers

1969 and the first ranger in Scotland was appointed - Andrew Christie was taken on by the then Renfrewshire County Council, followed quickly by Archie Matheson in East Lothian and Tony Anthony in West Lothian. Will we still have our national network of rangers in another 50 years ? SCRA is doing its best to ensure that the answer is yes, and individual rangers, former rangers, and all those who value what ranger services offer have a huge role to play in fighting for its future.

Country Parks

It's also the fiftieth anniversary of the first Country Park to be designated in Scotland - NTS's Culzean Country Park. Over the following 20 years the other 40 or so Country Parks were set up by local authorities or the National Trust for Scotland. They were approved by the Countryside Commission for Scotland with the award of a plaque. Most of the Country Parks are in the Central Belt with another cluster in Grampian. Ranger Services have always been a vital public service in these much loved and well visited places. Did you know that Strathclyde Country Park alone has over around 5m visitors a year ?

Theme for SCRAmble autumn 2019:

International (to coincide with the 9th IRF World Congress to be held in Nepal in November)

- Have you spent time with rangers in other countries or had rangers from other countries visiting your service ?
- Been on an Erasmus+ Archnetwork event or other training in another country ?
- Or visited interesting sites or projects while on holiday abroad ?

We'd love to have offers of articles for this edition – 500-1000 words with illustrations if possible.

Deadline: end November

Contact@ ruthgrant.cally@btinternet.com who can provide SCRA's Guidance for authors.

..... and 70 years of....

National Parks

The UK's first National Park, the Peak District National Park, was designated in 1949. In the brave new world after the Second World War people were enjoying getting out of towns and cities into wilder areas and were putting new pressures onto the countryside. Scotland had to wait another 53 years for its first National Park.

Young Rangers making their mark

Congratulations to Luke Taylor (West Lothian) and Toni Lamont (North Ayrshire) who were both winners in the 2019 LANTRA Learner of the Year Awards. <https://www.scotland.lantra.co.uk/news/winners-celebrated-lantra-scotlands-2019-learner-year-awards>

As a result they are both now members of the LANTRA Industry Champions Initiative. <https://www.scotland.lantra.co.uk/news/launch-our-industry-champions-initiative>



Building Bridges at Balmoral

Pammy Johal Backbone CIC

Backbone CIC (www.backbone.uk.net) is an environmental organisation working directly with those who do not have access to nature-based opportunities and all that it has to offer.

The magic of our approach is the time taken to build relationships with our partners and community groups. This relationship is not target/statistics-driven, but based on genuine intention, mutual respect, trust and valuing differences. It may seem that you cannot get much more different than the communities we serve and Balmoral Estate in the heart of the Cairngorms National Park with all its grandeur. Yet, from our experience working with rangers, groups have found they have quite a lot in common. Re-connecting people with homelands through nature – where better to do this than Balmoral Estate with the rangers whose knowledge and passion has our groups shouting for more!

Backbone CIC has introduced many marginalised groups to Balmoral on day trips and overnight experiences in all weather. Groups are of all backgrounds, ages and abilities – to mention a few:

- Hindu Mandir Elders group
- Dundee International Women's Centre elders group
- Yusaf Youth Initiative – New to Scotland group
- Boots n Beards – Pakistani Muslim family group
- Nepalese Himalayan poetry and family group
- Al Amal Project: Syrian Refugee Group
- Resettlement Project Aberdeen City: Syrian Refugee Group



continued.....

Glyn Jones and his team of rangers have provided a safe and engaging experiences for everyone. The team were flexible in their approach ensuring that everyone was included and cultural needs respected and valued. Groups walked away with smiles on their faces and with a strong desire to come back... and they continue to do so.

Backbone CIC has introduced groups to sites and staff so that groups have the confidence and knowledge of how to continue accessing these magical places in nature. Through ranger-led activities groups have a greater understanding of nature and the role communities play in conservation and protection. A few years after their first visit we know that groups continue to contact rangers for new experiences like bushcraft, walks, environmental games and lots of fun!

What have groups got out of their time at Balmoral? It's more than learning about nature. It's about being with others and not spending it on their own. It's about a sense of belonging and learning about their new home called Scotland. It's about time out from being a mother, wife and just being themselves. It's about building confidence. It's about practicing this new language called English. Most of all it's about being themselves, without compromising what is fundamental to each person – their culture and faith.

A huge thanks to Balmoral Estate Ranger Service for using nature to bridge the gap and bring people together. One of the most memorable experiences was when the elders of the Hindu Mandir group met the children at the local school to share stories of their faith. Brilliant! Thank you!



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Ranger in the Dark

Elizabeth Tindal Freelance Ranger and Biosphere Dark Sky Ranger

Freelance Ranger

Freelance Ranger is my business name and also what I am. For 22 years I worked as a ranger with Dumfries and Galloway Council when they offered me redundancy plus early retirement. I decided that it was a great opportunity to do something different. Well, different, but still wanted to be a ranger. Difficult to do and still live in Dumfries and Galloway. What about freelance ? With a bit of research online I found that there were no freelance rangers or at least none that called themselves that ! I could get a website, Twitter handle and a Facebook tag all for Freelance Ranger.

I snapped up the www.FreelanceRanger.com domain name and made accounts on social media all for @FreelanceRanger - then came another great piece of luck, the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere were advertising for Biosphere Dark Sky Rangers. I lived and worked in the Biosphere and really wanted the Biosphere Ranger part of that title. What about the Dark Sky part ? Well I am a night owl and staying up was less of a problem than getting up early so it seemed that being up when it was dark should be OK and I liked stars. The Biosphere and Galloway Forest Dark Sky Park were looking for people who could communicate - they would teach them the information they needed to talk about stars and all things space, this was totally the role for me, especially as it was a title not a job being freelance too. Application – interview – I’m a Biosphere Dark Sky Ranger. Yes - I even added stars to my Ranger logo.

Biosphere Dark Sky Ranger

The addition to Freelance Ranger of this role made a huge difference. It catches people’s imagination. It creates a ranger role for the winter. It allows me to say that I am not just a ranger with the capability



Using the 'Quorum' artwork as a Darkness destination
Photo – Elizabeth Tindal .

to work 24/7 but 24/7/365 and the actual stars are a brilliant bonus on top of this.

The stargazing in the Galloway Forest Dark Sky Park is world class. The Park is a very dark place, away from the light pollution of towns and cities and in the remote heart of our Biosphere. We have been given the highest tier of gold as a Dark Sky Park. It is estimated that you can see between five and seven thousand stars above us here.

People have always been fascinated by stars and



Freelance Ranger Logo with Stars

continued.....

this is a great place to see them. People love patterns and stories and stars give us both of these. The stars belong to all of us. Most star names come from Arabic, the constellation names are in Latin and the myths told here in Scotland are usually Greek. I can find other myths from Norse traditions, Inuit, Japan and China however Scottish stories are not easily found. If anyone knows any please let me know.

Apart from myths there are other stories to be told - science stories. How far a star is from Earth, how big it is, how bright, how old, what colour, does it have planets ?

To give an example one of the brightest stars that we can see on any clear night year round is called Vega (Arabic), meaning the 'Falling Eagle'. In the summer it is high overhead and part of the summer triangle of stars. It is the main star in the constellation 'Lyra' (Latin), the harp, which was played by Orpheus (Greek) when he rescued his wife from the underworld. It is twenty five light years away from Earth and egg shaped. Vega is two and a half times the size and forty times more luminous than our sun. Its blue white colour means it is a young, hot star only around 600 million years old compared with the sun's middle aged 3.5 billion years. It is thought to have rocky planets similar to Earth. Another interesting fact around 12000 years from now Vega will be our north star !

Then there are galaxies, black holes, planets, aliens and the rest of the universe. So no lack of things to talk about when out stargazing. I was out with a journalist and his son who is around 10 and we had the most interesting conversation about theology, the possibilities of alien life and what was beyond the end of the Universe. Seeing all those stars and planets makes one think how precious our little blue planet is. Compared to all those other opportunities how lucky we all are that we have just the right conditions here on Earth for our level of life to exist and how tenuous that existence is.



Starting your own fire, Darkness Tourism Experiences are about more than stars. Photo – Elizabeth Tindal

Darkness Tourism

As I am not just a Dark Sky Ranger there are a lot of things that I bring to being out in the dark and stargazing. The Biosphere and Galloway Forest Park were right about wanting communicators. Knowing all the facts is one thing but being able to talk to people at the level they need to make connections is another. I also bring in contingency elements for if it is cloudy we can't see any stars. My philosophy is to be outside anyway as there are gaps in clouds and I have had the best stargazing when the forecast was torrential rain. Luckily I know how to make fires and shelters. There are also some great places here with art works and monuments that we can visit in the dark. By doing this I have discovered that what many people want is that darkness experience where the stars are a bonus rather than the purpose of their visit. Here in Dumfries and Galloway I am now leading the way having created something new 'Darkness Tourism'.

Coming full cycle Darkness Tourism gives me an opportunity to bring dark sky experiences into my summer activities. Midnight picnic anyone ?

Outdoor & Woodland Learning Scotland (OWL Scotland)

Bonnie Maggio [Outdoor and Woodland Learning Manager, Scottish Forestry](#)

[Find us in a wood near you !](#)

OWL Scotland is a national organisation dedicated to increasing the use of Scotland's outdoor environments for learning. OWL Scotland evolved out of the Forest Education Initiative which ran successfully for over 20 years in Scotland, England and Wales.

[The aims of OWL Scotland are:](#)

- First-hand learning experience
- To increase the use of the outdoors for learning – discovering, exploring and connecting to the natural world.
- Learning for sustainability
- To increase opportunities to learn outdoors about the natural world and how it links to social and economic factors locally, nationally and globally.
- Knowledge, skills and understanding of outdoor environments
- To increase opportunities for adults to develop pedagogical skills for use in a range of outdoor environments to encourage depth, breadth and progression in learning.
- Health and wellbeing
- To increase understanding of the positive impacts of learning outdoors on health and wellbeing.

[Join your local OWL group !](#)

OWL Scotland is supported by Scottish Forestry and operates through local OWL groups. These groups are locally managed and run by volunteers. The groups comprise teachers, rangers, educators, third sector and government organisations. Local OWL groups work together to run projects, events, network, and to share resources and good practice in outdoor learning. Your local OWL group can offer you free training opportunities, chances to network with like-minded practitioners, kit that can be borrowed and more. To find an OWL group near you search Groups on the website www.owlscotland.org Groups are supported nationally by the provision of grants, training, advice and networking opportunities. Check out the calendar online to find events near you.

[Local OWL Groups are funded to run a wide variety of CPD training.](#)

Topics have included; natural cordage, creative writing, wildlife gardening, nature nurture, exploring maps and place names, owl pellet investigation and Gaelic in the woods – to name but a few. Some groups hold kit such as pond dipping kits, or Forest School kits which can be borrowed by members. Find out what your local group can offer you.

[Get Free Resources !](#)

OWL Scotland nationally works both alone and in collaboration with others to produce learning resources and guidance for practitioners, these include: Tree Stories, The Woodland Workout and Tree Measuring. The resources cover all ages and abilities, they are available free and can be accessed on the OWL Scotland website or hard copies can be ordered.

Continued.....



[Come to the National Networking Event!](#)

OWL Scotland holds an annual national networking event over a weekend in February. It is a great opportunity to network and learn new skills and practice for outdoor learning. This year's event included workshops on Winter Play, Fire – old and new, Felt Feet, Outsider Decider, Peg Loom Weaving and Number Kubb for numeracy. The full report can be read [here](#).

[Keep up to date with OWL Scotland News!](#)

The OWL Scotland bulletin, produced in collaboration with Outdoor Learning Wales, provides regular information from OWL Scotland, the local OWL groups and our partners on local and national events, education resources, funding, and news and topical information for teachers and practitioners. To receive the bulletin [subscribe here](#).

We look forward to seeing you in the woods one day.



Back to the Basics
Laura Hamlet, NW Geopark

UNESCO Global Geoparks are areas of geological significance managed with three main objectives: education, protection and sustainable development.

Different countries have different ways of managing their Geoparks and in Scotland we are truly grass roots. The North West Highlands Geopark is managed by a community-led charity and we work in partnership with a wide range of public sector and community organisations to deliver the three main objectives for our region. In fragile areas as sparsely populated as ours (did you know only about 3000 people live within our 2000km² area?)

Geoparks are an exciting way for communities to survive and thrive. We capitalise on our UNESCO status to attract attention to our area but we also use it to encourage the co-operation we need to achieve a zero sum game for nature, communities and our economic development.

People are most inclined to care for the natural environment if they understand it and so part of our role is helping the Highlife Highland Countryside Ranger Service to include geodiversity as part of their guided walks and promoting what they do as being set in, and part of, a UNESCO Global Geopark.

We also work in close partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage, running our own short geo-themed guided walks for the general public at Knockan Crag National Nature Reserve.

More in depth multi-day guided tours for a those who wish to deepen their knowledge of landscape formation are on offer too, where we connect people with the physical processes of planet-building which started three billion years ago !

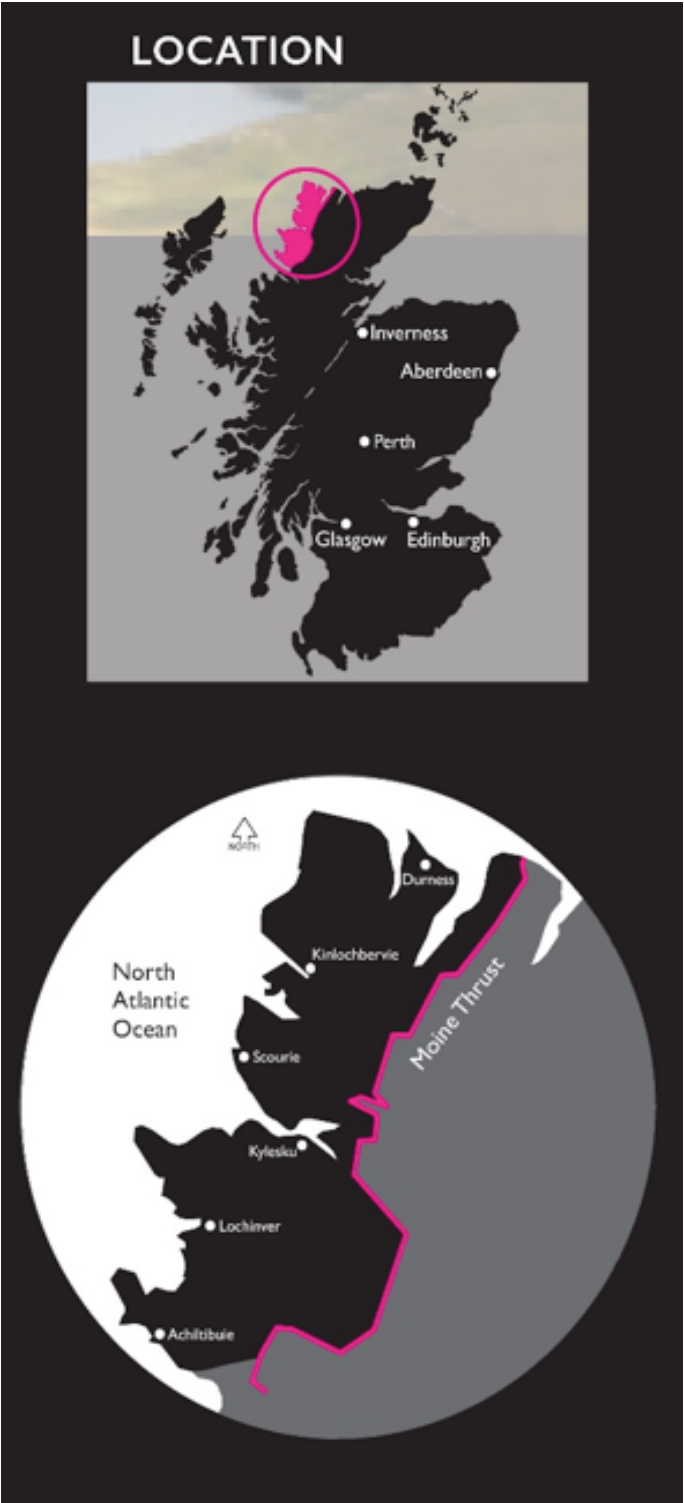
At the heart of the Geopark is the Rock Stop – a rare indoor venue containing an augmented reality sandbox, virtual reality time machine and interpretation of beaches, mountains and cultural landscapes around the region.

Visitors travelling the North Coast 500 route often stop here for refreshments in the café, or locally-made souvenirs in the shop and then spend time learning about the epic planetary scale histories contained by our geological heritage. At the Rock Stop we organise public lectures and talks from scientists and historians who have conducted research in the Geopark. Topics range from the Highland Clearances to our now famous billion year old Meteorite Impact site and the events are well attended by local people and casual visitors.

Around the Geopark we have developed Pebble Routes and Geopods, landscape interpretation that includes information on the geodiversity, how this impacts on biodiversity and also the human input; how we humans shape and are shaped by the landscape around us.

Although there’s a lot of space in the North West Highlands, most of the land has been managed by people in the past for agriculture of some sort and pre-medieval populations depended much more on local resources than we do today.

continued.....



Our Soil Fertility project, conducted jointly with the University of Stirling and match funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund through the Coigach Assynt Living Landscape Partnership, is starting to feed knowledge on nutrient legacies and possible future land management and production opportunities for communities. Through this there is potential to lower our collective carbon footprint by producing more products locally.

UNESCO Global Geoparks are all about supporting communities to maximise the opportunities available to them by helping generate the critical mass to leverage funding, attract the attention of central government and foster a culture of working together.

In an area as sparsely populated as the North West Highlands this is how we connect with and protect our natural heritage whilst at the same time building a sustainable future for the coming generations.



Coastal Outdoor Learning

Susan Davies CEO Scottish Seabird Centre

The Scottish Seabird Centre is a conservation and education charity formed in 2000 and our core purpose is to inspire and educate people about the Scottish marine environment, motivating them to care for it.

Our approach has always been founded on the belief that learning should take place outdoors, as well as at home and in the classroom. The benefits of outdoor learning quickly become apparent when people are given the opportunity to take part in activities that allow them to learn anywhere, anytime and at any age. Importantly being in the outdoors gives people a better appreciation of the wildlife, land- and seascapes around them and helps engender respect and care for these environments.

Research shows that the benefits of outdoor learning include greater confidence, increased motivation towards learning and a higher likelihood of meeting educational goals. The positive physical and mental health benefits of spending time outdoors have been well evidenced. Increasingly we are seeing health walks and green prescribing becoming more common practice and Scotland's coastline offers boundless locations for these. Through our charitable activities we offer a broad range of outdoor learning programmes.

During term time, our Education Manager, Fran, runs our wildlife watch for ages 4 to 12. Our popular seaside science holiday club complements this during the summer months. The children participate in a wide range of activities including bird watching and identification, creating beach shelters, rock pooling in different tidal zones, control of invasive species, nurdle hunts, animal track identification and beach cleans. Our activities are well supported by our own volunteer team and Sam from the East Lothian Council Ranger Service. The type of litter found on our beach cleans is recorded and results are submitted to the Marine Conservation Society to help track where the litter comes from.

We link our activities to the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence and have produced Scottish Qualifications Authority-approved coursework guides, suitable for National 5 Environmental Science, on assessing plastic pollution on a beach and assessing species distribution down a rocky shoreline. Changes over time can be monitored and linked to changes in behaviours or wider environmental pressures.

We recognise that some schools may be more distant from the coastline or not able to afford to travel. To reduce these potential barriers, we offer funding to help cover travel costs for schools from disadvantaged areas. We also have marine loan boxes which may be of interest to schools that are unable to regularly access coastal areas, these boxes contain marine-related real and

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replica items, books, activities and reference materials to help bring the wonders of the seaside into the lives of children who have not experienced these to date.

Providing learning and volunteering opportunities for different age groups is important to us. Our SOS Puffin project was created in 2007 to tackle the problem of the invasive tree mallow plant that threatens the important populations of puffins and other seabirds on three islands in the Firth of Forth. It provides an opportunity for people of all ages and from diverse backgrounds to learn about invasive species, to support ecological monitoring and to participate directly in work parties to remove the tree mallow. All of this takes place in an amazing coastal setting which helps to inspire people further. Since its inception we have supported over 1200 volunteers in 300 work parties onto the islands.

Outdoor learning extends through to the wildlife boat experiences we operate in partnership with Seafari, Forth Wild and Braveheart. These trips are led by expert guides who provide information on the amazing seabirds and wider marine wildlife encountered, their natural behaviours, the threats faced and the conservation activities in place. The guides also tell the story of the history of the islands from imprisonment on the Bass Rock, to the story of the "wreckers" who tricked passing ships into running aground on the rocks, and the presence of the top-secret World War 2 base at Gin Head.

Looking forward we will be increasing the number of outdoor learning sessions we can offer to schools across Scotland with the appointment of our new Marine Engagement Officer, Charlotte, these outdoor learning activities can also act as a catalyst for people to engage directly in 'citizen science' projects. We aim to support more people to contribute further to initiatives such as The Open Air Laboratory Network (OPAL), whale and dolphin sighting reports and various seabird and shorebird surveys in the coming years.



Rewilding

Eric Baird Senior Ranger, Glentannar

What do we mean by 'rewilding'? I guess it depends on circumstances: letting your lawn grow long, or re-introducing apex predators. For us as countryside rangers it mostly will mean delivering or presenting government policy. So I went along to the Scottish Greens' policy conference, to see 'rewilding' policy being formulated.

I expected input from experts, case studies, structured discussion, and a rational outcome. The Greens, after all, hold a balance of power in the Holyrood Parliament, so the line they take could be decisive, of course, I took along my own assumptions and attitudes, but having only 'observer' status, my input would be minimal. Nevertheless, I am grateful to the Greens for allowing me to participate.

I was initially disappointed. Organisationally things were less than perfect: lunch was at 1pm- the café had closed at 12.30 (brewery, piss up, organise?). And having expected some ecological big-hitters, what we got was undergraduate and anecdotal. But.....and it's a big 'but'.

But the Greens are a relatively young party and do not have the resources of Labour (Trade Union support), the Conservatives (wealthy donors), or SNP (massive membership base) so they can't hire facilitators/speakers but have to rely on party members giving their time and energy and I'm often chastened by the line from community development: 'good idea - why don't you?', whenever I'm tempted to suggest improvements - a line echoed by Robert Newman (I can't remember where, but you'll enjoy trawling through this to find it) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlpM_8v80hw

So what was the result? Inconclusive. The tentative proposals will be posted online, so members can extend the conversation. I'm not clear how the final decision will be made (I wasn't paying attention when the organogram/flow chart was flashed up) but that's OK - the Icelandic constitution was developed online recently, with broad participation.

And what does it all mean for us? Well, we are usually presented with 'policy', new, shiny, perfectly formed - but sometimes hollow, impractical, lacking in substance. It occurs to me that we have knowledge, experience, and an ability to communicate.

Why not invite your local branch of the Greens/Tories/Nats/Labs/Libs (apologies to anyone I've missed out) along for a site visit? With the focus on a particular topic: biodiversity, climate change, outdoor education, etc. That way, their subsequent discourse might be better informed and rooted in reality. In any case, they will at least have a better idea of who we are.



SCRAMble is one of SCRA's most important tools of communication with and between rangers and others who are interested in your work and experiences.

Publishing the three e-magazines a year can only be achieved if someone takes on the voluntary role of Editor, working with our contracted designer. Now that we have Guidelines for Authors the time commitment is substantially less than it used to be.

Main Tasks:

- Collating and editing (as needed – many need little change) articles and linking clearly to photos/illustrations
- Liaising with the Designer through the process of design and signing off the finished issue
- Approving publication on SCRA's website and payment to the Designer.

A more detailed description of Editor Procedures is available on request from the current temporary editor: ruthgrant.cally@btinternet.com

Useful skills and experience:

- Setting and meeting deadlines
- Attention to detail, especially grammar, spelling etc
- Working with others as a team

Personal Development benefits for those of you who are building your career:

- Developing network of contacts in the rangers world
- Honing writing skills, including correct grammar and use of illustrations
- Working closely with a Designer
- Persuasion and negotiation skills
- Project management (each edition is a mini project).

Mentoring will be provided, as you feel necessary by past and president editors and members of SCRA Council.

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