

ScotWays

OUR REGULAR MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2018



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“The preservation, defence, restoration and acquisition, for the public benefit, of public rights of access in Scotland including public rights of way, and related amenity”.

LAND REFORM MILESTONE

ON 10 January ScotWays was well represented at a reception at Holyrood, led by Ramblers Scotland, to mark the 15th anniversary of passing of the Land Reform Act 2003 by the Scottish Parliament. This excellent opportunity to blow a trumpet for the radical access legislation of Part 1 of the Act generated lively press coverage and a full edition of BBC Radio Scotland's *Out of Doors*, to which Alison Riddell made a constructively considered input. We're very grateful to the Ramblers for extending an invitation to join the celebrations.

It is a good moment to reflect on the passing of the 2003 Act, to look both back and forward. First, in looking back, to acknowledge the sustained effort over a full decade of work through the 1990s by ScotWays, the Ramblers, the Mountaineering Council and other bodies to lay the foundations for access legislation within working groups and forums under the aegis of the old Countryside Commission for Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage. We should especially remember the sterling work of the late Donald Bennet in drafting the seminal Access Concordat that achieved unexpected levels of consensus among diverse interests in Scotland's countryside.

The major final push after Devolution was undoubtedly led by the Ramblers but with considerable support behind the scenes from ourselves and other outdoor bodies, to ensure that the final output of this Part of the Act was as forward-looking and inclusive as possible. And we should record that, while the land-managing community inevitably had a different approach at the time of the Holyrood debate, they did make early and constructive contributions on the best way forward. Part 1 of the 2003 Act is more than another piece of worthy legislation: its ambition and broad scope, its revisionary approach and the commitment to collective working all combine to make this legislation amongst the best that the Scottish Parliament has created. It has much to offer to the whole population of Scotland and our many visitors; and it has captured the attention

of legislators in other countries.

The full provisions of the Act came into force in early 2005, the interval allowing for local authorities to prepare for their enhanced role, and for the Scottish Outdoor Access Code to be finalised and endorsed by Parliament: but we can record that the legislation has not caused undue problems. This is legislation for people, inevitably calling for a big effort to raise awareness of its scope and of the requirements of the principle of responsibility, shared between those who exercise access rights and the land-managers. A small number of landowners have made challenges via the Courts, but the outcomes have not been damaging to the Act itself, while they have helped to clarify its interpretation and application. Despite the burden on local authorities, especially in preparing and delivering the new Core Paths plans, overall they have done a good job of overseeing their role in implementation. Inevitably, some local problems have arisen – there is no risk of ScotWays dwindling away for want of case work and public enquiries to deal with – but these have to be kept in perspective.

Looking forward, we can readily identify one big problem and a couple of big challenges. First, the big problem, as shown in our last Newsletter, is the scale of current cutbacks on local government funding, reducing the finance and staff available to keep up the impetus of the new legislation. Linked in part to the cutbacks is the challenge of continuing to raise awareness of the new access

arrangements, not least in the face of leisure lifestyle changes, with many alternative leisure options for the young in society. And third is the challenge of ensuring that the countryside is as accessible as possible. The public have the rights, but it is not always easy to exercise them: some of the barriers are physical, some are more about building full confidence, which inevitably takes time. So 15 years on from the passage of the Act there is no lack of continuing work for ScotWays, and for our colleagues in the outdoor recreation community.

John Mackay



PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD BARRON @RKABWORKS

AGM REPORT

STAFF were pleased to welcome over 50 members and guests to our AGM last November, many of whom arrived in time to enjoy catching up over lunch before the formal business of the day began, chaired by Muriel Robertson.

Muriel presented the directors' report, highlighting various aspects of the Society's work including Bob Aitken's work in updating the talks we can offer to other groups, Karen Inkster's work to develop the volunteer network and improve contact with other organisations, George Menzies' participation on ScotWays' behalf in the National Access Forum and the work of several volunteers in mitigating the impact of major road proposals on access.

She was also delighted to report that the National Trust for Scotland had just installed the Quoich Bridge (see below for more details) and finished by thanking staff, directors, honorary advisers, volunteers and members for their contribution to the work of ScotWays over the year.

Alison Riddell, Treasurer, then presented the accounts, drawing attention to a gentle decline in membership income and encouraging members to invite friends and family to join the Society. She also spoke about directors' plans to use the Brown Soutar bequest which had had such a major impact on the Society's reserves.

Her report was followed by the appointment of George Menzies as Honorary Vice-President as resolved by the AGM the previous year. Bob Aitken paid tribute to those directors standing down from office, Hugh Anderson, Pat Hunter and Richard Barron, thanking them for all their work, and the three directors retiring by rotation but standing

for re-election were all elected unopposed: David Dixon, Muriel Robertson and Douglas Wright. New director Katharine Taylor was also elected and she introduces herself on page eight.

Muriel then resumed the lectern to provide a summary of the strategy day which had been held in January 2017. She reported that it had been agreed to produce a new guide to access law, the most recent edition of the Society's current law guide having been published in 2006. There had also been discussion on ways to make access information public, such as through our website and signposting programme, and giving more talks to targeted groups, rather than those simply trying to fill a space in their calendar. She explained plans to digitise the Society's casefiles as part of the business continuity plan to secure them for the future, to facilitate remote working should the office become unusable for any length of time, and also to make the files more readily searchable. Finally, she announced the creation of a small grants scheme. For more details see page three.

Karen Inkster followed with an update of her first year in post, providing a summary of the various activities she has been involved in, and Richard Barron concluded with the reports of the signposting survey he had carried out, to which a very pleasing 213 responses had been received, largely very positive about the Society's signposting work.

After the formal business was complete, Nick Cooke gave a very interesting presentation on the work of the Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum entitled "Caledonian Caminos".

Alison Riddell



PHOTOGRAPH: KAREN INKSTER

The Sawmill Bridge on the Airlie Estate

SAWMILL BRIDGE AT CORTACHY, AIRLIE ESTATE

Last November saw installation of the replacement for the Sawmill Bridge at Cortachy, on the Airlie Estate. The old bridge had been washed away during the 2015 storms when a huge tree was swept downstream, knocking out the middle pillar and sending the bridge cascading down the South Esk. An anonymous ScotWays donor and Airlie Estate funded the replacement of the bridge which carries a core path and facilitates a popular circular walk at Cortachy in the Angus Glens. The new wooden bridge was designed and built by a local firm and lifted into position by a crane. An official opening of the bridge by Lord Ogilvie, owner of the Airlie Estate, is to take place in spring 2018.

THE DONALD BENNET MEMORIAL BRIDGES – UPDATE

Last summer, we reported that the replacement for the upper footbridge over

the Quoich on the Mar Lodge Estate had been ordered and time booked for the new bridge to be flown in once the abutments were built. The National Trust for Scotland expected then to have the bridge in place by the end of June.

Plans were thwarted by the nesting of a pair of hen harriers so the bridge could not be flown in until after they had fledged, and then a date had to be arranged to fly it in, preferably coinciding with suitable weather. Very shortly before our AGM in November, we heard that the bridge span had in fact been delivered to Mar Lodge

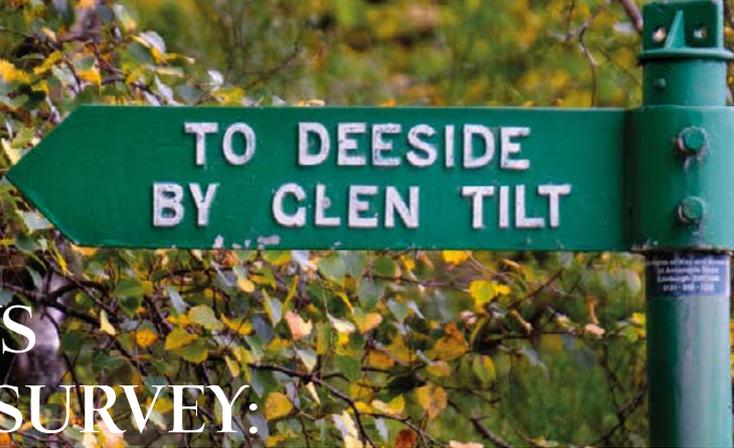


PHOTOGRAPH: NTS

Quoich Bridge, Mar Lodge Estate

and we were able to see pictures at the AGM of the helicopter lowering it in place. It was however not until early January that the work was completed. We are delighted to report that the bridge is now open for public use, and hope that it will give service for a long time to come. We have agreed to transfer a substantial part of the Bennet appeal fund to the NTS to cover the cost of this.

In contrast, we are concerned that the NTS does not see any immediately pressing need to consolidate the 'temporary' bridge over the Derry Burn, one end of which is simply resting on the bank. We are aware that some donors to the appeal share our concern that the bridge as it stands may not be capable of withstanding another major flood. ScotWays has agreed to apply further funds from the Donald Bennet appeal for that work. The Trust does include consolidation of the bridge within its management programme but it does not plan to undertake the work until much later this year.



THE SCOTWAYS SIGNPOSTING SURVEY: THE RESULTS

AT THE end of October 2017, we launched a survey to find out what people thought about our signposting work.

ScotWays has been signposting rights of way and other paths across Scotland since it started in 1845. Times have changed and today many different people and organisations are also signposting paths so it was time for us to consider our role in signposting. The survey asked for views ranging from what type of paths should be signed to what colours we should use on the signs. 213 responded, all their answers were anonymised and the results brought together into the report the *ScotWays Signposting Survey* which is available on our website (<https://www.scotways.com/images/pdf/ScotWays-Signposting-Survey-Results.pdf>).

So what did respondents say? 92 per cent of people had seen one of our signs in the countryside and 91 per cent thought we should be maintaining all our signs. There was unanimous support for keeping our green and white colour scheme and putting our name on all our signs. Whilst there was a preference that we only signpost rights of way, respondents were very much split with 52 per cent saying rights of way only. Of those that suggested signing other routes, core paths and heritage paths predominated. Not everyone wanted signs and some said all those present should be taken down as they are “a blight on the landscape”.

The survey asked whether we should develop our own unique style of sign. Whilst respondents were in favour of this, there was an overwhelming view that the mix of sign styles out there did not matter and that repair and refurbishment were more important than developing a unique style. In fact, many felt that the green and white signs were our brand and so unique in themselves that nothing more

special was needed. A lot of love was shown for our older signs which date back to 1885 and many people commented on how helpful our roadside signs are. “A door opening to a new adventure”.

One unexpected consequence of the survey was the number of people who chose to say thank you for the work that ScotWays does. Unexpected, but very welcome, thank you. Thank you too for taking the time to complete our survey and giving us your views.

FASCINATING FACTS

- Our original signs had red lettering on a dark background
- The part of the sign with the words on it used to be known as a “ticket”
- Many of our early signs came from the Royal Label Factory, Stratford upon Avon and cost around £7 each (in old money).

Since the survey, the Directors have met and agreed that our signs will remain green with white letters, displaying our name and conforming to the requirements of the Traffic Sign and General Direction Regulations. Priority will be given to maintaining and replacing our existing signs. Directors have also ratified the 2007 Board decision that the Society will no longer act as a signposting contractor for third parties. This doesn't mean no signposting, but means that future new signs will be tailored to meet the objectives of the Society.

The next stage is to decide where and what we sign. All the views people expressed in the questionnaire will be taken into account when the Directors next discuss signposting in 2018.

Richard Barron

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

AS MENTIONED in the Annual Report, we are in the course of a project to digitise our records, starting with our casefiles. At time of writing, the first batch of files has been sent for scanning after a team of staff and volunteers spent the first week in January going through files to check for anything of historic interest, any photographs and removing anything such as booklets which did not need to be scanned.

Although hard work requiring a lot of concentration, the exercise has produced some interesting finds, not least the realisation that so many access issues revolve around the same range of problems, often neighbours' disputes. It has also brought to light some entertaining comments which will be published from time to time on our Twitter feed and Facebook page.

SMALL GRANTS SCHEME

SCOTWAYS is delighted to announce the creation of a small grants scheme, designed to facilitate a community-based and access-related project which might not otherwise be able to proceed. Grants may be for up to 50 per cent of the total budget for the project, amounting to between £500 and £1,500. Applicant organisations should be members of ScotWays. The next submission date for applications is 31 May, and a decision on any applications received by that date will be made by the end of July. Further details and an application form are available on the downloads page of the ScotWays website, <https://www.scotways.com/downloads>

Our 2018 walks programme

A NEW year and a new walks programme. We have already had many members getting in touch to sign up for walks and if you'd like to join them, you can use the booking form sent with this mailing. All you need to do is fill it in and send it back to us (including a cheque for the appropriate booking fee). There are still spaces available on every walk.

We have a total of nine walks this year from March through to October. As ever, our thanks go to those members who have volunteered to lead these walks for us.

We start the programme gently in March with an Edinburgh walk from Blackford Pond going across the Braids.

April sees a walk to Wemyss Bay via the Greenock Cut and the Kelly Cut aqueducts with views over the Clyde Estuary.

In May we have two walks: the first along the Slochd Military Road (walking south from Tomatin), the second being a circular route from Melrose using part of the Borders Abbeys Way.

For June we travel up north for a walk which will be partly along an

old drove route across the Struie in Easter Ross, then in July it's back down south with a walk following part of the Southern Upland Way to the Three Brethren.

A walk slightly off the beaten track in Glen Tanar follows in August and in September a walk through Balloch Castle Country Park is on offer. Our programme finishes in October with the Hermitage Circular from Dunkeld, one of Perthshire's classic walks. More details on all these walks can be found on the booking form.

Our walks programme is supported by a very loyal band of members. If you are not yet one of them, we'd be interested to hear why not. Are our walks too long? Too short? In the wrong part of the country? Do let us know, to info@scotways.com. While we can't expect to please everyone all the time, we hope there is something for everyone in our selection and look forward to hearing from you.

Lynda Grant



PHOTOGRAPH: ELIZABETH MCTAGGART

— Enjoying the view from the top of Overton Muir

A CIRCULAR WALK OVER OVERTON MOOR

16 SEPTEMBER 2017

9.5 MILES/15 KM

LEADERS: ALISTAIR AND CATHERINE RAEBURN

ABLY led by Alistair and Catherine Raeburn, this walk started from Loch Lomond Shores shopping centre. The 9-strong walking party strolled along the Balloch to Glasgow Cycleway beside the River Leven down to Renton, dodging the cyclists and chatting to local fishermen angling for salmon and trout.

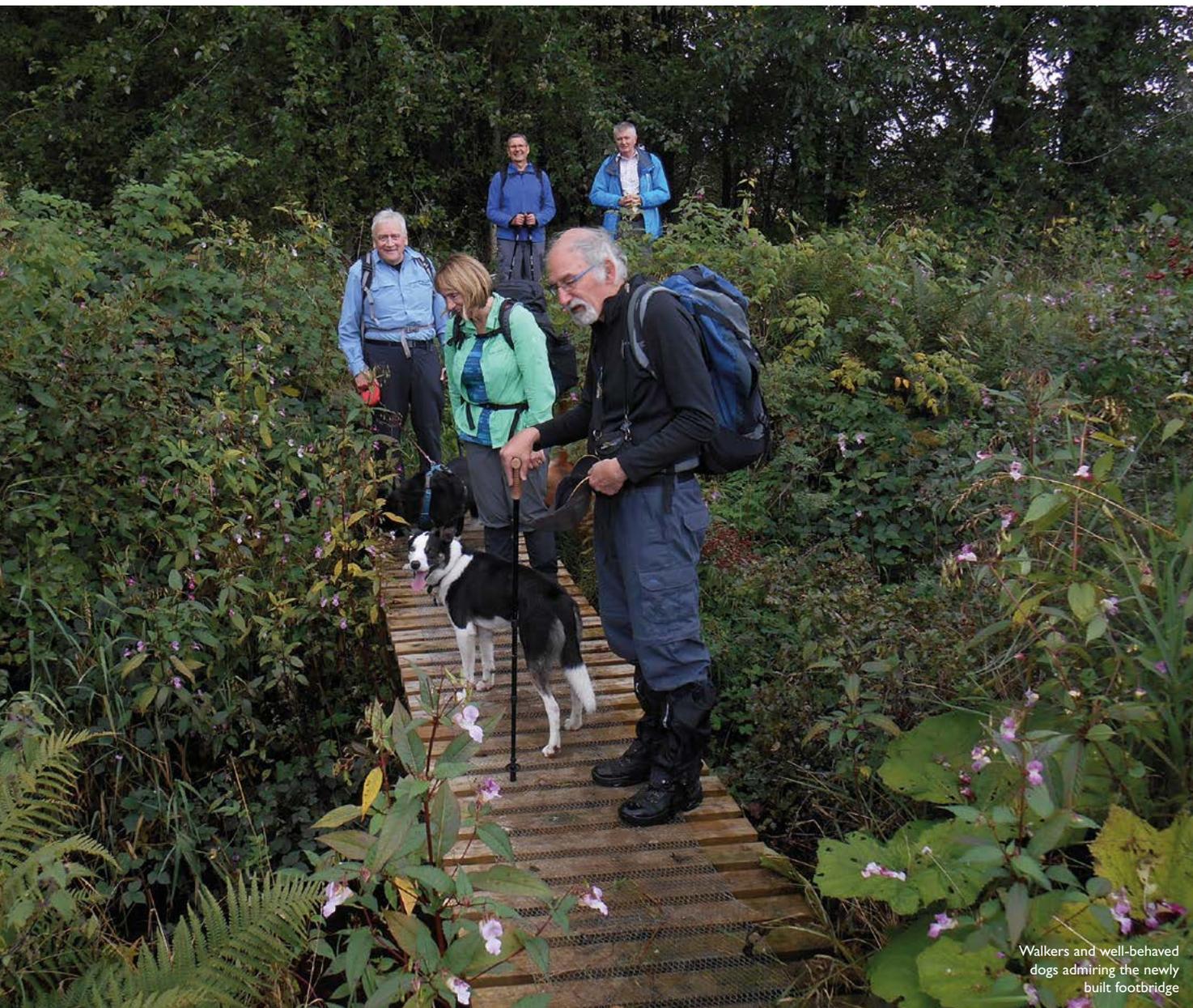
We then headed uphill towards Carman Reservoir, passing two large trees littered with memorials and a water hole complete with

metal cup and chain, before crossing the moor road that leads down to Cardross. The lunch spot was on the site of an old hill fort with a panoramic view of the Firth of Clyde.

After lunch, we traversed Overton and Bromley Muirs to reach the cross stone at the edge of Stonymollan Muir, a section of the route which sorely tested the waterproof nature of our boots. It is believed that this large flat rock was a resting place for the coffins during the long haul over to consecrated ground near Cardross.

We were then treated to a spectacular view of the southern end of Loch Lomond with its islands marking the line of the Highland Fault. As the party descended the path back to Balloch, we realised that this path formed part of both the John Muir Way and the Three Lochs Way. There was still time for some retail therapy at Lomond Shores at the finish.

Report by Eric Gotts



Walkers and well-behaved dogs admiring the newly built footbridge

A CIRCULAR WALK FROM CRIEFF TO COMRIE

23 SEPTEMBER 2017

15.5 MILE/25KM

LEADERS: FIONA BLACK AND JOHN STIRLING

SIX ScotWays members, plus three very well-behaved dogs, met at McRosty Park, Crieff at 9.30am to go on this epic walk. The weather was slightly overcast as the group wended their way along the 'Lady Mary's Walk', by the River Turret and then the River Earn, through attractive woodland and on past the David Baird's monument at Strowan. Crossing the minor road they reached a metalled path formerly an old railway line. Although it is designated as a right of way the local farmer was fairly determined to keep folk at bay, with various signs of non-welcome, secured gates and other impedimenta; but being from ScotWays and knowing their rights of access the group of six battled onwards to Comrie, even stopping for a cuppa and a chance to fully appreciate the delightful rugged scenery. Also, the newly built footbridge crossing a fast-flowing tributary of the Earn confirmed the fact that this walk was definitely intended for public use.

On reaching Comrie, some of the party decided on coffee and

the bus back to Crieff, leaving four stalwarts and two dogs to continue. As everyone knows the best part of any route is always the second half. After packed lunches at a riverside park and a swim for the dogs, the walk led through Comrie and into open fields overlooking Cultybraggan. A gentle climb took the group towards the Auchingarrich Wildlife Park, home to a variety of interesting and curious beasts. Despite fabulous views from the coffee shop a quieter spot was required for the afternoon tea break. Therefore, refreshments were partaken of in a large, faded yellow, yurt-like structure which is erected in the middle of an ancient, atmospheric wood, once part of the old Caledonian forest.

The route continued uphill to reach the forest tracks of Torlum Hill. Spirits were lifted when Crieff became visible on the distant horizon. Great views of the Ochils and the distant West Lomond were on offer on the way to Knock Mary. Having climbed, and then circumnavigated, Knock Mary they returned to McRosty Park by the quaint back streets of Crieff.

Altogether, it had been a superb walk, mostly done in the dry, with the occasional burst of sunshine to brighten the day. The route had been varied and interesting and the views mostly breath-taking. It is definitely a walk which should be done again and enjoyed!

Report by Fiona Black



GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION

The rules regarding data protection are changing, and ScotWays, along with any other organisation processing data, must comply with the new regulation by 25 May 2018.

When you take out membership of ScotWays, you provide us with a certain amount of personal data which we use to maintain our membership records and enable us to send you information about ScotWays plans and activities, and how your subscription will be used to further our work. We will never pass this information on to any third party without your specific consent, except if the law obliges us to do so. As we cannot record you as a member of ScotWays without you providing this information, we are processing your data on the basis of our legitimate interests. If you no longer wish to receive information from us, please let us know and we shall ensure that you are removed from our mailing list. You can contact us by emailing info@scotways.com, by writing to the National Secretary at ScotWays, 24 Annandale Street, Edinburgh, EH7 4AN or by telephoning 0131 558 1222.

LAND USE STRATEGY

ScotWays has to keep an eye on the bigger picture of legal and administrative change within which our day-to-day effort sits and, through this, try to influence such change. One ongoing issue is the Government's ambition for bolder strategies for rural land-use, which dates back to 2009. We attended the launch of the proposal to prepare a Land Use Strategy for Scotland in that year, and have attended regular meetings and responded to consultations. It would be fair to



say that this venture has had a low profile: there have been two pilot studies, in the Borders and Aberdeenshire, to explore the best way forward, and there is a published strategy. At the original launch it was good to hear that the venture would range

beyond the conventional big land uses of agriculture and forestry and engage with wider social issues of the kind we represent: but over the years, the focus has narrowed such that recreation and landscape care have almost slipped out of sight. There is now the prospect of more action following recent legislation on Land Reform, and for a restructuring of the Forestry Commission in Scotland; and we contributed last year to an initial review of land use issues in the uplands, prepared by SNH. All of this action calls for our closer attention in the coming years.

John Mackay, Honorary adviser



PHOTOGRAPH: IVON BARTHOLOMEW

NEW DIRECTOR AT PATHS FOR ALL

Alison Riddell, the Society's National Secretary, was appointed a director of Paths for All at their AGM last October. Paths for All is a partnership organisation of 30 national groups, many of them charities, all with an interest in encouraging people to become more active. They range from those connected

with outdoor activities such as the Ramblers and the Scottish Canoe Association to health charities such as SAMH and the Stroke association, and government bodies such as SNH. ScotWays has been a partner for many years but it is hoped to strengthen links with Paths for All by having board representation. The organisation is largely government-funded and champions walking in Scotland 'for everyone, every day and everywhere'.

BILL FORSYTH 1927 – 2018

We are sad to record the passing of Bill Forsyth on Thursday 18 January 2018. He was a very helpful and supportive director of ScotWays between 1991 and 2005 who had a knack of getting on well with people. The news reached us just as we were going to press. We send our condolences to his wife Sheena and their family. A fuller tribute will appear in the Annual Report.



IN BRIEF

SCOTWAYS CLOTHING

As a reminder, ScotWays branded clothing can now be ordered through the Image Scotland website using the following link:-

<http://scotways.imagescotland.com>

The range available includes beanie hats, polo shirts, sweatshirts and woollen jumpers, all with an embroidered ScotWays logo. If you do not have internet access and would like to order something, please contact the office for an order form. In the light of comments we received about the flat rate of £5 post and packaging applying to all purchases regardless of size, we have purchased a small supply of beanie hats and badges which can be purchased through the ScotWays office. Hats cost £6.50, plus £1.80 P+P (UK). For felt badges with the ScotWays logo, send the office a cheque for £6 and a stamped (normal first or second class stamp) addressed envelope DL or larger. All cheques payable to ScotWays please.

MEMBERS' DISCOUNTS

We are delighted to have received confirmation from Cotswold Outdoor that the discount of 15% for ScotWays members is still active and applies Snow & Rock, Runners Need and Cycle Surgery as well as Cotswold itself.

Please contact the office for the discount code. It remains unchanged so if you have used it before, there is no need to contact the office again. It can be used both in-store and online; it is not to be used in conjunction with any other offers or discounts; 10% discount applies to bikes; selected lines are exempt and the offer is to be used for personal purchases only; it may not be used by members of clubs and community councils who are supporter members of ScotWays. The discount arrangement is not to be shared with third parties.

The 15% discount arrangement with Nevisport continues to apply to full priced items.

We can confirm that the members' discount of 10% off all accommodation bookings with SYHA Hostelling Scotland is also still available. Contact the office for the new discount code.



THE DEAF, THE DAFT AND THE DITSY

a four legged journey across the Hebrides

ON 10th August last year I set off to the Outer Hebrides with my rescue animals, dog Pip, who is deaf and my ditsy mare Connie. Our plan was to walk/ride the length of the islands to raise funds for Blairgowrie Riding for the Disabled. We were undertaking the adventure unsupported, which meant we were, or rather Connie was, carrying all of our camping, corralling and cooking equipment.

We set off from the southerly island of Vatersay and headed north, covering both Vatersay and Barra in two days. Crossing Eriskay some of the rare Eriskay ponies came trotting down the hillside to say hello. I couldn't wait to get to South Uist to start the Machair Path. Being a Heritage Path, I'd read about its 35km of sandy trails and beaches. In 1805 William Bald surveyed the path and it was shown as the main route through the island. We spent two days on the trail, stopping off overnight at the wonderful old black house Gatliff Hostel at Howmore.

We had hoped to follow the newly opened Hebridean Way, but unfortunately the trail is neither horse nor cycle friendly. By day three we had encountered so many locked gates or unmarked path junctions that we gave up. But it was easy to pick out your own route with the use of a map and talking to friendly locals.

Heading north, we reached Benbecula and stopped at the Uist Community Riding School. They give lessons to local children and offer hacks to the beach for tourists. They were full of advice on which paths were suitable for horses, and warned to be aware of bogs and shifting sands on the islands. I had heard horror stories of ponies being stuck in quicksand and then drowned in the incoming tides, so it was advice we were careful to heed.

After briefly touching on Grimsay, we spent a sea-bound night on our very own island of Valley which was absolutely stunning. It was like stepping back in time with haunting old ruins of a mansion house and farm yard.

Another short ferry crossing brought us onto Harris, where we rode another Heritage Path, the Old Road to Tarbet. It was a former packhorse route and led me to wonder what it was like, back in the day when

horses would have been part of everyday life on crofts. It was a lovely, albeit boggy path which climbs up to a bealach, which gives stunning views across the loch behind. This brought us to another Gatliff Hostel, Rhenigidale, where Connie made friends with a pet Hebridean sheep! We had hoped to ride the Rhenigidale Post Road as I had read stories about the school children walking it on a Monday, staying in Tarbet until their return on a Friday, and the postman walking it twice a week. I even shared a brew with Kenny MacKay who wrote *RHENIGIDALE A Community's Fight for Survival*. Sadly, I was advised it wasn't suitable for a pony, especially one carrying large panniers.

After Maaruig on North Harris, I found it difficult to find tracks heading north. The roads were becoming busier and I had little desire to spend all day walking on tarmac. So we headed west to see the stunning Callanish Stones before heading up the quieter coastal road to the Butt of Lewis.

If I were to sum up our adventure in one word it would be "humbling". The islanders were so warm and welcoming, everywhere we went we were offered a field, food and often a bed, though I stuck to my "unsupported" mission and camped each night. People stopped in their cars or came out of their houses and chased after us to say hello, give a donation and wish us luck. There was never any shortage of information and advice from locals on which paths to follow or where I could next find supplies.

We rode across 13 islands, covered approximately 227km over 18 days and raised over £4,000. Among our adventures, Connie escaped from her corral twice, but simply came and found me. We went into a bog one day and I fell off and it rained 16 out of 19 days! But it's an experience I will never forget and I will forever be in debt to my four legged comrades who followed me day after day without question.

Karen Inkster, Development Officer



Editor's note: Karen has written up her experiences in a short book: The Deaf, the Daft and the Ditsy – A Journey across the Outer Hebrides. Available from Karen at £4.00. 25 per cent of proceeds go to The Dogs Trust which is where Pip came from. For more information please contact Karen directly at: Karen_a_inkster@hotmail.com

SCOTWAYS PEOPLE

Volunteers are the lifeblood of ScotWays.

In the second of our 'people' articles, we speak to Katharine Taylor who lives in Edinburgh and joined the ScotWays Board in 2017. We asked her a few questions about what she does for us.

How did you first hear about ScotWays?

My first connection with ScotWays was when I worked for Sustrans Scotland. I was involved, along with ScotWays, The Ramblers and Paths for All, in organising national meetings for members of Local Access Forums, which were held annually in Stirling for several years. This was in the early days of the Land Reform Act and I learnt a lot from all the participants at those meetings and became the 'access expert' at Sustrans. I was impressed by ScotWays' legal knowledge and tenacity in fighting contentious cases. Sustrans Scotland was a member of ScotWays for many years and I followed developments through the regular newsletters.

Why do you choose to volunteer?

I have always liked what ScotWays does and the sort of organisation it is – small, practical and with a clear focus. My awareness of access issues goes back to childhood when my grandfather, who lived in Ballater, used to regularly remind us that there was 'no trespass law in Scotland' as we marched across other people's land! He may not have been strictly correct, but he instilled an attitude. When ScotWays asked me last summer if I would consider joining the board, I was delighted as it ties in with my personal interests and past work experience.

What do you do?

I only became a director in November, so I am still settling into the role! I hope that I will bring useful experience in developing maps and leaflets, in signage work, and through knowledge of and contacts in the cycling world. I would like to help ScotWays raise its public



PHOTOGRAPH: JACK HUNTER

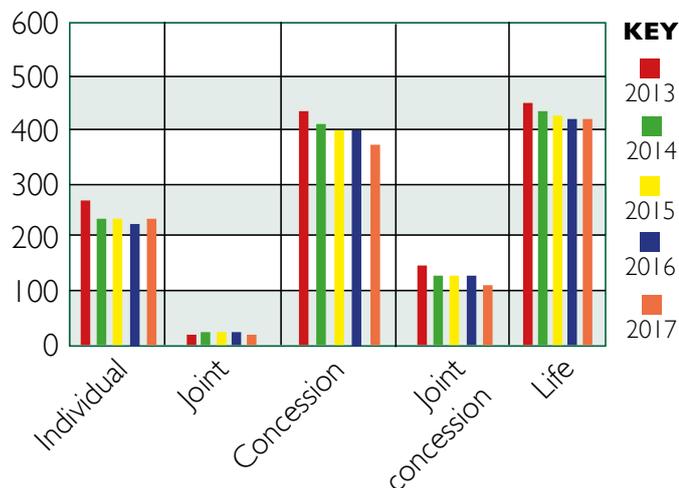
profile and develop partnership working. Recently, I've been working in the office with other directors, staff and volunteers to prepare files for digitisation – it's been interesting finding out about past access disputes from the old case files.

What do you enjoy most about it?

It is good to work with like-minded people all working for the same end. There is a collaborative spirit that you don't find everywhere.

Favourite walk or bike ride?

The most memorable walks are the big ones like the West Highland Way and crossing the Lairig Ghru, but the walk that my partner Jack and I do most often is from Leith to Portobello to watch birds along the shore. I championed this cycling/walking path when I worked in route development at Sustrans and am always pleased when I see so many people using it now. This year, I plan to survey some routes and signs for ScotWays, so I'll tell you in the autumn what my favourite Right of Way is!



MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Despite a small but steady decline in total membership, we are pleased that we have acquired 23 new members this financial year to date, the same number as in the full financial year 2016/17. This is encouraging with five months of the current year to go, but there is plenty room for more!

It's a concern, since members are essential to our work: financially, through subscriptions and donations, keeping us informed about access problems and the state of our signposts and in lending authority to our voice on access issues. Our development officer, Karen, is working to raise our profile in developing links with like-minded organisations and offering talks about ScotWays' work to interested groups. Groups should email her on: Karen_inkster@scotways.com.

But we also encourage you, our own members, to spread the word about ScotWays. We would be delighted to send a membership application form to any of your family, friends and colleagues who might be interested in supporting us.



ScotWays – The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society

Founded in 1845, the Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society works to safeguard rights of way and access throughout Scotland.

www.scotways.com provides information about the law on rights of way and outdoor access, updates on court cases and information about our work, activities and publications.

For our Heritage Paths project visit www.heritagepaths.co.uk

ScotWays depends on a large number of volunteers, from those who help in the office doing research and administration to those surveying paths in their area. ScotWays also needs the support of individual and corporate members. To find out how you can help, or to join us, contact the office.

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