

nevis

AUTUMN JOURNAL | ISSUE 5



BEN

GLEN

PROJECTS

PEOPLE

VOLUNTEERING

NEVIS PARTNERSHIP SHOP



We have officially launched the Nevis Partnership shop! You can support us by purchasing copies of our 2019 calendar, the Ben and Glen Nevis Geological Map and Guide and the Archaeology of Dun Deardail books. Proceeds from these sales support the work of the Nevis Partnership, conserving and enhancing Ben and Glen Nevis.

www.nevispartnership.co.uk/shop

Front Cover: Alex Farquhar



AUTUMN JOURNAL 2018

The leaves are turning

By Iona Skyring

The Glen is amber with Autumn colour and the Ben has had the first snow of the season. Summer has passed again and what a busy few months we had!

We had eight Trainee Volunteer Rangers between April and September, hosted three National Trust for Scotland Thistle Camps, one Fix the Fells weekend, bashed tonnes of bracken, fixed many metres of paths, planted hundreds of trees, ran a Red Squirrel survey and put on a festival. Time for a holiday?

Somehow we thought it would get quieter coming into the cooler months but as always we are as busy as ever. Luckily, the budget from the Nevis Training Project has allowed us to take on three new TVR's for the winter. Eilidh, Jen and Cormac will be joining us until March next year to help us out in the last six months of the programme. Look out for their adventures on social media and in the next Nevis journal.

Looking to the future, we have lots of ideas up our sleeves which we are working on. Our new funding manager, Sarah Lyth, has been working closely with all the team on life after the NLP programme. One of our ideas has come to life and we're excited for you to join us on the next adventure.

Images by Nathan Berrie



SPONSOR A TREE

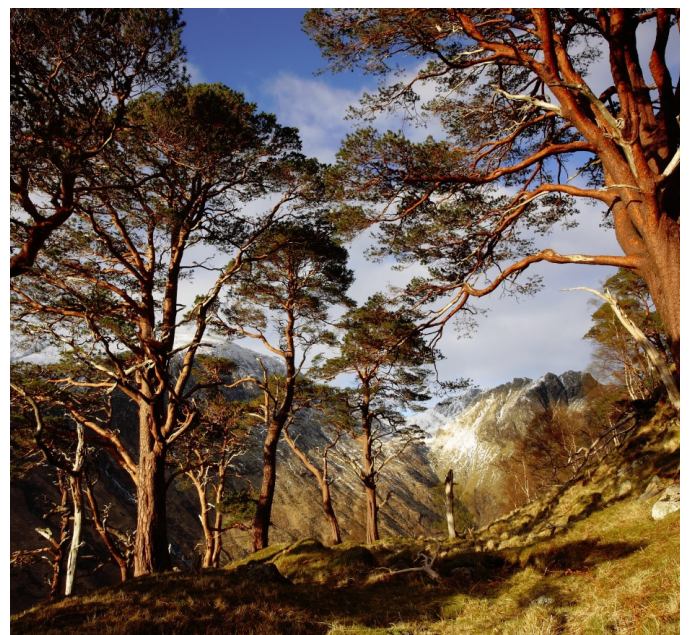
Our first fundraising campaign!

Beginning in 2014, the Future Forests project started the process of restoring the native woodland in Glen Nevis. Key to the success of the project was bringing together the local community, enabling them to get hands on in the whole process from propagating trees from to planting them out in the Glen. So far we have planted 10,000 native trees, and we have another 175,000 viable seeds in storage to produce more trees for the future.

Funding for this project finishes in March 2019, so with that in mind, we have been working on how our important work of conserving and enhancing Ben and Glen Nevis can continue into the future. The Sponsor a Tree campaign aims to raise money to continue the work of the Future Forests project, improving woodland connectivity and encouraging community stewardship. When you sponsor a tree, you will be donating vital funds that can go towards tree planting, exclosure fencing, tools, materials and education days for school students and volunteers. As well as growing our future forests, we will continue to work to enhance habitats for native wildlife and maintain paths to provide sustainable access to this unique environment. There are a range of donation amounts to choose from and all contribute to the costs of restoring these native forests in Glen Nevis.

This makes a great gift idea for Christmas or any other special occasion and comes with a beautifully illustrated card made from recycled paper to say thank you for your donation. We will be running a Christmas fair at the Ben Nevis Visitor Centre with High Life Highland on Sunday the 9th of December where you can sponsor a tree and buy other handmade Christmas crafts. Join us for some festive cheer and family fun. Check out the website to find out more:

www.nevispartnership.co.uk/sponsoratree



Friends of Nevis

Written by Joy Biggin

Friends of Nevis is a group who share an interest in helping the Nevis area. Our members pay a £10 per year donation to show their support, and many members also help by taking part in voluntary work. We have about 80 members plus some corporate members. We also have many other supporters who take part in our activities. All are welcome.

FoN was set up in 2008 by Liz Wilshaw as an offshoot of the Nevis Partnership. In 2010 it became an independent charity and is run by Trustees and a part time paid coordinator, Rory Stewart. FoN is a member of the Nevis Landscape Partnership, which was granted Heritage Lottery Funding in 2014 to put its 5 year Action Plan into operation with 19 projects to benefit the whole area, including our own Community Engagement Project. FoN is the main volunteering arm of the Partnership, and the money is enabling us to run a much extended programme of events.

"Hard work, but fun" sums up most of our activities. Each year we organise several Litter Picks in Glen Nevis, which start by meeting for a coffee in the Ben Nevis Highland Centre (Woollen Mill), where they have welcomed us for over 10 years. These are friendly, well attended events for all ages, when unfortunately we find lots of rubbish to remove, though we hope that the amount has lessened over the years! There are also very enjoyable wildlife and conservation events and monthly path maintenance days. There is always plenty of work to be done to look after our paths.

Our A.G.M. is a pleasant, sociable occasion, usually held in the autumn in the Glen Nevis Restaurant, with a speaker, followed by a buffet and a chance for a chat.

You can find out what's going on by looking at either our website www.friendsofnevis.co.uk or the NLP website www.nevislandscape.co.uk

Please come and join us when you can - you will be made most welcome.



Light Up

WORDS Iona Skyring

A completely clear evening gave way to a great start to the first event in the Nevis at Night programme, Light Up Ben Nevis.

Each year, over 130,00 people walk up Ben Nevis and 250,000 visit Glen Nevis. These numbers have a great impact on the paths, roads and the natural environment. Nevis at Night, organised by Mike Pescod of Abacus Mountain Guides, came about from a desire to conserve and enhance Ben and Glen Nevis.

Three groups set off at different intervals in the late afternoon of Saturday 22 September so that the 24 participants would all be returning to the base at midnight. Our yellow group reached the halfway Lochan just before 7PM, perfectly timed for the golden hour.

Proceeding up the zigzags towards the summit, the cairns which were lit up with flood lights started to come into view. We were then greeted by a tin whistle player, enjoying a musical break before the last push up to the summit. By this point everyone had their head torches on as the path was getting snowy and the sky was quite dark but energy was still high.

Reaching the top, there was a couple of inches of snow under foot, some of the first of the season. After a short stay on the snowy summit, the descent began, with another interval of Scottish music and poetry from the tin whistle player.

Making it back down to the Ben Nevis Visitor Centre just after midnight, a feast provided some much needed warming and nourishment. The Crannog Restaurant was to thank for the catering, and the Ben Nevis Distillery for the wee bottle of whiskey that each walker received after finishing the event.

'Summiting Ben Nevis along with a big team of determined fundraisers was magical. Despite the sub-zero temperature and snow on the ground, the warmth of feeling for the mountain and the shared experience of doing something positive to look after it was powerful. Everyone who took part told us they had an incredible time and being part of the solution to look after Ben Nevis made it even more valuable. This is one of our most beautiful wild places which we should continue to enjoy and experience, but also do what we can to look after' - Mike Pescod



Ben Nevis

This event is the first of its kind within the different charity walks up Ben Nevis and other peaks in the U.K. Light Up Ben Nevis is set aside from other events in that it raises money to fund the conservation and maintenance of Ben Nevis, an important cause when you consider the 130,000 people that make the walk up Britain's highest peak each year.

Between all the participants, over £2,500 has been raised for the Nevis Partnership so far. Participants were also given the option to raise further money for other charities after they had reached the £250 target. A further £1,600 has been raised for three other charities because of this. Overall, the first Nevis at Night was a huge success.

Light Up Ben Nevis will be happening again on Saturday the 21st of September 2019, with an addition to the Nevis at Night programme at a lower level. Both events will have lights, music and poetry to enhance the natural beauty of this incredible area, making this a unique, exciting fundraising event.

If you would like to find out more about any of the Nevis at Night events or participate next year, please visit the website: www.nevisatnight.com



An Outlandia Journey

Iona Skyring & Louise Kernaghan

The Glen's residence for local, national and international artists hidden in the forest, Outlandia is a sanctuary for creativity and expression.

The most recent residents of this off the grid art space were local students from the Room 13 Community Studio. The students visited Outlandia as part of a three day workshop which looked at the journey and processes of creating art and the benefits of nature for this process.

Workshop organiser, Louise Kernaghan, is an artist with a passion for the outdoors. She studied painting at the Edinburgh College of Art where she was able to build a portfolio of photographs, and small paintings and collages. Much of this work was based on her experiences getting out of the studio and exploring the Scottish Highlands, replicating journeys she had taken through her art. After her studies, Louise went on to get her outdoor qualifications and got a job working as an instructor for the Outward Bound Trust Loch Eil.

'This was a great journey in confidence and exploration personally, but I also valued the ability to positively impact directly on young people's lives. After a couple of years I left to give myself more time to get into art again and so the opportunity to work with Room 13 Studios to run a workshop with young people, engaging them in art and the outdoors was a perfect fit. I also did a residency at Outlandia last year so it was my idea to have the final day of the Room 13 workshop up there as a fitting end to the theme of 'Journeying in the Landscape.'

Aided by Room13 resident artist, Richard Bracken, the three-day micro project was run for children aged 8-11 and was based around methods and tactics that Louise herself uses as an artist to develop ideas to generate artwork. One of these methods is seen in the link between journeying and the evolution of an idea or inspiration. With much of the project being spent outside, the children were able to test this approach themselves by making physical journeys in the landscape to aid them with inspiration and development of their ideas.

'The first day was spent down at Caol beach, near where Room 13 is based, and the children were able to explore the area, collecting materials, objects and making some initial drawings and sculptures outside. I told them about how I like to reuse found objects in my work and draw on scrap bits of paper or offcuts, instead of using new paper, so they had to find their own materials that otherwise might have been thrown away. Day two was focused in the studio, developing their ideas and creating a collection of sculptures, drawings and performative pieces. I introduced the idea of documenting the art in unusual spaces so we photographed much of the work outside to let the wind interact and in the stairwell and corridors of the Caol Community Centre as the children were holding their work or walking with it.'

'The final day was spent in Glen Nevis and journeying to Outlandia. We developed the idea that the artwork can go on a "journey" physically and conceptually, and that the documenting of the journey itself could be the art rather than just the object. I like the idea that the act of exploring can be the art rather than just the final product and so our trip to Outlandia was very fitting. The children noted the effort it took to get up the steep hill carrying their artworks but were rewarded by the sculptural shape of the treehouse. They spent the rest of the day documenting their work in and around the space whilst all the time coming up with further ideas. It really was a "journey" in many senses of the word.'

The Nevis Partnership are the key holders for Outlandia. We can facilitate the sharing of resources with artists in residence and anyone who wants to know more about the space, the local area, our environmental projects and our partner organisations. If you are an artist and wish to use Outlandia, contact London Fieldworks with a proposal.

www.londonfieldworks.com

www.nevislandscape.co.uk/projects



Partnership Working with the John Muir Trust

Written by Nathan Berrie

Summer can be an extremely busy time of year for the land staff throughout the various John Muir Trust properties, particularly at Nevis.

Much of our time in Nevis is spent fulfilling our wildlife monitoring programme. The programme in the Nevis area is now in its 10th year and offers vital insights into wildlife and habitat trends which are being used to inform our future management of the property – making it a priority task for us.

Thankfully over recent years this task has been made considerably easier with the help of The Nevis Landscape Partnership programme. A particularly significant piece of our monitoring is concerned with dwarf heath and seedling monitoring which is used to steer our deer management in Nevis. This laborious task requires many hours of trekking across hill sides while painstakingly recording observations from over 200 seedlings and 40 separate heath plots.

Luckily for us, the Nevis Landscape team are always happy to help. The Nevis Training Project presented us with the perfect opportunity to complete our work plan whilst providing relevant training for the trainee volunteer rangers. Without their help, the task in hand would have been much more challenging. It just goes to show that the best thing for conservation management is feet on the ground. Furthermore, it seems the experiences gained by the trainee rangers is now being put to good use with one of the former trainees, Edith, now using the technique to monitor deer impacts at other locations.



As well as our general work plan, we often take into consideration an unplanned work load. The Steall Gorge path is susceptible to rock falls and landslips. The rock fall of Autumn 2016 was a particularly memorable one. However, most readers will not be aware that smaller scale movements of the Meall Cumhann hill occur on a regular basis - the summer of 2018 was no such exception. After some heavy rain fall a small but concerning landslip brought debris down onto the gorge path.

In some circumstances this work would require a contractor to be arranged at great cost. However at a moment's notice, Conservation Officer Rowan and Path Officer Dougie, were able to use their skills and assist us in making the path safe and reopened to the public. Their help was particularly valued as the slip occurred during one of the busiest visitor periods of the summer. The path would have possibly been unsafe for an extended period while contractors were arranged if they weren't able to aid in getting the path cleared and making it safe again.

Looking into the future, whether it is unplanned or planned work, we hope that this partnership will continue. As stated earlier, the best thing for conservation is feet on the ground - with Nevis becoming an increasingly busy visitor destination, feet on the ground are more important than ever.



Winter Diary Dates



Footpath Work Party - Wednesday 5 December 2018



Conservation Work Party - Saturday 8 December 2018



Christmas Craft Fair - Sunday 9 December 2018



Footpath Work Party - Wednesday 9 January 2019



Conservation Work Party - Saturday 19 January 2019



Fort William Mountain Festival - February 20-24 2019

To find out more and sign up visit:
www.nevislandscape.co.uk/events