

THE BORDERS FOREST TRUST
ANNUAL REVIEW
2009

..rooted in the community

The Borders Forest Trust Annual Review 2009

Director's Message



New BFT Patron Rory Bremner with Willie McGhee



Forest Schools Teacher Training

Where to start in writing a message encapsulating what happened to the Trust in 2009? Obviously the success of our Devil's Beef Tub appeal and taking entry to Corehead was a tremendous fillip for the Trust; another piece of the jigsaw in building a new Ettrick Forest. People to thank for this achievement are innumerable: members, charitable trusts, statutory bodies, BFT Trustees and all those individuals who were moved to support the venture. Special thanks go to the fundraising team in BFT led by Bridie Ashrowan and including Louisa Finch and Nicola Hunt, and for the sterling efforts of our most dedicated local volunteer, Peter Dreghorn. Other thanks go to Jim Hume MSP and to Pierre Alban Guy for hosting fundraising events at the Scottish Parliament, Castle Venlaw Hotel and Auchen Castle Hotel.

As if acquiring the Beef Tub and Corehead was not enough we were delighted to welcome Rory Bremner, Britain's foremost satirist and impressionist, as our BFT Patron. Rory has a direct link to the Scottish Borders and a strong affinity for the landscape of the south of Scotland; we have no doubt that he will be an enthusiastic champion for the Trust.

The BFT AGM was enlivened by Professor Stephen Blackmore, who regaled us with his predictions for the state of natural systems across the globe and gave us a vision of gardening the earth. We bid adieu to two Trustees; John Bathgate and Jeremy Thompson and welcomed Mike Baker and Pierre Alban Guy on to the BFT board.

Yet again we have to extend a large vote of thanks to Andrew Panter and the Scottish Natural Heritage team in Galashiels, who have awarded us a further two years of core funding. Thanks go to our diligent grants officer, Karen Morrison and to SNH Dumfries and Galloway, notably Jon Warren and Chris Miles, who continued to fund our volunteering effort at Wildwood.

In pursuit of creating a wood using culture, the progress of Real Wood Studios has been exemplary. The move from the previous top down management structure within Woodschool to an employee owned collective has resulted in a renaissance of creativity. This shiny, new restructured Woodschool is a natural progression of the founding principles of the Trust, as espoused by Tim Stead, who envisaged a day when communities and collectives of people would realise their

aspirations through their own endeavours. Long may their order books be full.

The Trust received funding from many sources. These are too numerous to mention all here, but a thanks must be given to the Voluntary Action Fund, Lloyds TSB Foundation, LEADER, Forestry Commission Scotland, Rural Payments and Inspection Directorate, Robertson Trust, Gannochy Trust and the Ernest Cook Trust. Special thanks also go to Andy Tharme of Scottish Borders Council and to Greg MacFarlane, Jim Affleck, Iain Iaidlaw, David Kennedy and John Dougan at the Forestry Commission.

A final note of thanks to all those members and supporters of BFT who continue to give their time, resources and money. Without them the Trust would not be able to continue in its mission, to provide new and exciting ways for trees and woodlands to become a meaningful part of peoples' lives.

WILLIE MCGHEE
DIRECTOR

Patron's Foreword

With its hills, native woodlands and wild places, the Borders landscape must be one of the most dramatic and beautiful in the country. Anyone familiar with the Eildon Hills above St Boswells - Roman Trimontium - or the wild expanses of hill and moorland either side of the border will testify to their attraction, in any light and (almost!) any weather.

When we bought a house here and decided to spend more time in the Borders, it was not least with the intention of spending time exploring this unique landscape. So I was delighted when the Borders Forest Trust approached me to become a Patron. Their vision, and their work in encouraging local communities to help these wonderful places flourish impressed me. It's a vision they're busy putting into practice, working with young people and communities, engaging with local landowners and supporting large-scale projects like the Carrifran Wildwood and Corehead.

It's clear that Borders Forest Trust's work is well respected throughout the Borders and beyond, and I'm pleased to give the Trust's aims my backing.

RORY BREMNER
PATRON

Contents

| | |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| Page 2 | Director's Message |
| Page 3 | Patron's Foreword |
| Page 3 | Chairman's Report |
| Pages 4-5 | Community Woodlands |
| Page 5 | Real Wood Studios |
| Page 6 | Carrifran Wildwood |
| Page 7 | Woodland Habitats |
| Pages 8-9 | Map |
| Pages 10-11 | Education |
| Page 12 | Corehead |
| Page 13 | 2009 Devil's Beef Tub Stakeholders |
| Page 14 | Staff Profiles |
| Page 15 | Financial Summary |

Chairman's Report

Thanks to the wonderful support of our members and many other people, 2009 was a memorable year for the Trust. The nail-bitingly close but successful appeal to raise the purchase price of Corehead Farm by the May deadline was undoubtedly the highlight and provided a boost which took us through the rest of the year. We ended with increased membership and a satisfactory financial surplus.

Restoring native woodland is the bedrock of our work and we have been pleased to continue working with private landowners in creating new woodlands, large and small - some of which are designed to help the spectacular but rare black grouse. To fund these schemes our staff have become expert at negotiating their way through the complexities of the new Scottish Rural Development Programme.

Restoring links between people and their natural environment is our other main priority and through our education and training programmes we have been making an important contribution towards achieving this. We continue to provide valuable support to the various community woods in the Borders.

After the difficult restructuring of Woodschool in 2008 it has been very satisfying to see the new consortium Real Wood Studios doing so well. They have developed a studio for the public to view their splendid products and

have improved the financial position of Woodschool considerably.

Volunteers remain our lifeblood in many ways, enabling us to do so much more. The Wildwood is a splendid example of this and the tenth anniversary of its purchase was celebrated in October by the launch of a book by Myrtle and Philip Ashmole "The Carrifran Wildwood Story". They have led this project from its conception and their book is not only a stirring read but a testament to the huge contribution made by so many people.

Taking possession of Corehead has meant a fast learning curve in the delights and cares of owning sheep during the most severe winter of recent years. The experience of owning and managing a working farm will give us a better understanding of rural issues and help to forge stronger relations with the farming community.

The staff have performed wonders during a year when they have frequently been short handed. I am very grateful to Willie, Nicola and the rest of the team for their commitment and enthusiasm. My thanks also go to our Trustees for their support and willingness to give their time to help the Trust's work. Despite the country's uncertain financial position we can look forward with confidence to 2010.

JOHN HUNT
CHAIRMAN



Roseanna Cunningham MSP visits the Real Wood Studios workshop



Families enjoying green woodworking at the 2009 Open Day

Community Woodlands

This project aims to support community owned and managed woodland in the Borders, encourage greater participation in woodland activities and re-ignite a woodland culture within the people of the south of Scotland.

The first half of the year saw the submission of a 3 year application to the Scottish Rural Development Programme Forestry for People Challenge Fund for woodland training and events on behalf of the Borders Community Woodland Forum. This application was successful, enabling 21 Community Woodland group members to attend training courses in strimming, chainsaw, chemical spraying, woodland management and planning and coppicing. Wooplaw Community Woodland provided an ideal site for both the woodland management and coppicing courses which were run by Donald McPhillimy. Those who attended greatly benefited from the experience and were eager to put the new skills gained into practice within their own community woodland sites. The funding has also enabled the woodland groups to hold events such as the one held at Gordon Community Woodland involving a wood sculpture workshop run by local artist Jeremy Cunningham. Other events included Wild in the Woods and green woodworking events at Wooplaw. Match funding for this project came from the Scottish Borders Council Community Grant Scheme.

Darnick Community Woodland held its annual Easter Egg Hunt in April which again attracted lots of eager children to the woodland. The members continued throughout 2009 to develop ideas for the newly acquired three acres adjoining the existing woodland. Plans were drawn up for new areas of native planting along with a community orchard, benches and a wooden shelter. The group look forward to progressing these plans in 2010 once grant applications have been made and funding secured.

The Peebles Community Woodland groups had another productive year with members



Willow weaving at the Kelso Family Fun Day

participating in various work days and meetings. Venlaw Community Woodland erected tawny owl nest boxes with the help of a CSV Action Earth Grant. They also continued with the control of invasive species such as ragwort and Japanese Knotweed and the group had various work days whereby they tackled some large overhanging branches and thick areas of gorse and broom that had been slowly encroaching onto the road. Jubilee Wood also provided some additional help to the wildlife with the installation of some new bat boxes made by the local Peebles Scout group.

Wooplaw Community Wood had plenty of events and work days throughout the year with help from Edinburgh University 'Dirty Weekenders' conservation group and New Caledonian Woodlands volunteers. Tasks such as path edging and high pruning were tackled at both Big Wood and Gullet Wood. The community woodland also benefited with the installation of a new green wood working shelter at Axehead Wood. This was made possible with help from Tom Roebuck and Eoin Cox. Borders Forest Trust also held its annual open day at Wooplaw this year and the event was a success with activities such as willow weaving, green woodworking, traditional firelighting and pond dipping. Approximately 50 members of the public and community woodland members attended the event.

Crailing Orchard continues to develop, and in 2009 the old trees produced a good crop of apples, pears, damsons and plums. The 40 young trees planted in 2007 are faring well and volunteers were kept busy with weeding, strimming and mulching. The bees are also doing well, providing a modest honey harvest.

Kelso Community Woodland group continued the good work at both Wooden Anna and Broomlands throughout the year. Additional trees such as holly, hazel and rowan were



Wood sculpture event at Gordon

planted at Broomlands once tree surgery work had been completed. Interpretation boards were installed at both Broomlands and Wooden Anna. These boards were erected with the help of the Community Woodland Officer's young trainees from the Woodland Volunteering and Youth Training project. The Kelso group had a very successful family fun day at Wooden Anna in late September. Activities such as green woodworking, willow weaving, fun dog classes and long bow archery kept over 70 people entertained over the course of the afternoon.

The Biodiversity Trail at Glenkinnon Burn Community Woodland attracted lots of visitors including school children over the course of the year and the Steiner School from Edinburgh attended an afternoon outdoor work session. Pupils and teachers participated in remedial path works on the trail along with conifer regeneration removal from the native woodland area. In recognition of their efforts the school was provided with Christmas trees and foliage for their Christmas market.

2009 continued to see Leadburn Community Woodland receive support from RBS Yourbank with more trees gifted from their customers. Tree planting days for the RBS trees and others were organised throughout the planting season and this was undertaken by Community Woodland members with help from the Lothian Conservation Volunteers. The group was successful in securing funding from Awards for All to improve access, for drainage work, seating and signage and SRDP funding was also secured for raised bog restoration.

Thanks go to the Forestry Commission Scotland Forest Development Programme and the Gannochy Trust for funding for the Community Woodlands Officer to support community woodlands in the Borders and make these projects possible.

Woodland Youth Volunteering and Training Project

Community Woodlands throughout the Borders benefited greatly during 2009 with the launch of a Woodland Volunteering and Youth Training Project. Funding for this project was gratefully received from Forestry Commission Scotland, the Lloyds TSB Foundation, Voluntary Action Fund and the Scottish Government and European Community Scottish Borders Leader 2007 – 2013 Programme. The project is co-ordinated by the Trust's Community Woodland Officer Lisa Brydon who dedicates two days per week to the project which

involves working with volunteers of all ages and backgrounds along with young unemployed trainees between the ages of 16 and 25. The volunteer day every Wednesday attracts a wide range of volunteers from various organisations such as Apex Borders, Ways 2 Work, Borders College, JHP training, Momentum Scotland and Volunteer Centre Borders.

Tasks undertaken by the volunteers within the community woodlands include tree planting, tree tube removal, brashing, pruning, strimming, coppicing, invasive species control and path works. This outdoor conservation work has proved to be very beneficial to the volunteers, in particular the younger ones who may never

have had the chance to visit a community woodland before. The trainees that go out every Thursday also undertake the above tasks along with attending training courses in strimming and brushcutting, chainsaw use, chemical spraying, quad bike driving and woodland management and planning. By the end of 2009 a total of ten young trainees had gained Lantra certification and from this two have gone on to further education, studying countryside management while two have gained employment within the forestry sector. The project has had a very successful first pilot year and the Lloyds TSB Foundation announced that they will continue to assist with funding for an additional year.



Chainsaw training in progress

Real Wood Studios

Real Wood Studios is one of Scotland's leading centres for locally sourced hardwood design and utilisation. It provides manufacturing infrastructure for furniture designer-makers, promotes hardwood product and design and processes and sells hardwood timber.

Following the restructure of Woodschool in late 2008, the majority shareholding in the business was transferred to five of the furniture-makers and timber operations manager, with Borders Forest Trust continuing to maintain an interest as a minority shareholder. Now operating as a non-profit distributing enterprise, the makers at Real Wood Studios design and produce a wide range of pieces - including dining tables, chairs, fireplace mantles, cabinets and coffee tables. Larger projects are also undertaken including bespoke kitchens, reception desks and stairs.

Borders Forest Trust and Real Wood Studios jointly attended a number of public events

during 2009, finding that the combined message of woodland conservation and the sustainable use of timber is an effective one. Events attended included the Borders Organic Gardeners' Potato Day in March, Edinburgh Treefest in June and the Peebles Wood Market in October.

The reputation of the workshop continued to grow, attracting interest and commissions from architects, businesses, groups and individuals. Notable work undertaken in 2009 included oak seating crafted by Graham Murdoch for the new Darnick Community Garden; memorial benches for Alnwick town centre and picnic tables for Harestanes Visitor Centre made by Ross Ketteridge. A

number of the makers worked together to provide flooring and a bespoke oak kitchen for Lewinshope, a 19th century threshing mill conversion in the Yarrow valley.

Real Wood Studios continues to sell FSC-approved Scottish hardwoods, including oak, ash, elm, beech, birch, sycamore and yew, all sustainably sourced from local estates. Keith Threadgall's timber processing services with the Woodmizer were much in demand throughout 2009, seeing him travel to Cumbria, Berwickshire, Edinburgh, Perthshire and central Scotland to undertake cutting work.

Over the summer months, extensive repairs and renovations were undertaken to convert an old storeroom and workshop, transforming it into a timber-clad, bright and welcoming showroom. A well-attended opening event was held in September and the showroom now acts as an effective "shop front" for the workshop, backed up by the website www.realwoodstudios.com.

In December, Environment Minister Roseanna Cunningham was given a tour of the workshop, meeting the makers and seeing first hand how the locally-sourced timber is transformed into hand-crafted furniture. She then went on to visit the new showroom, where she wished the venture every success for the future.



Kitchen created for Lewinshope by Real Wood Studios

Carrifran Wildwood

The Carrifran Wildwood project aims to recreate, in the Southern Uplands of Scotland, an extensive tract of mainly forested wilderness with most of the species present in the area before human activities became dominant.

The year 2009 saw completion of the first decade of ownership of Carrifran by BFT. Over the past ten years the valley has been changing on an annually accelerating basis. The changes are becoming increasingly apparent as the trees become more established, and more than a dozen species are now bearing seed. In 2009 a total of around 18,000 additional trees were planted across the valley, about half of them by volunteers. This work was organised by George Moffat, in his first full year as Wildwood Project Officer, a position he took over from Hugh Chalmers late in 2008.

Two high altitude sites were at the forefront of work this year. In Firth Hope, just below the summit of White Coomb, the third year of planting was again done mainly by volunteers who camped overnight at an altitude of just over 2,000 feet. They braved a cold March weekend and brought up to 11,000 the total of shrubs and trees planted in this pioneering attempt to restore the lost treeline habitat of the Southern Uplands. The second treeline site, at Rispie Lairs below Saddle Yoke on the opposite rim of Carrifran glen, is only a little lower. A special Forestry Commission grant enabled us to employ Keith Threadgall to plant over 7,000 trees there during the winter months. This was achieved by moving materials and trees up over the top and descending into the bowl with a quad bike.

Over 1,700 other trees were planted by contractors, mainly below Rispie Lairs. Weed control plays an important part in tree establishment, and contractors were also used to reduce 6 ha of bracken in compartments 4a, 2b and 2c. This was completed by the end of July and further planting of sessile oak in the treated areas started in October. The extra oaks only became available at this time due to past poor seed years, and were needed to ensure development of the kind of oak-birch woodland that we originally decided was appropriate for most of the valley. The rest of the planting by volunteers was designed to enrich species diversity; it included many shrubs that were under-represented in the original planting.

Wildlife recording has always played an important part at Carrifran, and in 2009 several woodland bird species took up residence for the first time. Black grouse were again recorded at the two leks (male display sites) and these sites remain the highest recorded

leks in the whole of Great Britain. A family of eight kestrels were seen close to the sheep stell at the entrance to the valley in the last week of July. The high numbers of surviving chicks is doubtless due to the explosion of the vole population.

An amazing amount of voluntary effort has yet again enabled so much to be achieved in the valley. Over the year a total of 428 volunteer days were recorded. These volunteer days are predominantly achieved by the regular Tuesday and Sunday volunteer days. There is also a group of hardy boundary fence walkers who achieved fifteen fence checks over the course of the year in all weathers. The fence is generally in good condition although an emergency repair was required in March up on Saddle Yoke. This was carried out by the Tuesday Volunteers: Stan, Robin, Les and Malcolm, and fortunately the "temporary" repairs have lasted into the following year.

Wildwood also plays host to organised groups of people from a variety of backgrounds. One thing they all have in common is their attraction to the aims of the project. During the year there were visits from 35 Austrian foresters on a fact finding mission across Scotland hosted by Scottish Woodlands, as well as 18 people from a renewable energy company from Edinburgh and 12 RSPB site managers looking at the black grouse habitat. Visits from the Scottish Forestry School and Nat West Bank staff were also of great value in bringing enthusiasm and also helping to spread the conservation message.

Another significant event was publication in September of "The Carrifran Wildwood Story: ecological restoration from the grass roots" by Myrtle and Philip Ashmole with members of the Wildwood Group. Described by one reviewer as "a glorious combination of prose, poetry and pictures", the book explains the original vision, the science that underlies the project and the way in which Carrifran valley is being transformed. First-hand accounts are included from many of the people who have helped to create the Wildwood. In the best tradition of the project, the book was produced entirely by volunteers and no contributor was paid. Half of the cost of printing was covered by Scottish Natural Heritage and all money from sales goes into the project.



Volunteers at Saddle Yoke Maul



Wood anemones among the planted trees

Woodland Habitats

The Woodland Habitat Project encompasses sites planted under the Ancient Woodlands, Riparian Woodlands, Ettrick Woodlands, Wood Pasture and Juniper Restoration Projects together with new native woodland plantings. The Woodland Habitat projects cover an area of 1810 hectares contained within 70 sites managed in partnership with local landowners and farmers.



Riverside compartment planting at Over Kirkhope

New Sites

In 2009, the Trust was successful in securing forestry grants from the Scottish Rural Development Programme for four new planting schemes in the Borders. The forestry grants within the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) were revised in 2009 to give favourable planting grants for new native woodlands and this is acting as a great incentive to landowners and farmers to encourage more native woodland planting.

The approved new planting schemes comprise 170ha of riparian woodland at Over Kirkhope in the Upper Ettrick Valley, 14ha on the Steele near Penicuik a 12ha planting at Wardlaw Hill on Dryhope Farm and a 5ha planting on two cleuchs (gulleys) at Kirkstead Farm. At Over Kirkhope, the planting has been phased across two planting seasons with 48ha scheduled for the 09/10 season. Unfortunately frosty weather at the end of the year delayed the fence construction and planting till 2010. The 1.7km deer fence at the Steele was completed by the end of 2009 but again planting was delayed to 2010 by the extreme winter conditions which made access to the site very difficult. The grants approved on Dryhope Farm and the adjacent Kirkstead farm are for planting in the 2010/11 season. Once completed they will link to existing planted and regenerated areas by the individual parkland trees in boxes planted along the valley. It is hoped that the planting on these two sites will be of benefit to the nationally rare Black Grouse which are known to have leks (display grounds for the males) on these farms.

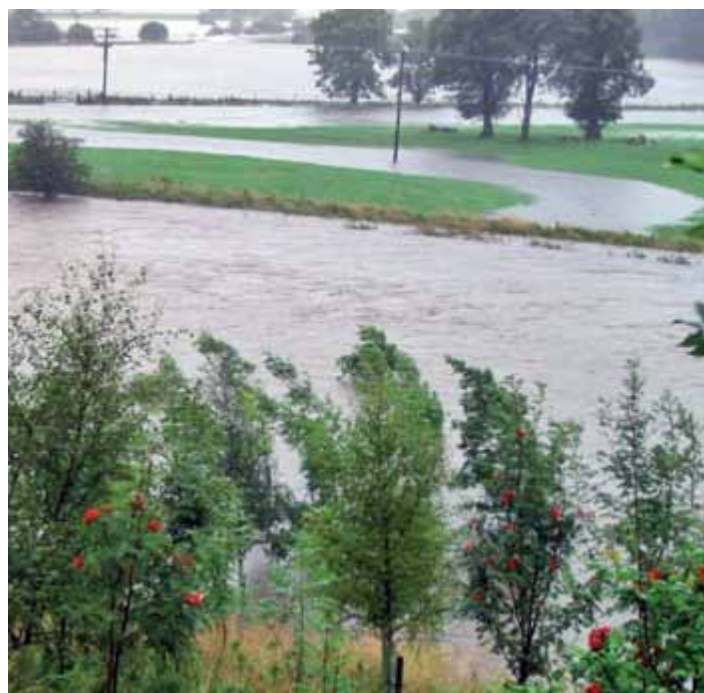
Existing Sites

The ongoing maintenance and fence checking continued on a weekly basis across the portfolio of existing sites. It was encouraging to spend less time replacing losses, and in 2009 we required fewer than 1,000 replacement trees over all sites. Another important task has been carrying out weed control. Contractors did most of this over the winter months but BFT staff make good the smaller sites in the summer. In general, any tree or woody shrub below 1.5m in height tends to require some herbicide application.

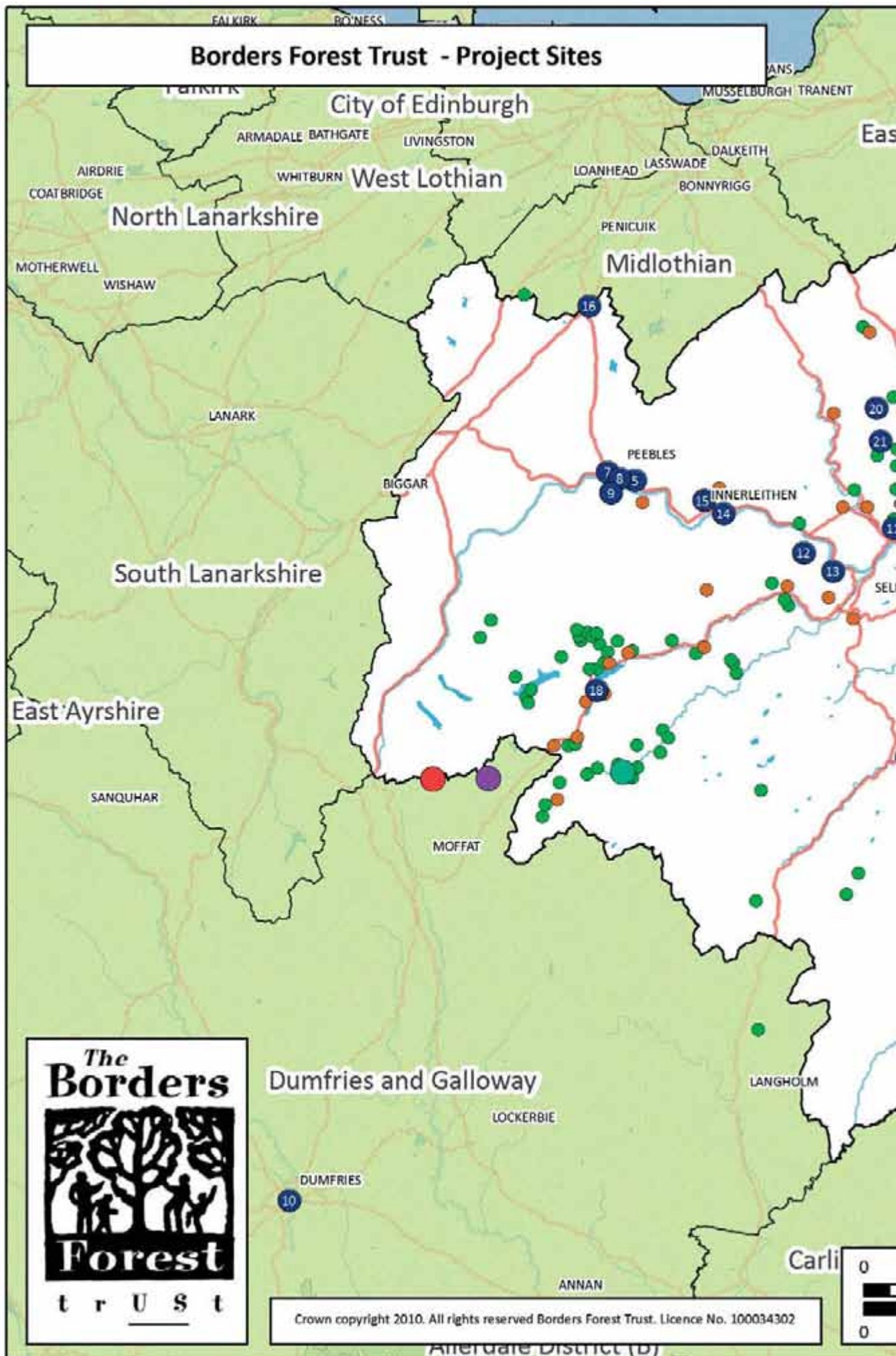
Checking fence lines and gates is a constant task, carried out regularly with repairs made as soon as possible. Spring and late summer are generally the times of year when damage occurs. This is in part due to flash rises in water level which often carries debris that breaks fences. Paths and car parks have also been affected by the heavy rain and snow and here the remedial work has meant improvements to drainage or resurfacing.

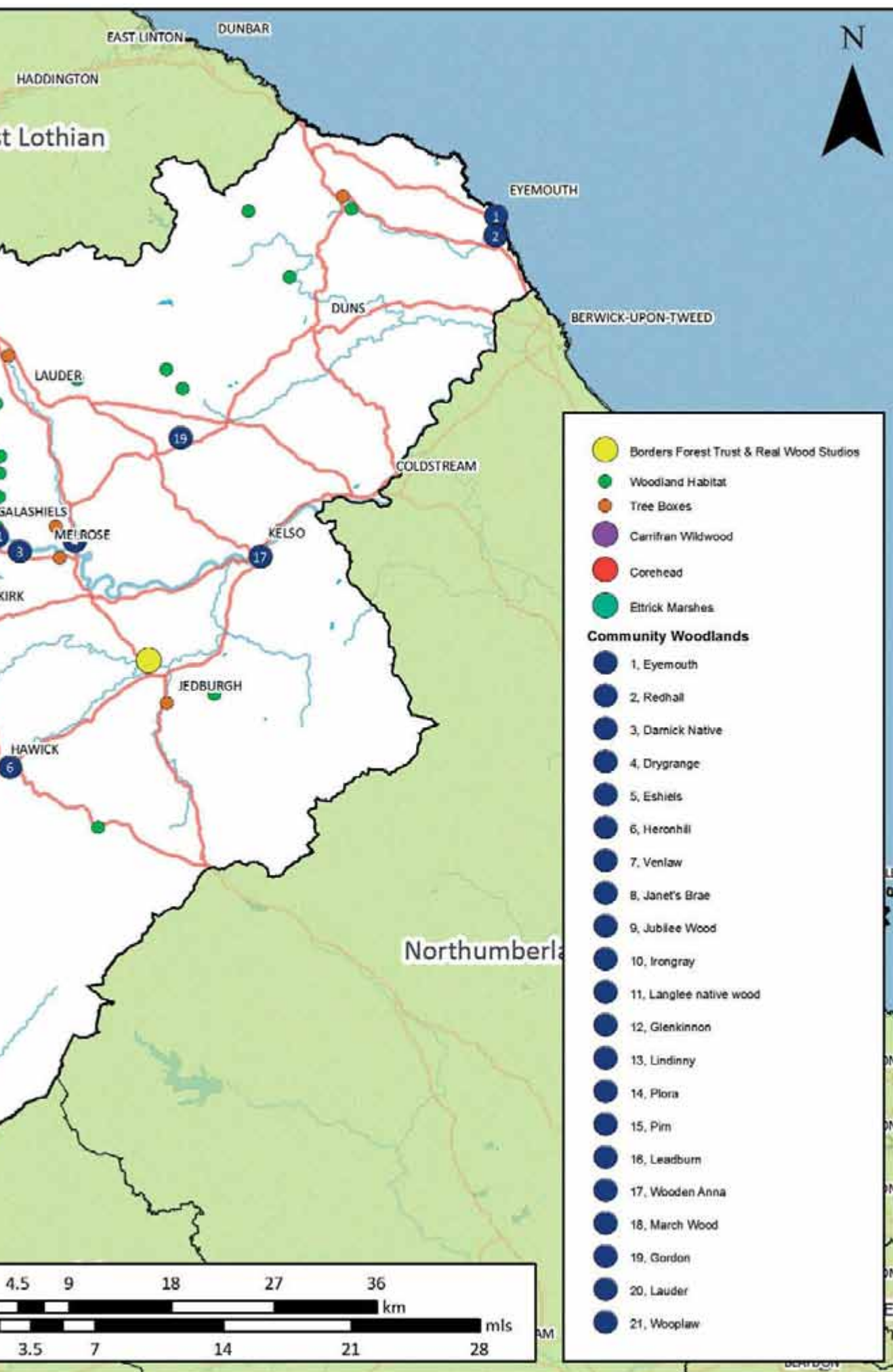
Most of our tree boxes are now well established but a few succumbed to cattle rubbing. This is generally not too troublesome, but the ones which needed attention tended to be a little off the beaten track. Tree boxes which are helping to re-establish wood pasture habitat can be seen from many roads in the Borders area and in particular from the A7.

As ever the contribution from work placement students, regular volunteers and the groups of volunteers helped us enormously. The time given and the skills they bring with them are greatly appreciated by all members of staff. Over the past year the time equivalent of over £5,800 worth of voluntary contributions have been recorded. These contributions assist in supporting grant applications but more importantly we believe they provide an enjoyable and rewarding experience to the individuals concerned.



Flooding at Tushielaw





Education

The main components of Borders Forest Trust's education project are Forest Schools and general woodland activities. These components aim to deliver a range of innovative educational and recreational projects designed to raise awareness of our woodland heritage and the natural environment. Forest School is 'an inspirational process, that offers children and young people opportunities to achieve, develop confidence and self esteem, through hands on learning experiences in a local woodland setting'. General woodland education can cover a wide array of curricular topics, Eco-school themes and also promotes general health and wellbeing.



Forest School Teacher Training

In 2009, the Community Liaison and Education Officer (CLEO) was funded by Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Robertson Trust to work with local schools and young people groups; develop and deliver projects; promote a sustainable system for the future delivery of all forms of environmental education such as facilitating a Forest School teacher training programme; and to promote the use of local woodlands for educational and recreational purposes. The post has a strong emphasis on the delivery and promotion of Forest School projects in the region, as well as supporting and leading general woodland educational visits and other woodland activities and events.

Forest Schools

Throughout 2009 the CLEO continued to deliver a variety of Forest School themed projects and also worked towards developing a Forest School teacher training project and network.

Over the course of the year the CLEO delivered ten Forest School projects, working with Sprouston (two projects), Broomlands, Morebattle (two projects), Stow and Edenside Nurseries, Stow Primary School and Earlston and Kelso High School Learning Support

pupils. In 2009, over 150 young people benefited from BFT's Forest School projects. Although a large proportion of this project work is child led, the CLEO worked with class and nursery teachers to devise project programmes to tie in with aspects of the Curriculum for Excellence and the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network criteria. The participating High School pupils worked towards individual Discovery level John Muir Awards with project work at Gordon Community Woodland incorporating the main themes of this awards scheme - to discover, explore and conserve a wild place and then share experiences. These elements work particularly well with Forest School projects and also provide extra value to project outcomes, providing participants with an additional valuable and meaningful certificate at the end of a project. Following the success of the first Forest Kindergarten project in 2008, the CLEO was asked to deliver further similar projects with other local nurseries in a variety of different sites. This type of early years project aims to promote sensory skill development and imaginative nature play.

In late 2008, BFT was successful in securing funding from Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) 'Forestry for People' challenge fund, towards a Forest School Training Project for local teachers. This project

set out to deliver a programme of training to enable up to sixteen teachers to participate in a Level 1 Open College Network (OCN) Introduction to Forest School course and a further sixteen teachers the opportunity to work towards a Level 3 (OCN) Forest School Leaders Course. This project aims to arm teachers with the skills and confidence to deliver outdoor teaching and Forest School projects on their own - increasing opportunities for more young people to benefit from this valuable form of outdoor learning.

A number of different factors affected the delivery time of this project. These included the need to find further funding to pay for the full course. This was thankfully secured in the form of generous awards from a variety of Trusts, including the Ernest Cook Trust and the R S Haywood Trust. Also, Scottish Borders Council's local education department underwent large scale reorganisation through 'Transforming Children's Services' and the training courses were delayed until aspects of this restructure had been implemented.

The training started in November 2009, when fifteen participants from fourteen different schools in the region started the Level 3 Forest School Leaders course. This course involves eight days of taught components (intensive, theory and practical skills), a two day ITC Outdoor First Aid course, development of a health and safety handbook (Forest School policies and procedures), a series of six Forest School pilot sessions and a large amount of written coursework and research.

Environmental Education

Environmental and woodland education continued to be in great demand in 2009. Throughout the year the CLEO worked with over 1600 young people from twenty local schools and six other clubs or groups in both educational and recreational woodland activities. This work has included general woodland visits covering a wide range of themes with pupils from Earlston High School and Duns, Gordon, Chirnside, Knowepark, Sprouston, St. Ronan's, Heriot, Stirches, Morebattle, Melrose and Langlee Primary Schools as well as Newtown St. Boswells, Walkerburn and Balmoral Nurseries. The CLEO led tree and bulb planting activities with Walkerburn Primary School; willow sculpture and weaving activities with Stow Primary School; bat and bird box building with Kingsland Primary School; Eco Schools Award/ Eco-Action Day activities with Wilton, Coldingham and Newcastleton Primary Schools. The CLEO has also worked with a variety of young peoples' out of school

projects, e.g. Oxnam, The Rezz (Kelso), Coldstream and Chirnside Youth Groups, Kelso Cubs and Galashiels Wildlife Watch Club.

Throughout the year the CLEO has provided talks and workshops at a variety of teacher training events. These included a Biodiversity Talk for a teachers' Continued Professional Development training session and a presentation about woodland education at a Royal Scottish Forestry Society gathering.

Green Grounds

Funding for BFT's Green Grounds Project, which helped schools in the Borders to develop their grounds for wildlife and learning, came to an end in March 2009. This nine year project was a great success, helping pupils to introduce features such as butterfly and sensory gardens, raised beds, willow structures, wildflower areas, bird and bat boxes to their school grounds. Many thanks to Scottish Natural Heritage for funding for this project which reached so many young people and helped to improve the biodiversity value of all of the school grounds in the Borders over the years. The end of the project sadly led to the loss of Diane Bennett as part-time Green Grounds Officer, although Diane has remained with the Trust on a contract basis to deliver the Ancient Tree Hunt project.

The Ancient Tree Hunt

This new project began in partnership with the Woodland Trust, Forestry Commission Scotland and Treefest Scotland to find and catalogue ancient, veteran or notable trees across the Scottish Borders, as part of the national Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Hunt. Diane Bennett is leading the project, and held tree training and survey days across the Borders, sharing information about the region's most interesting trees and recruiting volunteers to help with the project. Well-attended events were held during the summer at Bowhill, The Hirsell, Kailzie Gardens and at Borders Forest Trust's office. The project was also promoted at many summer shows, including Edinburgh Treefest, the Border Union Show and the Duns, Peebles and Newcastleton Shows. By the end of 2009, the volunteer tree recorders were half way to reaching the target of finding 800 ancient, veteran and notable trees in the Borders. Thanks also go to this project's other funders, which include the Ancient Tree Forum, Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, Heritage Lottery Fund, Scottish Natural Heritage and The Tree Register.



Earlston Eco-Group Pond Dipping



Stow Primary enjoy Forest Schools activities

Corehead

Corehead is a special place in the Moffat Hills that links the Devil's Beef Tub to Hart Fell and the headwaters of the Annan to those of the Tweed. Borders Forest Trust will manage this land to preserve its unique character and to maximise its biodiversity potential in a way that includes the local community and provides access and education opportunities for all.

2009 was something of a rollercoaster year for the Trust, having reached the end of 2008 with only one fifth of the purchase price for Corehead Farm secured and six months left on our legal option it felt as if the Trust had bitten off more than it could chew. We needed to raise a total of £700,000 - £600,000 for the land, £50,000 for 1,000 head of sheep and £50,000 to purchase the agricultural grant entitlement.

Our dedicated membership, loyal Trustees and excellent fund raising team did not let the Trust down. We reached the funding total by the deadline and took entry to Corehead Farm on the 15th of July. On top of this feat we managed to secure five years of conditional grant funding from the Tubney Charitable Trust for capital works such as meadow and wetland restoration. The condition was that we secure a further quarter of a million pounds towards our ecological restoration plans. Thanks go to Nick Forster of the Tubney Charitable Trust for his encouragement and understanding.

Taking ownership of a hill farm is a departure from our woodland creation projects and becoming sheep farmers has involved acquiring new skills and has been a steep learning curve for the Trust. We have relied heavily on Brian and Andy Ryder from the neighbouring Newton Farm, who have acted on our behalf as contract farmers, looking after BFT sheep and managing cattle grazing at Corehead. Andy and Brian provided a lot of valuable farming knowhow and support through 2009 and the Trust is grateful to them for this assistance. Unfortunately they were required to sell Newton Farm and have decided not to continue at Corehead. As we go to press, we have a new contract farming team in place, with Jim Mitchell of Henderland, working with his brother in law Lee Davis, his sister Doreen Davis and his son James Mitchell. A real family team with years of experience in managing Blackface sheep.

The Trust took the decision, before we bought Corehead, to decrease sheep numbers on the most easterly section, which runs to the summit of Hart Fell, and we sold some two hundred and fifty ewes and hogs in October. We also had to buy a number of tupps (rams) for November when tugging started. Mike Baker (BFT Trustee) and John Hume (our agricultural advisor), assisted us in the process of buying, selling and managing the sheep and they will continue to provide valuable input through the Corehead Steering Group.



Surveying Bracken at Corehead



Tups at Corehead, September 2009

This move into farm ownership allows us to marry low intensity hill sheep farming with native woodland creation, heather moorland regeneration and other practical actions designed to restore habitats and encourage colonisation by new animal and plant species. Our aims for habitat restoration are ambitious and the latter part of 2009 was consumed with preparing a large Scottish Rural Development Programme submission for funding towards: tree planting, fencing, hay making, grazing, heather management, bracken management, wetland management and paths and interpretation. Much of the preparation of this was ably shouldered by our Chairman, John Hunt, and by our Projects Manager Nicola Hunt, with input from Wendy Fenton (an independent advisor) and the Trust Director. The labyrinthine SRDP process, which has to be entered online, was expertly handled by Nicola and at the time of going to press we eagerly await the outcome of this submission which was submitted in early 2010.

To give a flavour of what went into the SRDP submission, we plan to plant 200 hectares with new native woodland. This will include ash, hazel and elm on richer, more freely draining soils, downy birch and willow on acidic and moist Molinia dominated areas, Sessile oak and Silver birch on drier ground, and pockets of Scots pine and Juniper on the steep sided, more nutrient poor valley sides.

Other elements of the SRDP submission include changes to the inbye (improved fields) closest to the road. Planting a small area of oats to provide seed eating birds with forage and reinstating hay meadows by cutting and wild flower planting are planned. These activities, whilst requiring agricultural skills, can involve local community participation and volunteering opportunities.

The Trust has been successful in securing Dumfries and Galloway LEADER and Scottish Natural Heritage funding for our new Corehead Site Manager through to 2012 and Ed Glenwright will be starting in this post in April 2010.

Community involvement in decision making and practical management of Corehead is a keystone of this project and we currently have five local people, drawn from Annan Water and Moffat, sitting on our Corehead Steering Group, with six others from Trust staff and Trustees. Idy Davidson, John Hume, Peter Dreghorn, Jane Grey and David Major all live in the Moffat area and have kindly volunteered to provide guidance during this early phase of the project.

2009 Devil's Beef Tub Stakeholders

The Trust would like to gratefully acknowledge the donations made to the Devil's Beef Tub Appeal. Listed below are those who contributed to the Stakeholder and Guardian schemes between 1st January and 31st December 2009, in the names of:

Julia Airlie
Timothy C Allen
The Annandale Arms Hotel
Dominic Ashmole
Philip & Myrtle Ashmole
The Ashrowan Family
Christopher Badenoch
William F & Maureen Ball
Jean E Bartlett
Dr Morris & Sylvia Bradley
Michael E Braithwaite
Mr & Mrs J D Brett
Professor Paul Broda
Jeremy M Burnet
Bridget Butter
Rose Clarkson
Kirsty Clements
Mrs J M Davis & Mr C Davis
Dr Peter Dickman
Murray Douglas & Suzanne Lindsay
Peter Dregghorn
Margaret Elliot
John B Elliot
Andrew K Elliott
Miss J M Errington
Craig Wind Farm Ltd
Judy & Robert Foster
Jevan, Carolyn & Thomas Fraser
Dr W Anthony Gladstone
The Goodburn Family
Nigel Goodman
Mr & Mrs D Gordon
John Grant-Robertson
Keith M Griffiths
Julian Hall
Deborah Hamilton
Heather Harbinson
Catherine M M Hardi
Dr David Hardwick & colleagues,
Borders General Hospital
The Harley Family
Martin & Wendy Harrison

Kate, Connie, Alastair & Iona Harrison
Richard Hartree
Harris, Rowan & Freddie Wingfield-Hayes
Sarah Joanne House-Simpson
John & Janet Hunt
Bill & Ingrid Jamieson
The Johnston Family in memory
of our father, James
Admiral Sir John Kerr
Barbara Knowles
Richard J Leaver
Douglas Lowe
Dr Dorothy A Lunt
Gordon MacGregor
Ronald & Marlies MacLean
Mrs L Madsen
Joan Herrmann & Aubrey Manning
Tony & Sue Manning
Fi Martynoga
Michael Matthews
Alice & Duncan McGhee
Phil McLean & Adrian Kentleton
Chris and Alison Miles
David Millar
Moffat Foundation, Inc
Clan Moffat Society
Edward M Moffat
John Molleson
The Montgomery Family in memory
of Elizabeth Anne Montgomery
Dr Paul Morris
Alan Mould
Hugh R W Murray
Dr Rory Newman
P M Nicholls
Dr Maggie Nicol in memory
of Bobby McBride
Mr & Mrs W R C Ogden
Prof Ian Oswald
Marian Peacock Pochin
Geoff Peel & Isobel Howe
Phillip Steven Pinder
Lord & Lady Polwarth

Clement D Proudlock
Dr Graeme Purves
James & Hilde Paxton
Drew & Moira Reive
Graeme Richardson
A G Ritchie
Edward Hugh Rogers
Colin & Hilary Ross
Jen Ross
Michael Rusbridge
Judy Russell
Heather A. Salzen
Alan P Scott & Carole A A Scott
Miss Vi Shannon
Michael Simmons
Bryony Singleton
Ian Smith
David & Teddy Mehta-Young
Peter Stevenson
Callum & Lewis Tharme
Mrs Elizabeth Thomas
In memory of John Timings
Diana Tinson
JoAnn Frielink & Brian Tiplady
Ann B Toms
Christina Tracey, Eleanor & Isabel Cannard
The Saps Are Rising
Francis Valentine
Ken Wardrop
Mrs A Watson
Nick Whitaker
Mr David A White
Sarah Whitley & Graham Whyte
Dr Peter Christopher Whitwell Machen
Dr Maggie Williams
In memory of Eileen Seeley
John & Carol Woolliams
Douglas & Sheila Wright
Kirsty, Caitlin & Gregor Wright
Sylvia Young
Stephanie & Calum Young

The Trust would also like to thank the following Trusts for their generous support in 2009:

The Banister Charitable Trust
The Gatliff Trust
The Gunter Charitable Trust
The Hamish & Doris Crichton Charitable Trust
The Helen and Horrace Gillman Trusts
The J & J R Wilson Trust
The James Thin Charitable Trust
The Janelaw Trust
The Konrad Zweig Trust

The Mackintosh Foundation
Miss E C Hendry's Charitable Trust
The Pump House Trust
Sir James Miller Edinburgh Trust
Sir Matthew Goodwin's Charitable Trust
The Stafford Trust
Sylvia Aitken Charitable Trust
The Tay Charitable Trust
The Tekoa Charitable Trust



Volunteers planting at Corehead in November

Staff Profiles



Willie McGhee
BFT Director

Willie is a forester who has worked with the Trust since its formation in 1996. He graduated from Edinburgh University with a degree in Ecological Science and Honours in Forestry and has worked in UK and international forestry since 1990 and in the environmental sector since 1988. He is currently a non executive Director of Woodschool, the Tweed Forum, and BioClimate Research and Development Ltd. and is a Trustee serving with the Scottish Forestry Trust and Scottish Power's Green Energy Trust.



Nicola Hunt
Projects Manager

Nicola joined the Trust team in 2001 as the Projects Assistant. Now Projects Manager, she is responsible for the general day to day running of the Trust and the development and delivery of projects. Originally from Hamilton, Nicola moved to Edinburgh to study Ecological Science at the University. From there she worked in a number of jobs including as a ranger in West Lothian before moving to the Borders in 2000 to a mammal research position.



Lisa Brydon
Community Woodlands Officer

Lisa, a local Borders person joined the trust in June 2008 as the new Community Woodland Officer. Lisa graduated from Edinburgh University with a degree and honours in Ecological Sciences. Lisa previously worked for the RSPB in the Tweed Valley as their Osprey information assistant and has a keen interest in wildlife and conservation at both home and abroad.



George Moffat
Woodland Officer

George's involvement with the Trust stemmed from being a volunteer at Wooplaw Community Woodland. He then went on to study conservation management whilst working locally with land based companies before becoming Warden on Selkirk Hill. He joined the Trust in 1997 as Community Woodland Officer before moving onto ecological restoration within the riparian and ancient woodland project sites.



Anna Craigen
Community Liaison and Education Officer

Anna started out with the Trust in 2002 as a part-time Community Woodland Assistant and has since become the full-time Community Liaison and Education Officer. She graduated with a Masters in Landscape Architecture from Heriot Watt University and has experience in landscape design, property law and voluntary work in the conservation sector.



Sandra Smith-Maxwell
Finance Officer

Sandra joined the Trust in January 2006, having gained an HND in Business Management at Heriot Watt University in 2001. Sandra works part time with BFT and also takes an active part in her husband's events catering business and fridge trailer hire company.



Louisa Finch
Communications Officer

In January 2009 Louisa joined the Trust, working part-time to provide administrative and marketing support. Since late 2009 she has also been responsible for the Trust's fundraising activities. Louisa has worked as a freelance journalist for the last six years, specialising in articles about gardening and the environment, and she was previously a staff writer at The Scotsman.



Barry Roberts
Native Woodland Site Manager

Barry recently joined the team as our new Site Manager. He graduated from Bangor University in North Wales with an honours degree in Forestry and has spent the majority of his adult life working with young people and community groups in the environment. Before joining the BFT team Barry worked for The Mersey Forest as a Community Forester and on various GIS projects.



Sarah Anderson
Office Manager

Sarah joined the Trust in March 2010, working part-time to provide administrative support to the team. Previously she has worked for a variety of different companies and charities in a similar role, and is keen to assist in the daily running of the Trust. The mother of two boisterous daughters, Sarah spends much of her time with her family in the woodlands in and around the local area.



Ed Glenwright
Corehead Site Manager

Ed joined the team in April 2010 and will oversee the development and implementation of the Corehead project. Ed has moved to Scotland from Kent, where he worked as a Countryside Officer for Kent County Council and as a Reserves Officer for Kent Wildlife Trust. Previous experience as a farm manager on the North York Moors will stand him in good stead in this new post.



Staff Changes

There were a number of staff changes during 2009 and early 2010.

Bridie Ashrowan, the Trust's Fundraising Manager, left in August 2009 to take on a new role as Project Manager at Youth Borders.

In February 2010 Barry Roberts joined the Trust as Native Woodland Site Manager.

Sarah Anderson began working for the Trust in March 2010 as part-time Office Manager to support to the team while Nicola Hunt is on maternity leave.

In April 2010 Ed Glenwright joined the Trust as Corehead Site Manager.

Diane Bennett continues to work on contract to deliver the Ancient Tree Hunt project in partnership with the Woodland Trust and Forestry Commission Scotland.

Financial Summary

Summary of Financial Statements for the year ending 31 December 2009.

BALANCE SHEET

| | | |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| FIXED ASSETS | 2009(£) | 2008(£) |
| Tangible Fixed Assets | 1,067,166 | 473,678 |
| Fixed Asset Investments | 25 | 2 |
| Total | 1,067,191 | 473,680 |
| CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| Stock | 49,923 | 3,230 |
| Debtors | 128,096 | 65,121 |
| Cash at bank | 439,793 | 385,755 |
| Total | 617,812 | 454,106 |
| CREDITORS | | |
| Amount due within one year | (42,059) | (16,606) |
| Net Current Assets | 575,753 | 437,500 |
| Total Assets less Current Liabilities | 1,642,944 | 911,180 |
| CHARITY FUNDS | | |
| Restricted Funds | 1,624,566 | 901,474 |
| Unrestricted Funds | 18,378 | 9,706 |
| Total | 1,642,944 | 911,180 |

GRANTS 2009

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| | (£) |
| Forestry Commission Scotland | 27,102 |
| Lloyds TSB Foundation | 8,611 |
| Gannochy Trust | 6,000 |
| Robertson Trust | 9,000 |
| Scottish Borders Council | 2,789 |
| Black Grouse Recovery Project | 61,125 |
| Scottish Natural Heritage | 44,812 |
| SGRPID | 37,922 |
| LEADER | 12,905 |
| RS Hayward Trust | 1,000 |
| J Watson Trust | 1,500 |
| Voluntary Action Fund | 13,000 |
| Ernest Cook Trust | 942 |
| Sundry | 500 |
| Total | 227,208 |

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

| | |
|---|------------------|
| INCOMING RESOURCES | (£) |
| Donations & Membership | 734,558 |
| Activities for Generating Funds | 64,283 |
| Investment Income | 15,452 |
| Grants Receivable | 227,208 |
| Total | 1,041,501 |
| RESOURCES EXPENDED | |
| Costs of Generating Voluntary Income | 24,563 |
| Fundraising expenses & other costs | 3,839 |
| Charitable Activities | 253,834 |
| Governance Costs | 27,501 |
| Total | 309,737 |
| NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS | 731,764 |
| Fund balance at 1 st Jan 09 | 911,180 |
| Fund balance at 31 st Dec 09 | 1,642,944 |

OPERATIONS EXPENDITURE 2009

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| | (£) |
| Borders Forest Trust | 43,634 |
| Community Woodlands | 68,546 |
| Corehead | 17,976 |
| Education Green Grounds | 5,206 |
| Education General | 33,610 |
| Ettrick Marshes | 279 |
| Wildwood | 49,471 |
| Woodland Habitats | 35,112 |
| Total | 253,834 |

The financial summary is taken from the Borders Forest Trust 2009 Audited Accounts, copies of which are available on request from the BFT office. The fourteenth set of Borders Forest Trust Accounts has been produced in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting by charities.





Our vision for the south of Scotland is a place where a rich network of native woodlands and wild places flourish, cared for by local communities. We work to conserve, restore and manage native woodlands and other natural habitats for the benefit of people and wildlife. We support community woodlands, habitat restoration, education and arts projects and are involved in the sustainable use of hardwood timber. Our vision can only be realised with the participation and support of people in the south of Scotland.

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