

Arts in the Outdoors

2008 Seminar Proceedings
of the
Countryside Recreation Network

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Countryside Recreation Network Seminar

"Arts in the Outdoors"

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Sally Thomas
Countryside and Land Management Team
Scottish Government

Art installations are accepted as part of the urban environment and increasingly we are not surprised to encounter art, in all its forms, in the natural environment. Artists recognise that the natural environment inspires and informs their work, and the public are demonstrably keen to encounter art in the outdoors through installations, events, and hands on experience. Is this a response to urbanisation and the need to reconnect with our environment? Does art in the outdoors enable people to make that connection either through direct hands on involvement or through the interpretation of the work of others?

This seminar will consider current art projects in terms of the benefits they bring for participants, communities and policy makers. It will also consider the practicalities of installing or staging arts in the outdoors. The day aims to share ideas and raise awareness about the range work currently underway. We will also explore common themes and demonstrate innovation.

The seminar will look at how art can be used to deliver a range of policy objectives such as health improvement, social inclusion and community empowerment. The success of such work is well documented but with the need to show clear tangible benefits in order to secure future funding we need to find ways to demonstrate those benefits, some of which are difficult to measure in a conventional statistical way.

It is easy to overlook the practicalities of staging art in the outdoors. Events which attract large numbers of people need careful planning and the seminar will consider the range of issues which must be dealt with to ensure that the experience on offer is not only enjoyable and inspirational, but also well managed and safe.

Communication is a central theme throughout the day either with individuals or with the wider community. This may be through hands on involvement in terms of the creation of art works or communication where art enables people to interpret their environment. Essential to all of this work is the environment itself as the inspiration, the backdrop and the performance space for art in all its forms.

Countryside Recreation Network Seminar

"Arts and the Outdoors: Scope, objectives and opportunities - emerging findings from a review for the Forestry Commission"

Dave Pritchard
Consultant

Introduction

Modern ecology has become less holistic, and offers little help with intangible and subjective aspects of the value-set. Many environmental values are anyway largely cultural constructs, and matters of societal choice. Increasingly, perhaps, the arts offer a better language with which to engage with these aspects.

Trees and woodlands offer some of the most accessible ways of relating to the natural world. We look to them for many metaphors of human life, and anthropomorphise their structures, cycles, vulnerabilities and strengths. We watch individuals grow over a lifetime that is comparable to our own, but can also be a link to our history and a legacy for our grandchildren. The worldwide social, sacred and mythological significance of trees is no surprise.

In recent decades in the UK, there has been a decline in personal and cultural connections with trees and woodland. UK forestry policy has changed radically, however, and is now as concerned with environmental and social benefits as it is with timber. The sheer scale of what the state forestry sector is able to do, combined with a general expansion in public participation in art, and a growth of professional arts practices that deal with nature and environment, makes it an exciting moment to review the arts activities of the Forestry Commission (FC).

The FC is responsible for a huge variety of such activity throughout Great Britain. There has, however, never been a complete overview of this, and no policy or strategy for its future direction. This paper gives a glimpse of the picture emerging from a project currently underway, in association with the Centre for Contemporary Art & the Natural World (CCANW), to provide:

- (i) a basic audit of activities that have been taking place so far;
- (ii) a discussion of the FC's role in art, as a basis for future strategy.

The range of FC involvements¹

Beyond the well-known Forestry Commission sculpture sites at the Forest of Dean, Stour Valley, Tyrebagger, Grizedale and Kielder, the present review identifies a further 120 initiatives across Great Britain. In addition to sculpture, these range across drawing and painting, creative writing, music concerts, sound and light events, drama, photography, community outreach and education programmes, craft festivals, film and TV locations, storytelling, architecture and conferences. Artists are also sometimes used in community consultation and forest landscape design; and there are even places where it could be said that the forest itself is a work of art.

For an initial 20 years or so, the Commission was known for supporting examples of lyrical land art, but since the mid 1990s, activities have broadened to include more interactivity, community engagement, and sociocultural themes of all kinds. Some work is highly conceptual and critically engaged, while other work is mainly a visitor amenity.

Reviewing the art, the policy context, and practical management issues

In addition to documenting the art itself, the review is examining both its policy context and a range of internal management issues, including drivers of initiative, sources of funding, governance arrangements and partnerships, branding and marketing, risk management, legal liabilities and health & safety. Other considerations relate to responsibility and care for the artistic content of the work, intellectual property, maintenance and decommissioning, and balancing curatorial needs with the needs of operational forestry.

Outcomes and benefits

The Forestry Commission's art activities can and do add in unique ways to people's awareness, understanding and valuing of trees, forests and woodland. Art can be very effective at addressing "sense of place" and other intangible values concerning cultural history and identity; reassessing relationships between nature and society. Art projects which increase people's respect for forest values have helped in reducing litter, fire and vandalism; and probably also support a wider societal sense of care for the natural environment.

Some initiatives are making important contributions to empowerment of the disadvantaged, catering for people with special needs, and making new channels of connection with local people. Some art projects support important agendas concerning well-being and health. New ways of getting people into forests, and developing creative expression, produce a range of physical and psycho-social benefits.

People's perception of landscape is highly bound up with imagination and with cultural narratives, and research on forests has looked at links with perceptions of

¹ Reference in this paper to "FC arts initiatives" includes partnerships with others.

safety and fear of crime. Whether people see a forest as threatening, or problematic, is heavily influenced by artistic representations. Society may be exhibiting some distorted risk-aversions nowadays, but at the same time, proximity to trees has a positive effect on house-prices; so complex forces are at work here.

The FC uses art in its mainstream public communication work. Art is also important in education work, including the "Forest Schools" programme, where more than 150 sites act as outdoor classrooms for creativity-based play and curriculum studies on art and music, and also use art in teaching numeracy and literacy. This can especially help the development of children who have difficulties in a normal classroom. An obvious impact of Forestry Commission art is in attracting visitors to forests, and the Commission is an increasingly important provider of recreational amenity and tourism development. Art influences the quality of visits, the motivation to visit, the likelihood of re-visiting, and the length of stay, all of which can have benefits for local economies, including employment. Individual artworks are often valued as a point of reference or a destination for a walk or cycle ride. This can give visitors a mental or emotional structure for their experience of a landscape which they might otherwise perceive as boring or lacking in familiar cues. In addition to the technical aesthetic role of art in forest planning and design, community arts projects can sometimes be the best way of enfranchising people and consulting them about change.

A final category of outcome is obviously the intrinsic creative merit of all the art work that is undertaken, whether this is manifest as products or as processes. The review project is showing that the *artistic* achievements of the FC's involvements – the *content* of the work, and its meanings, effects, significance and quality, add up to an enormously significant contribution to the contemporary cultural life of the nation.

What are the Forestry Commission's niche strengths?

The particular institutional "enabling environment" of the FC especially seems to favour:

- work that deals in sensitive creative responses to individual places;
- work that benefits from being located in extensive outdoor areas, either as the right type of setting for it, or in the sense of accommodating activities or collections of works which operate with issues of space, distance and landscape, or work that needs buffering from surrounding areas, or needs to absorb large audiences;
- work that needs time, because it is process-based, or needs researching over seasons, or gains value over time;
- work that champions the use of wood as a material;
- work that can be developed conceptually in "free space" and then have a wide variety of possible locations or other delivery options to choose from, so as to optimise the realisation of some conceptual vision;
- work that can benefit from an extensive nationwide patchwork of landholdings, so for example constructing strategic programmes of activity that have diversity within them, but also have some kind of unity and coherence;

- activities that benefit from synergy with infrastructure that is already being operated by the FC for other reasons, such as visitor facilities;
- activities that benefit from an institutional context that can give a long-term view, not just in terms of stability of funding or landholding, but using the FC's role as a guardian of relevant public interests.

Dilemmas and balances

Defining the areas of strength still leaves some potential dilemmas to address. For example, the FC could engage in art that is as simple, accessible, popular and non-challenging as possible, aiming for mass recreational appeal and visitor numbers; or at the other extreme it could favour art that pushes new frontiers, excites the art press, raises profound questions, has a "message" and stretches the imagination in unusual ways. On the one hand there are risks of being superficial or repetitive, and on the other hand risks of being obscure, shocking or elitist. Moreover some works that may be alienating when presented in a "fine art" context can be more appealing and democratised when they are offered in a "user-friendly" outdoor setting.

Another "balance" question would be between a policy on one hand of mapping, signposting and explaining every artwork in a forest; and on the other hand an approach where interpretation is low-key or minimal or absent, and the purpose (and the attraction) involves mystery, intrigue, and personal subjective reactions. Other examples include the choice between a proactive role for the FC or a more reactive role.

Consultees predominantly consider that most of these dilemmas can be solved by offering examples from all points on a spectrum across the national totality of involvements, tailoring things to local circumstances rather than having one corporate formula.

Needs, opportunities, and options for the future

There is no doubt that the case is powerfully made in principle, and on several counts, for the Forestry Commission to continue to be actively and extensively involved in the arts. There is a significant set of UK forestry policy mandates which cover some of the evolving relevance of FC arts activities to public health and cultural agendas. Most of the formal expressions of the cultural dimension still couch it in terms of interpreting cultural "heritage", and do not yet recognise the contribution being made to the *contemporary* cultural and creative life of the nation. Exceptions are emerging, however, particularly in Scotland.

The report will suggest integrating the policy fragments and the description of niche strengths and benefits into a statement of FC arts policy *purposes*, to give the organisation, for the first time, a vision and overall strategic orientation on the subject, linked to the national quality of life.

Government investment is important for providing public benefits that markets will not provide, but the FC is increasingly pressured to make an economic return in more areas of its business, and this will be a continuing topic for debate. There is

scope for more exchange of experience among different groups with an interest in these issues. For example the FC might wish to animate some kind of forum or network on outdoor sculpture trails. More broadly, it could be valuable to explore links or synergy among arts initiatives based on natural environment land area systems, such as National Parks, World Heritage sites, AONBs, Biosphere Reserves, Woodland Trust sites, National Trust properties and others, as well as the FC. There could be a shared interest in looking at nationally defined approaches to varied arts involvements in each of these networks of areas.

Conclusion

It is apparent that arts initiatives in partnership with, or under the auspices of, the Forestry Commission are achieving a great deal in relation to objectives for education, awareness, social inclusion, sense of place and identity, creative enterprise, cultural expression, physical and mental well-being, environmental valuation, recreation and amenity, community cohesion and local economies. Fundamentally in many cases too, of course, they are producing art that is intrinsically valuable in its own right.

People drawn by the art can have their experience of the natural environment expanded. People drawn by the forest can have their cultural experience expanded. A single poem or sculpture can bridge the gap of access and understanding between a community and its next-door forest; and it can sum up a set of social aspirations and heritage values for the nation as a whole.

Our relationship with the natural world is at the heart of whether humans achieve respect, conflict-avoidance, sustainable development, and much besides. We may advance this with science, with philosophy and politics; but sometimes we advance it best with art.

Countryside Recreation Network Seminar

"Route to Health - Community Arts Trail"

Lisa Shephard
Arts Development
Cannock Chase District Council

Case Study 1

The Route to Health is a one mile community arts trail which combines both creativity and an opportunity to understand the importance of living a healthier lifestyle, creating a ripple affect of enthusiasm and project work. It has provided the opportunity for the disengaged to be engaged, the uninspired to develop aspirations and has changed peoples lives for the better.

Wide and diverse local groups work alongside local artists and 'health champions' to create healthy themed artworks. Both temporary and permanent pieces are created and then showcased on a non sensitive site on Cannock Chase. Each with supporting health information, the artworks are positioned amongst the trees and act as an incentive for the participants, their families and friends to experience the trail regularly.

The engagement process provides an informal learning opportunity of vital health issues to those who are considered hard to reach or 'at risk' individuals. The creative process encourages self expression and discovery, leading to positive personal achievements improving self esteem and confidence. It provides the perfect stepping stone for many to re-engage with their local community and for most, the opportunity to access Cannock Chase for the first time. Such a small and simple idea has grown into a nationally recognised sustainable scheme that tackles and addresses many community and social issues on many levels in an innovative way. From contributing to economic regeneration to engaging isolated individuals and by providing a platform for networking, it has in turn, created a wealth of other partnership projects rejuvenating community spirit.

As an ex-mining area, the demise of the coal mining industry still leaves a footprint of social issues from high unemployment, high illiteracy and currently 17 areas fall within the lowest 25% for health and disability deprivation in the country.

A common agenda was identified by all the partners, that of breaking down the barriers to access, whether it be to the arts, health information or the countryside. Those barriers also have a synergy with tackling health inequalities, a high priority for each partner. Even though Cannock Chase District is blessed with having Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty within its communities reach, the partnership identified those with access issues could not experience the positive mental, physical health and well being benefits it freely offers. With this in mind, the initiative was developed by three staff working effectively together representing Cannock Chase Council, South Staffordshire Primary Care Trust and the Forestry Commission West Midlands Forest District, in the hope to tackle such barriers by focusing on community engagement.

Now in its sixth year, the initiative has embedded itself in many organisations who embrace the opportunity each year and as their confidence, skills and investment increases they require less and less support from the core partnership. It now works on strategic and sustainable level, by each partner adopting it within their equivalent of service plans and committing resources of both cash and staff time. It now boasts a wealth of outcomes and has community groups requesting to participate using the process as a tool to meet their difficult objectives. In many cases it also contributes to groups succeeding in gaining awards and charter marks and additional measurements of achievement. Despite each year only having a core steering group of three people, a mainstreaming approach engages over 40 other members of support staff and professionals from the community groups and over 500 participants each year involved to create the temporary artworks.

Proud of its recorded 50,000 visits each year, a ten fold increase before the trail was initiated, Cannock Chase has successfully achieved its main aim of ensuring its visitors are from our local community, thus communicating the health messages to its target audience. However the Route to Health also has been recognised as adding an additional visitor attraction to Cannock Chase, as a recent survey showed that 70% of the Route to Health visitors would recommend it to others, despite no financial investment being placed in exploiting tourism opportunities. Over 4 million potential visitors live within a 30 minute drive of the trail.

In attracting diverse audiences and participants, the partnership including its participatory organisations, is able to 'piggy back' on the successful engagement and networking process to profile or consult the community on other issues, other than health related ones: the importance of recycling, Cannock Chase visitor management, habitat conservation, marketing other events and developing new ones, such as craft fairs and exhibitions. In an area where, in the past, cultural activities have been viewed as a low priority, the 'Route to Health' has been an effective vehicle in demonstrating how art as an industry can have an immense impact. Through engaging and supporting local artists, many have found continuous local employment using the arts within their workplace. It has enabled the development of a workforce of specialists of those who have the art and communication skills to work with hard to reach groups. Many staff from support organisations have been able to develop new skills and have discovered new fun

and productive ways of working, thus having a positive impact on healthy workforce issues.

"I was thinking of leaving, but getting involved in this project has made me feel more excited about my job, we're already working on next year's project!"

Nursing staff at a local hospital.

Local businesses have benefited by supplying materials for artworks and those who have worked alongside groups to create their artworks have broadened their scope and working practice and have had their profile raised positively within the community. Local colleges have embedded the Route to Health within their accredited courses, enabling those in arts training to experience a real live professional project. This offers a wealth of personal and professional development opportunities, from understanding agreements, health and safety to self promotion.

In a region whereby public art and civic enhancement opportunities are on the increase, this investment in local artists is crucial in order to support our home grown artists, designers or sculptors for the future. A successful award from the Arts Council of England via its lottery programme, enabled 7 community projects to design and create rest stops along the route, providing those with health difficulties much needed access to the route. In engaging a broad range of additional partners such as Social Services, Sure Start, Young Offenders, Millennium Volunteers and education providers, to name but a few, the potential to unlock funding opportunities is immense. Striving to create new artworks and projects to keep the whole route alive, the organisations expertise and knowledge of funding opportunities creates a supportive environment for community groups or individuals to feel confident to access funding.

The final quality of art varies, depending on who has made it, their abilities and needs. This is something we nurture and cherish in that it is not solely what the art looks like or how well made it is, it is about the journey that the participating individual has made in making it. The outcomes in creating something for the trail are endless, and the effort local people go to is simply amazing.

Countryside Recreation Network Seminar

"Dark Sky Scotland"

Dan Hillier
Visitor Centre Manager
Royal Observatory Edinburgh

Case Study 2

Dark Sky Scotland (DSS) is Scotland's first nationwide programme of public and educational astronomy events, several Scottish museums, observatories, science centres, universities and amateur groups already run public stargazing sessions - but DSS is the first collaborative approach to meeting the deep and widespread public interest in the night sky and astronomy. In fact, DSS is probably the first nationwide dark sky programme in the world. The programme was launched in January 2007 and plans are being developed to extend the programme throughout the UK up to 2010.

What is a dark sky? Dark skies are found in areas free from the light pollution that is caused by light that spills upwards from houses, cars, roads and offices. This light reflects off small particles in the air to create an orange glow that washes out our view of the many stars and other objects in the night sky. The north and south of Scotland has very large areas of dark sky – these are in fact some of the largest area of dark sky in Western Europe.

So what can you see in a dark sky? Well, in an urban light polluted sky you might see fewer than 100 stars with the naked eye. In a dark sky location, you can see more than 1,000 stars. The spectacle can be powerful and awe-inspiring. Each one of these stars we see is in fact a relatively local neighbour to our own star, the Sun. They are all just a small local part of our own galaxy, the Milky Way, a swirling disk of many millions of stars. From a dark sky location you may even see a large cloudy structure stretching across the sky – this is our edge on view into that disk of stars that make up the Milky Way. From a really dark sky you might see a much smaller fuzzy patch called the Andromeda Galaxy. From the northern hemisphere, Andromeda is the only object visible to the naked eye that is not in

our own galaxy. Light from Andromeda takes 2.5 million years to reach our eyes. That is what you can see from a dark sky.

So how do Dark Sky events fit as part of “art in the outdoors”? Some simple definitions may lay a foundation for looking at this relationship. Firstly, the night sky is part of the natural environment. It does not normally feature in the way we, as organisations or professionals, work with the outdoors in terms of nature conservation or countryside management. Nevertheless, the night sky is - physically-speaking - the natural context of the Earth environment. This relationship is stronger than we sometimes imagine. Just as one example, many scientists think the Moon was once part of Earth before it was blown off by a major impact. The second definition: we can see science as a cultural activity. It is different to but sits alongside the arts as a way of exploring and understanding the natural world. Bringing these ideas together, astronomy is the science by which we have, for hundreds of years, developed our cultural understanding of the night sky. And that, in a sense, is what happens at Dark Sky Scotland events.

Scotland’s dark skies are natural national assets that have become the rallying point for an unusual family of diverse organisations that make up the Dark Sky Scotland partnership: the Royal Observatory Edinburgh, the Forestry Commission Scotland, Glasgow Science Centre, the Institute of Physics Scotland and Careers Scotland. Other funders are the Scottish Government, the Science and Technology Facilities Council and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. The partnership aims are to:

- Inspire people
- Promote science & technology subjects & careers
- Promote dark sky tourism
- Create a legacy of people able to run events
- Create a legacy of organisations able to support events

Some 30 additional organisations have become involved in the DSS programme, often helping to host and organise events. In particular, VisitScotland and local Community Woodlands organisations have supported a number of events. This expanding network of interested organisations is perhaps the greatest single indicator of the success of the programme. It shows that it the project is starting to meet the widespread but largely unfulfilled interest in the night sky. These organisations have helped to deliver some 35 events across Scotland often in some of the country’s most remote communities such as Dunnet on the north coast, Kirroughtree in Galloway and Knoydart on the west coast.

We run many different activities at dark sky events but an event includes three main types of session:

- Stargazing. These are family-friendly evening sessions where we largely focus on simple, naked eye observing and getting to know the main constellations.
- Astrofun. This afternoon session involves a number of daytime and indoor astronomy activities: using our special solar telescope to safely observe the Sun, watching shows in our portable Starlab planetarium, handling some

real meteorites, making and launching air powered rockets and a comet-making demonstration.

- Training workshops. At most events we run a two hour training workshop which is targeted at local teachers, informal educators, community group leaders and the tourism industry.

To help run these dark sky activities, we have trained a pool of some 60 scientists, students, teachers, science communicators and amateur astronomers. A typical weekend event is led by a Dark Sky team of 4-5 people with the following programme.

Friday	
am	travel to venue
pm	Teacher workshop
eve	Family stargazing
Saturday	
am	Community & tourism workshop
pm	Astrofun
eve	Family Stargazing
Sunday	
am	return home

We have had over 5,000 people taking part in our events and some 200 people have attended the more in-depth training workshops. The feedback from audiences has been very good:

- “Brilliant learning experience.”
- “Really great family event: comet was fab!”
- “Very useful practical advice that I will be looking forward to using with my pupils.”
- “A great session that has taught me a great deal! Thank you.”
- “Lively & not too technical – Just right!”
- “The knowledge and enthusiasm from all staff was exceptional.”

So what makes the Dark Sky events successful? Two key features probably go along way in ensuring the success of the programme

1. making sessions accessible for a wide range of audiences, and
2. creating a legacy within the local community of people and organisations inspired to run their own activities.

The impetus to focus on these issues comes to a large extent from working with remote rural communities for which (because of costs and travel times) a dark sky event is likely to be a special, once in a life-time event. Our strategy for making the most of this opportunity involves:

- The programme. The overall programme of a typical weekend event is an important part of how we do this. The family sessions are spread over two days giving people several chances to take part. Also, the two evening sessions double our chances of have clear skies. Of course, the training

workshops are central to leaving a legacy within the community of people able to run astronomy activities themselves. Even 2-3 people in the workshop can be enough to get the ball rolling.

- Simple astronomy. Another part of approach is that we start with simple approaches to astronomy. Astronomy can be awe-inspiring - it can also be overwhelming and confusing. Our activities have all been tried and tested with different audiences by the Dark Sky partner organisations and we follow effective approaches to communication and interpretation. The sessions are delivered by skilled communicators. We ran two weekend workshops training up the Dark Sky team, many of whom are talented communicators with lots of experience of working with the public and schools.
- Learning that can be shared. We place an emphasis on learning that people can use themselves and share with family and friends. A good example is our really simple stargazing chart which we use to introduce the night sky before a stargazing session. It has much simpler content than most commercially produced charts. Once people have learned how to use this stargazing chart they can use it again the next day, next month – in fact for the rest of their lives. Of course, the training workshops are also a major way that we promote learning about astronomy.
- Deep astronomy. We don't just keep astronomy simple. The sessions also have a lot of depth. This depth might start, for example, with showing people some of the fantastic images of galaxies and nebula that have been taken by telescopes such as the Hubble Space Telescope. These help to trigger question and answer sessions which quickly lead to quite profound discussions. For many people at a Dark Sky event they will remember it as much for conversations with an astronomer as for seeing the night sky.

Another way of looking at the reasons behind the success of the events is to consider the question "What happens if it's cloudy?". Understandably, this is one of the first doubts to enter the mind of a potential host organisation or anyone coming along to an event. The fact that we can market our events as "Weatherproof" reflects the efforts we make to offer a high quality and reliable programme. If the skies are clear too, then that is a fantastic bonus.

These are all factors that the Dark Sky team can take some credit for. But there are two other critical aspects of the events. The first is the role of the local venue and in particular the local organiser. Every event has a key local person who pulls the event together, organises the venue, the local marketing and so on. These organisers tend to get involved from one of three starting points: tourism (perhaps the venue is a museum or visitor attraction); education (the person may be a teacher); or the community (they may be involved in a local community group that runs events). The very best Dark Sky events are ones where all three drivers for an event come together. On the whole, it seems that the events that start as community events have the best track record in making this happen. And in particular, we have found community woodland organisations to be very successful hosts. Piers Voysey, who organised an event for the Anagach

Community Woodlands in Grantown-on-Spey, said: "It seemed like a good way to encourage use of the community woods at a time when many folks stay in doors. A Dark Sky Scotland event also offers so much to a range of people – the public, school students, teachers and outdoor instructors."

Perhaps the last big ingredient in the success of the events is simply the widespread public appetite for finding out more about the night sky and astronomy. Audiences can be forgiving of hiccups in organisation and bad weather if they are enthralled by the subject. In fact, many of the local organisers seem to be motivated by a personal curiosity in the stars. In this respect, we are simply very lucky.

Finally, what do we want to improve? Everything has so far sounded grand and rosy. That's not the case of course. There are many things we want to do better and there are some avenues we want to explore too:

- Event planning. The events are a little unusual in nature and we try to be very flexible in the format they take. A consequence of this is that it's not easy for local organisers and venues to understand what we can do. We need to find a better way to make a clear offer to them.
- Event programming. There is a similar issue in communicating about the event programme to audiences, through our marketing and on the day itself. A rigid programme can be a hostage to fortune at a community event – but some people do like to know what is happening and when.
- A big opportunity is in exploring the links between astronomy and the environment. There is a natural connection here for many people. As one person said after seeing Saturn through a telescope: "It's the first time I have ever felt like I am on a planet".
- We can do much more to work with urban audiences. We have traded on the dark skies of rural Scotland. But you can still see fascinating things from dark locations in and around towns or even from the doorstep.
- Funding and pricing. For most of our events we charge the host organisation a fee and the sessions are then free to the audience. However, we have experimented with online ticketing for some events and we need to look at what we have learned from this.
- A big issue is how to look after this thing we have created. We have partners, a team and a brand – what is the best way of sustaining all this?

We hope to find the answers to all these questions through Dark Sky Inspiration 2008-2010. This is our plan to continue the programme, not just in Scotland but across the UK and hopefully internationally too. 2009 has been designated International Year of Astronomy (it is 400 years since Galileo was first person to look at the heavens through a telescope). Dark Sky Inspiration will be our attempt to share what we learned in Scotland with anyone who is interested in running or hosting similar activities.

Countryside Recreation Network Seminar

"Happy Stacking - A contemporary vision of agriculture and culture culture"

Alistair Hudson
Deputy Director
Grizedale Arts

Case Study 3

Grizedale Arts is based in the Lake District National Park. It has now moved on from its origins as an artists' retreat and sculpture trail to become a network of projects across communities, cultures and continents. Grizedale's aim is to make art and artists useful in society, particularly in the newly emerging rural context.

The title of this talk is Happy Stacking, which is the title of our forthcoming project in China and refers the new emergent meaning of stacking, which is to use multiple media platforms at the same time – watch TV, surf the net, chat on the mobile and play Nintendo DS all at the same time. It also refers to role of using art to make life better, to make people happy.

Grizedale Arts is based in the Lake District National Park, which is not a particularly happy place. It also a very complex place which makes it a vital and interesting location for a contemporary arts organisation to work. It has a long history of cultural development, although it has always been over dependent on monoculture whether that be farming or tourism, and this has created and exaggerated many of the problems that rural areas now face – population decline, poor quality work, aging populations, brain drain, schools closing, communities disappearing, high house prices and lack of accommodation and so on.

Whilst the Lake District is marketed as a unified land of rural harmony, it is in fact populated by a mass of competing micro cultures, all in conflict with one another about how the land should be used and who it is for. For an arts organisation this provides a stimulating and contemporary resource in which to get artists to work and respond in appropriate ways to new emerging situations. Whilst the cities (the cradle of Modernity) are now on fixed trajectories, it is the rural zones of the world that are the frontier for change in the 21st century, in the shadow of post modernity.

As such this arena is now creating a whole new range of artwork which uses this complex seedbed to build a lively and contemporary practice with universal applications and implications.

Grizedale Arts began as one of the UKs first outdoor sculpture residency programmes in 1977. Back then Grizedale Forest was not open to the public but Northern Arts developed the idea of using the forest as a new context and resource to develop a residency programme – a kind of European version of Land Art. This soon developed into a highly active arts programme with a loyal audience and slowly evolved as a sculpture trail that became a popular visitor attraction. However by the 1990s the sculpture trail had stagnated in its approach, not keeping up with developments in art, and lost all critical currency. In 1999 the decision was made to reformulate the organisation as Grizedale Arts to re-engage with contemporary debate and to look again at the ideas which had formed the first incarnation of Grizedale Arts.

By this time concepts of nature and ecology had changed. The Forest was no longer seen as a natural environment and the concept of ecology had opened up to include a broader view of social, economic, community and cultural systems. Against this back drop Grizedale Arts began to look beyond the forest to see how an art programme might work, a creative and critical agency within an open and supra-connected (maybe even post-) rural world.

Whilst early efforts looked at how the forest might be used in new ways (car boot sales, events, fetes, weddings, broadcast, music) these did not chime well with the established role of the sculpture trail as a visitor attraction with an established audience of land art lovers. Consequently, Grizedale Arts began a move to establish a new model contemporary programme out of the forest, whilst the Forestry Commission took on the management of the existing sculptures in its existing format.

The new Grizedale Arts HQ is currently being developed on the Western edge of the forest at Lawson Park farm, an historic hill farm established in 1338 by the monks of Furness Abbey. It was also used by John Ruskin in the 19th century as part of his re visioning of aesthetics, culture, agriculture and art. Picking up from these themes Grizedale Arts now seeks to work with artists and communities to make a creative impact on society, to make art and artists useful. As such Lawson Park is not a visitor attraction, but the hub of a local, national and international network of activity. This activity uses artists to develop new ideas and ways of working which can help communities evolve and adapt to cultural change and in turn instigate cultural change itself. This, like Ruskin, champions a moral aesthetic over a formal aesthetic – assessing a work by what it does not what it looks like.

This approach can be demonstrated by a number of recent projects:

Romantic Detachment

PS1/MoMA New York and UK touring

This project involved over 50 artists who all made work out of our rural environment and converged on a live exhibition in New York. The show challenged

the Romantic premise of the artist as creative genius and looked to dismantle the idea of the artists as individual or hero.

As the show moved from MoMA to the UK it transformed from large scale museum show to small scale community projects in village halls; broken up into increasingly smaller fragments. This finished in the presentation of a customised yet useable tea urn and tea pot to Water Yeat Village hall with a village tea dance and the sale of an identical urn to Tate.

Coniston Water Festival

Out of this project emerged The Coniston Water Festival which was a project with our local village of Coniston to re-start the Victorian festival which had died out due to lack of village resources and the demands of the tourist economy.

The festival was redesigned with artists and villagers as a celebration of village life and a sort of harvest festival of the end of the tourist season. Whilst it has since reverted to a more tourist focus, it is still going strong in its third year and has instigated a new confidence and determinism in the village, recently resulting in the villagers taking over the running of the tourist information centre.

A Public Art Strategy for Egremont

In 2005 Grizedale Arts were asked by the West Cumbrian Town of Egremont to devise an art strategy for the town. Egremont is a deprived semi-rural, semi-industrial market town that is situated next to Sellafield Nuclear plant. Because of its industrial past and remote location it has been bypassed by mainstream culture (and cannot attract tourists) so has evolved its own version of culture typified by its historic annual (and fairly raucous) Crab Fair.

Because of this, Grizedale endeavoured not to make works of art, but to provide an infrastructure for the town to build upon its own culture. To make work to export out, not import it in. This ongoing programme (all our projects have long and sustainable timelines) in its 3rd year involved a radio station, a community orchard, a new performance pavilion for the Norman Castle, a schools competition to design the lighting for the castle, community projects, a new community art centre and the re-establishment of the town's Greasy Pole event with artists Jeremy Deller and Alan Kane.

Egremont now has its own arts officer who is driving the strategy forward along with with the people of the town.

The Seven Samurai

In 2006 we were invited to take part in the Echigo Tsumari Triennial in Japan. This is a large scale visual arts and architecture festival designed to regenerate a remote rural area in the NW of Japan. We had reservations of this approach, having seen the detrimental effect of tourism in the Lake District, so offered not to make any works of art but to send a group of seven artists to help a remote mountain village with their current problems.

These problems, mirroring our own communities, were identified as a lack of tourists' engagement with the village, the decline of young people in the village and how to make farming work given the ageing population. This project resulted in a new shop for the village, repackaging and marketing of the village rice, direct selling, online sales and promotion of the village and its product as a viable way of life.

The net result was a new outlet for village product, younger people moving into the village and a change in outlook for the community.

In 2007 seven of the village came to Coniston to help us develop our culture and agriculture. They showed new ways to farm the land, new ways of using wild food and ran a restaurant in Coniston specialising in locally sourced bracken shoots.

Happy Stacking

In May this year, following on from the Seven Samurai project, we will be sending a group of artists to the mountain village of Nanling in Guangdong province in Southern China. This came from an invitation by Vitamin Creative Space of Guangzhou to help devise a new way forward for their art programme for the village.

A development company has bought this village as part of a National Forest Park, to develop the region as a forward thinking eco-tourist destination. Whilst building luxury boutique-chic hotels the developer also wanted to maintain, promote and advance the culture of the village through an arts and education programme. He even pays a member of staff to liaise with the old people in the village. The company had worked with Vitamin to bring artists to the village, but this programme had not really benefited the community, only the artists' careers. So Grizedale was asked to apply its approach to the situation to see if something more worthwhile might evolve.

The group of seven will go for one month at first to make acquaintance with the village and then seek to work on a long term basis, building projects with Nanling which will help them realise their goals and ambitions, whilst in turn helping communities in the Lake District find a new way forward, to manage its own future in the broadest ecological sense.

Countryside Recreation Network Seminar

"Working Outdoors with Art and the Community"

Shusheila Jamieson
Sculptor

Artist

Since completing a post graduate degree in sculpture I have continued to sculpt and also worked for a short while as a part time tutor at ECA. Work is inspired by nature and the wider landscape. My work has been shown in number of group and solo shows. My preference is for hand carving in stone or wood on a large scale and I make work for sale to private clients. I run workshop classes from home and have recently been experimenting with mosaics. I have also been involved in a wide variety of community art projects. I currently work in a business partnership with my husband. He handles installation and helps with broader aspects of the work.

Projects illustrating different ways I have been involved in outdoor art

- **Beinne Eighe and Knockan Crag**

I was one of several artists asked by Scottish Natural Heritage's consultant designer to provide interpretive objects for these two visitor centres. In the case of Knockan Crag I made carvings of prehistoric creatures – pipe worm and a trilobite (plus a decorative handrail). The pipe worm carving has become a bit of an icon for Knockan Crag and appears on all the literature for the reserve. SNH were very keen that local stone was to be used. However, in practice it was not good enough for carving. At Beinne Eighe I submitted a proposal for green oak picnic furniture and totems. These all illustrated aspects of the ecology of the Beinne Eighe reserve as well as being functional furniture. Once again SNH were keen that local sourced oak was used.

- **Sustrans Pennine Cycleway – Northumbria**

This was a project which required sculptural seating. In this case I worked with youth groups in Wooler and Etal on designs for the seats. The Sustrans brief asked that the designs to be inspired by local prehistory and the natural world. The youth groups developed designs using collage and clay models. I adapted the designs and constructed the final benches in my workshop. Three wooden seats and one stone seat were made. The stone seat involved selecting and splitting stone of 1.5 tonnes on site and also using a local stone dyker. As in most of these projects concrete foundations and robust stainless steel fixings are a significant part of the cost. This project was supported by Sustrans and Leader Plus.

- **Newcastle “People Parks and a Sense of Place”**

This comprised a series of artworks developed for parks in Newcastle. All of them were developed to a greater or lesser extent with a diverse range of community groups. Funding for this project came from Culture 10 - a ten year cultural programme to develop arts in the North East of England

For one of the parks the Graffiti stone (see supporting presentation in appendix D for photos) was developed, over a very short period. A seven tonne boulder (not the one we chose) was dropped on Walker Park in one of the most deprived areas of Newcastle. Over the 4 days of a local holiday a YMCA group was boosted by local youth and they together carved the boulder. A local graffiti artist Barry McNab collaborated on the design and the carving.

For Nunsmoor Park Sensory Garden clay flowers were made by a very wide age range 2-82 years of park users over a weekend. The making of individual clay flowers captured the imagination of the group. They were permanently mounted in the sensory garden on a trellis of split oak lathe.

The Benwell seat was a robust Kilkenny limestone bench. A small community group consulted with me on a design and visited my studio to see the work in progress. The seat was placed in Benwell Nature Park.

Heaton bronze panels were my interpretation of childrens drawings of leaves and birds another local park. Two local (to the park) primary schools were invited to be involved in the project. The drawings were enlarged – transferred to clay – and cast in bronze. They have since been stolen but are to be replaced in bronze resin (as they were presumably stolen for their scrap metal value).

At Gosforth Park organic totems were created. This included some community involvement but it was confined to approving designs.

- **Ormiston Pencaitland Railway track totems**

A volunteer group of local adults, over 13 consecutive Wednesday mornings, produced carved green oak totems. The totem designs reflect the changing nature of the surrounding landscape from market garden- through coal mining to the present day leisure use of the track. The groups’ initial designs were simplified and

interpreted by myself and then carved by the group with some finishing work from myself. This project was part of a year long craft residency with East Lothian Council with funding from Scottish Arts Council Partners scheme

- **Bilston Glen Viaduct Bronze panels**

Funded by Edinburgh Green Belt Trust, the aim was to produce interpretive panels which told the story of the viaduct without being too literal. They were mounted on the old expansion bearings from the viaduct which had had to be replaced as part of the renovation. I worked with a wordsmith on the design of the panels, his words being incorporated around the edges of the panels.

- **Ross High School - outdoor mosaics**

This group was one of 6 that I worked with during my year long residency with East Lothian Council. A group of children experiencing low self esteem were involved in creating 9 outdoor mosaics for an exterior social space at the school. Abstract designs were developed from details of digital photographs taken at Morrisons Haven, Prestonpans. These initial designs were explored further in collage and then created in broken tile mosaics.

- **Whitecraig Cycleway entrance**

This was a Sustrans funded project for the East Lothian Ranger Service. A Wallyford youth group designed and carved interpretive stone panels. The group also collaborated on the design of a galvanised steel entrance totem. The design process, as for many recent projects, involved using digital cameras to record information on the site. Ideas were selected and then designs drawn. They also experimented with 3D entrance designs. I then fine tuned the designs and transferred them to CAD (Computer Aided Design). The construction of the steel totems was a fast and remote process involving computer controlled plasma cutting of the steel in Ayrshire, welding in South Lanarkshire, Galvanising in Cumbernauld and installation in East Lothian.

General points about above projects

There are a number of common factors which can help make a successful project:

- A clear brief ensures that the client gets what he wants and the artist knows what is expected of him/her. It also allows the artist to price/pitch their proposals appropriately.
- A realistic budget should allow for the production of robust art which has a long life outdoors in a public space. Low/zero maintenance is an unspoken requirement. Long life means for most art projects 20 years minimum
- If community involvement is required a liaison person between community and artist is valuable. Many local authorities have a cultural or arts coordinator who fills this role.
- A clearly identified and interested community group is also useful. A real and enthusiastic interest is rewarding. Community involvement at best creates a sense of ownership and vandalism is less likely.

The projects in these case studies were all obtained through public advertisement in the Artists Newsletter followed by a competitive selection and interview process. Artists can expect to provide visual examples of previous work at an early stage. It is not reasonable to ask for proposals at the selection stage. A common approach for larger projects is to ask a short list of artists to produce outline proposals for a fee.

Countryside Recreation Network Seminar

"Wendy"

Carl von Weiler
Senior Lecturer
Sheffield Hallam University

Artist

The few works that have been selected to be shown today act as reference points for the talk as opposed to the works dictating the pathway for the talk - and the accompanying information for the images will be delivered anecdotally (see Appendix D for accompanying slides).

I initially thought that I would begin by citing parts from a current contract I hold with Darlington Council on a project for Skertingham Woods, in county Durham. But before doing that I felt it would be useful to give you an example of an artwork of mine that formed part of the recent 2007 commissions for Craggside National Trust House in Northumberland. This exhibition opportunity named "Inside Out" came about when the National Trust needed to temporarily, for 6 months, close Craggside House for a total rewiring and refurbishment schedule.

The remit for the exhibition was for the artists involved to provide visual stimuli and therefore retain visitor numbers to a site that normally relied on the house as its main draw – and to work with the theme "Inside Out". We were to think of the house as 'closed' and the gardens as 'open'.

The artists were given special access to the site over a period of several months in order to build on the initial ideas for the exhibition. My part in the exhibition was to literally take an object that one normally finds 'inside' a house and place it 'outside'. The context for the work was important and this led to two different and unique works being made.

These works were actual beds that one would find inside such a property – one being a four-poster and one a single, and each was placed and floated on the lakes in the grounds.

My practice as an artist often seeks to invert a subject in order to find new meaning for us (the public at large). The works at Craggside, named Decoy 2 and the smaller one Decoy 1 made a very direct appeal to the public and its poetic imagination. Imagine for instance what it would be like to lay on a bed on a lake? What would it be like to spend the night out there?

The National Trust took a risk in commissioning this piece, opening itself up to potential criticism that the art would be totally out of keeping with the natural environment.

It may be worth just pausing for a moment and reflecting on this term 'the natural environment'. How and where are we, as human beings, on the sliding scale between, on the one hand, 'nature' and on the other 'the city'. The discussion between these polar opposites is a lengthy one to extrapolate here but in short we may be closer to 'nature' than we give ourselves credit for. I guess the point here might be that as an artist there is often a pressure to respond to any environment in an appropriate way i.e. in an urban environment one might feel the pressure to respond and 'urbanise' the artwork and in the countryside setting one might feel the pressure to respond with more 'natural' elements. I would like to argue that there are many other combinations along a sliding scale between 'urban' and 'wild', that the artist can use and on top of this let us also keep in mind the use of contrast, in order to heighten awareness of a particular environment around us.

Back to Craggside and the risk that was taken with these Decoy pieces. In fact you could argue that the risk paid off. The publicity that issued from the work hit headlines on BBC and ITV, radio and TV coverage, putting Craggside centre stage. Visitor numbers for that year were more than retained, especially given that the house is normally the main attraction. Some 120,000 people saw Decoy, so with this case study in mind it could be said that in opening the doors of the gallery to take in the outdoors, that it not only increases the potential number of people that see art but also the kind of audience that art then touches.

Let's look at that contract!

In currently being involved in the setting up of a new artwork for the newly planted woodland location called Skertingham Woods, Co. Durham, the countryside management agencies had to outline a development plan for the local area. How would or will the artwork change the development of the area, and how will it affect the community at large? A summary follows of the project guidelines.

Skertingham, as a strategic countryside area has 100,000 people within 3 miles of its borders:

As a result of the publicity issuing from the artwork there will be 20 extra visitors per day initially rising to 100 extra visitors per day after 3 years. This will provide increased levels of fitness, increased awareness of the natural world and reduced levels of stress. The number of children with increased awareness of their natural environment will be approx. 30 initially and 500 eventually. In the adult community there will be approx. 40 more initially with increased understanding of their heritage and locality and a further 10,000 more later on.

All this comes via the artwork, through visiting the site and reading the interpretation. These projections that issue from an 'artwork to be' are very desirable but let's also think about the term quality. There is currently no central bureau, or even a regional one, that has an over-arching role in artworks that are commissioned for the outdoors. No one panel vets each project and looks for quality per se, or how it fits into a grand scheme. What we have instead are 'opportunities' funded and managed by groups and individuals interested in working towards bringing artworks into being, for the increasing sites that are becoming available.

This is seen as 'democratic', in the sense that it gives opportunity to a greater number of people to become involved in the process, with funding and monies drawn from a mix that is the market force of today.

There may be no conclusion to this debate in a short talk of this nature – the point was raised to ask us to reflect and question the issue of 'quality'. The question of quality is of course foremost in the artists mind when creating an artwork of any nature. In the case of Skertingham the people involved there have been extremely generous about time and allowed as much as was needed, both to generate ideas and raise funds. The sculptural proposals I made early on in the process needed to morph into further proposals for reasons particular to that site, namely its proximity to the edge of town and it being unguarded day or night. During this process what emerged was an interest in a 'story' rather than an 'object' and it is this story that has carried the project on through an exhibition (at the Myles Meehan Gallery) and on to today.

Briefly the site I selected formed the start of the 1901 journey of the Durham Ox. It can be an incredible tool for an artist, to either have or create a story around a work. The story can provide a kind of imaginative hook for a public to engage in a work. In this case the Ox and its story was given a new lease of life in the exhibition earlier this year by being made into a life size version by the exact same weight in used clothing.

In 1901 this animal became famous for being heavy, beautiful, clean lined and friendly, and unbelievably went on a seven-year tour around the British Isles meeting and greeting people en route. In effect it/he became an exhibit that people sketched and made paintings of.

A story can give rise to publicity that can work hard for any project long into the future. It can raise awareness and even funds. A story can also give a sense of belonging. It could be important for these projects not just to land into a community or landscape from outer space but to grow into a place perhaps being knitted into the fabric through its tale.

I'd like us to look at a residency programme that does not absolutely require an outcome, although many of the artists have in the past left works in their wake. It is the Art and Architecture programme that runs out of Kielder Forest, Northumberland. It currently and concurrently runs artists projects, architectural projects and ones that merge the two together. When I was the artist in residence there in 2005 there was a live-in studio given over to the projects and the

programme was predominantly core funded by the Arts Council or lottery programme. It could openly declare itself as a 'residency' programme and had to apply to much the same funding bodies for each residency outcome. The programme resulted in some groundbreaking works, with Skyspace, a work by James Turrell being amongst them.

The Kielder programme now seems to run slightly differently and the reasons why are linked to the points raised in the Skerningham contract. Over the last few years it seems that there has been a shift, certainly in the terms used to describe (a) how an artwork functions in the outdoors; and (b) what benefits an artwork can have on an environment.

Whereas before the terms used to describe an artwork led to more stand alone budget strands, the terms used more recently lead to accessing funding from areas much further a field. For example within the Skerningham contract the artwork is deemed to improve visitor numbers – quite substantially in the medium term and this is also the argument put forward by those seeking funding at Kielder. If a good enough case is made for an artwork to form part of the Leisure and Tourism platform, in raising visitor numbers and in helping a community survive, then it seems that funding streams such as the European and Regional Development Funds start to open up. Once those strands open up certain restrictions may start to follow. These in fact may only be superficial and just a question of renaming something or piggy backing one project onto another, but nonetheless there seems to be a shift.

I hasten to say that these points raised here are done through the eyes of an artist, not a curator, or facilitator, and neither are they polar in that one position is better than another. I'm simply pointing out a perceived shift.

What I am still working out, and this interests me greatly is what impact if any this has on the artwork. It might be worth noting that during the term of my residency at Kielder that there were very few direct sculptural outcomes. There was an exhibition at Queen's Hall, in Hexham. A huge amount of work was produced and these works led on to subsequent works for other situations, but the one big permanent piece wasn't made.

By contrast, in terms of environments at least, I wanted to conclude by discussing a temporary public art piece made for the city of Newcastle upon Tyne in 2004. This work of mine called Monument was sited in the busy uncompromising concourses of the Central Metro Station for 6 months running 24 hrs a day. Again it used contrast as part of its makeup, by placing fragile technology in a tough environment and by using inversion particularly with the plasma screen downstairs, where the subject being myself (shown on the plasma screen), was hanging from the ceiling of the platform underground. The numbers that saw this work, in excess of a million, far outstripped any visitor numbers to works that I had previously made.

What this suggests is that the Art, perhaps particularly in these environments, is having to stand up to being scrutinised by a much wider public and also, in some cases, that it is having to dovetail itself into existing plans for regeneration. This

may not be unhealthy but it is different from the situation some years back. How does all this unfold in the landscape of the forest today?

The question to all of us still remains wide open— how do we make meaningful and qualitative contributions to what we call the natural environment?

Countryside Recreation Network Seminar

"Knockengoroch Music Festivals"

Liz and Simon Holmes
Artistic/Site/Co-ordination Directors
Knockengoroch Community Interest Company

The title of this seminar is deceptively simple. We all know what art is all about, or at least we think we do. As to the term 'outdoors', we prefer to use the words 'nature' or the 'countryside'.

Art may perhaps be described as our common need to express, understand, sometimes question, sometimes challenge, but always to communicate and celebrate, that which only in the end nature bestows; but while art is many things to many people, the countryside is our birthright, our natural home, our most precious resource. As to what constitutes art in the countryside, within the context of landscape, not only art but nature itself are most fully revealed.

Why is this so?

Over ten years of mounting two bi-annual upland music festivals in one of South West Scotland's remotest glens, Knockengoroch Community Interest Company has chanced upon some important answers. The world of art and the world of nature are interlinked in many complex ways. It is easy to get lost amidst the trees however, and not to see the bigger picture. Art requires an audience, which in turn demands a sympathetic venue, and both artist and audience are refreshed and enriched by their encounter with the countryside. The most enduring lesson that has been learnt at Knockengoroch festivals is that when these three elements are brought together, the resultant chemistry is unmatched, even by the finest concert venue, or theatre, or exhibition hall. The argument is won, that our inner nature and the nature of the world we live in are enhanced by respect and recognition, one of the other. Art & Nature are good things per-say. The question now becomes - how best to promote their interaction?

We must surely begin with nature. The landscape of Scotland is beloved by its people. No single place in Scotland, it seems, is not possessed of one or another upland vista of peerless beauty. Always in the background are its famous hills. Even in the industrial depths of Glasgow there are uplands to be seen, over the M8 traffic they loom, at the end of windy streets they march like distant lords. From the schemes of Easterhouse or Castle Milk one need not travel really very far to walk the Campsies or the Kilsyth Hills. How many do so is another matter, but most would agree at least that perhaps they should more often? The primal landscape that is the backdrop to our everyday lives we may not consider often enough with due reverence, not that this is something new. We may take such things for granted, but nonetheless the ever present image of marching hills is an integral part of day to day experience. Indeed it may be said to permeate the Scottish psyche.

Harry Lauder's song makes sense. 'I'll tak the hie' road and you tak the low road and I'll be in Scotland afore you'. The hills are Scotland's great cathedral; it is they, the long revered hills which rise up above them, that unites its varied peoples in a grand but simple vision. Scotland and its hills are one. They may have descended from the high ground to make history come about, travelled very far some of them, all around the world in fact today, but Scots do not willingly forget the 'heilands' of their forbears' birth.

We know no of no finer location, or no better outdoor arts event, that more clearly demonstrates the truth of this than is found in highland Galloway at the majestic foot of Cairnmore of Carsphairn, where lie Knockengoroch Meadows

Knockengoroch Upland Festivals

At Knockengoroch 'upland' festivals, for three days in May and three more in September, every year not far short of 6000 people experience the full gambit of music song and dance, poetry, street theatre and diverse other performance arts, not only truly live in the open countryside, but unlike any other experience of art or nature. Here, in nature's amphitheatre, the one is magically enhanced by the other.

It happens everywhere of course, in other venues besides Knockengoroch meadow. Art and nature come together, and wherever that happens the meeting is unique. All art has the endless capacity to engage, but like nature, art may always surpass itself, and not ever be repeated. Music of every hue and persuasion, performance arts as varied, poetry, sculpture, folk craft, design, painting, installation, arts of skill and craftsmanship; there is not one of these that is not enhanced by encounter with it in the countryside

The extraordinary story of these music festivals is one that owes as much to a creative dedicated management team than it does to any single individual. Simon's role as local historian and sometime festival spokesperson is most useful they assure me. He is conceited enough to enjoy the platform enormously at times at any rate, but really more than anyone else it is Liz who has made Knockengoroch festivals the success they are today.

Let us plea to the reader, artist and steward of the land alike. Cherish the landscape and actively support the bringing to it and the springing from it of all that

may be called art, and you have discharged your highest duty, both to the land and to humanity.

Knockengorroch Community Interest Company organises 2 music festivals a year - World Ceilidh in May and The Hairth in September at Knockengorroch, a small farm in the hills above Carsphairn village on the north-west reaches of Dumfries & Galloway, South West Scotland. This year sees our 20th and 21st festivals!

Music festival production has become a rapid growth industry over the last few years throughout Britain, and we see ourselves as perhaps leading the vanguard on the smaller more customer-friendly events.

We formed ourselves into a Community Interest Company two years ago to make it clear that it is important to us that our work brings benefits to our customers, our local community and the wider region of Dumfries & Galloway and indeed Scotland. The importance we place on booking top Scottish artists for every event also supports the Scottish music industry.

The events are unique in several ways:

1. we've had a full hands-on approach to event production – we ourselves have organised every aspect from the start
2. unusually for event organisers, we actually live on the site where the festivals take place
3. we are a family run business – Simon, Liz, their son and daughter all work together to create each festival. We also have the support of several key staff members nearly all of whom have been with us for many years.
4. the festival site at Knockengorroch is as important as the music in terms of visitor satisfaction and enjoyment levels. Simon's historical research into Knockengorroch and surrounding area provides a strong heritage emphasis. All these factors give our festivals an integrity and authenticity we believe not found at other music festivals. We believe it also demonstrates our commitment to the land and the area in which the events take place.
5. Knockengorroch itself has proved to be an ideal outdoor music venue. The glen forms a natural green amphitheatre where the music from the open air stage rolls out across the meadows, climbs the hills and wafts into the next valley.
6. The nature of the site, four miles from the main road along narrow windy roads, enhances the musical presentations and helps to promote the 'feel of an informal family party that celebrates the complete absence of the commercial trappings of urban life'. The festivals provide a true 'getting away from it all' and visitors frequently comment on how their 'batteries have been recharged' through their Knockengorroch festivals experience.

In practical terms, we divide up the events into key areas, all of which need extensive work to come to fruition. As with all activities that require successful outcomes, effective planning will assist any event to run smoothly. Pre event, we concentrate firstly on booking the performers.

Booking the artists

To support audience development and to ensure the festivals continue to attract new visitors in addition to the many hundreds of 'regular' customers, high profile performers are selected. As a small festival of some 2000 to 3000 people per event we have tight budget restraints but usually manage to keep within or close to what we have decided to spend on what could be considered one of the most important aspects of the festivals. Since we are first and foremost a *music* festival, the music has got to be good.

With so many years under our belt, our regular clients will book tickets without knowing who will be performing as we have built up a reputation for presenting good music. Also it is not uncommon for us to be approached by high-profile artists who wish to perform. The festivals celebrate great music in a Galloway setting, music that grows up from the ground-music from where people actually come from, whether that be from the hills and lochs of Scotland, the streets of London or the rainforests of Central Africa. We concentrate on top flight roots, celtic and world music artists and the mix celebrates both cultural diversity and the commonality of roots music across the globe.

Apart from headline artists, emerging and new performers are also featured including local young bands. Four different venues are programmed and we book around 40 artists in total, more for this year's World Ceilidh as we've extended it to four days to celebrate our twentieth festival.

Other regular features include fire displays, performance poetry, storytelling, weekend long sessions, street theatre, children's activities, a Scottish ceilidh, workshops in subjects ranging from yoga to swing dance, renewable energy to stone-carving are all organised to provide creative learning opportunities and something for everyone.

Staffing

We hire around 40 to 50 individuals to be responsible for the running of the various departments including production, box office, traffic, festival office, the bars, stage management, décor, crew and kitchen. In addition to these in-house staff, stage sound and lighting companies, first aid, welfare and security are hired in. We are fortunate in that the same individuals tend to make themselves available for each event, as nothing compares with festival staff experienced in the way the events are run. Also vital continuous improvement systems are put into place, driven by planning and debrief staff meetings.

We work with over 100 volunteers per festival. Largely students or young people they receive a free ticket in return for so many hours work over the weekend plus all their meals. They also receive training in skills such as dealing with the public, office work and learning to be part of a team in delivering each festival.

Production

The actual building of the site infrastructure starts around two weeks before each festival starts, and includes the creation, upgrade and repair of pedestrian and vehicular access, all structures including stages and marquees, lighting, haulage, plant and equipment hire. Almost as important is the dismantling, especially in the

case of hired in equipment which is knocked off hire as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary extra costs.

Marketing

An effective marketing campaign is essential to the success of any venture; people can't attend an event if they don't know its happening. As a guideline, it is considered appropriate to spend up to 25% of total budget on marketing, though in our case we spend considerably less, partly because we are not a new event and over the years word of mouth has proved more effective than anything else. We do advertise in appropriate music magazines, add the festivals to as many festivals listings as we can find, use a direct distribution company to display posters throughout Scotland, send out publicity material to those on our mailing list and send email newsletters. Our website is about to be revamped, and is a vital tool in attracting new visitors and retaining previous ones.

We also attend other music events and some conferences to distribute publicity and network with other events and music promoters.

Environmental issues

We try to be as green as possible in organising the festivals. We currently feature renewable energy workshops and both the cinema and the longhouse are powered through wind and solar energy. We recycle wherever we can including cans, glass bottles and cardboard and are aiming for plastic free festivals in a year or so replacing all plastic materials such as refuse sacks, cutlery and beer glasses with bio-degradable equivalents. Unfortunately these measures will add to the overall costs but we feel it important to lead by example.

We also book buses to transport customers from Scotland's central belt down to the festivals and back again. We also negotiate favourable rates for visitors who travel by public transport with the local taxi firm. As the festival site is restricted in size, the number of vehicles we have to accommodate continues to be a problem – roughly speaking two-thirds of the site is for vehicle parking and one third is camping. Obviously we would like to accommodate more tents and less vehicles, but the nearest people can get to the festival using public transport is four miles

Benefits to the region

As a community interest company it is part of our remit to support the local community through our work. Carsphairn itself is a small upland village on the far North West reaches of Dumfries & Galloway numbering in total about three hundred people. The issue of rural regeneration is ever-present, with nearly all young people moving away, a high proportion of retired residents, and the inevitable lack of affordable housing which could attract younger families with children into the area. The school is the lifeblood of the community and beat off closure eighteen months or so ago, and currently has a role of 8 pupils.

The Company uses local firms for service delivery whenever this is possible. Also the local village shop and other outlets such as garages, newsagents and food stores both in Dumfries & Galloway and Dalmellington, the former mining village just over the border in East Ayrshire, see a significant upturn in business over the events' weekends

The festivals have certainly helped to put Carsphairn on the map, and deservedly so as Galloway is sometimes called 'Scotland's best-kept secret' as its attractions are still relatively unknown, with Scotland being represented for most visitors by Edinburgh and the Western Highlands.

Funding

Although external funding meets only approximately 15% of our total costs, it is important for us to gain recognition from appropriate bodies as 'official' endorsement of our work. National Scottish agencies such as the Scottish Arts Council and EventScotland support our work whilst Dumfries & Galloway Council awarded us Beacon status in 2006 in recognition of the international standing of our events. Our work supports increased public participation in the arts and helps to satisfy everyone's cultural entitlements as the festivals take place in a little known area of Scotland with scant provision for the sort of arts events we produce.

New project

A natural extension to our festival work takes the form of a new arts and heritage project being piloted this September. The Knockengoroch Doonhame Experience is centred on the longhouse at Knockengoroch - a faithful re-creation, constructed from indigenous materials, of the sort of homestead residents of the glen would have lived in up to the Clearances. It stands adjacent to the footings of Nether Knockengoroch, a fermtoun inhabited until the eighteenth century.

Acoustic performance will be featured nightly in the longhouse, proved to be an atmospheric venue ideal for intimate performance with a welcoming open fire lit in the hearth. During the day, visitors will be encouraged to explore the beautiful unspoilt area around Knockengoroch, on foot, cycle or by car with the aid of a simple guide book Simon is currently working on. We aim to encourage the re-engagement of visitors with the land. The setting of Knockengoroch for all our events represents a classic example of the kind of homeland landscape that hundreds and thousands of Scots left behind when they left for the new world. It is however relevant to all visitors who may seek this re-connection with the land, and an escape, albeit temporary, from the hustle and bustle of modern life.

It is difficult to escape the bombardment of advertising through all media forms, extolling us all to buy, buy, buy. The public in general have become more 'media savvy' as a result, and increasingly more people seek more meaningful ways of expressing and enjoying themselves. The Doonhame Experience we hope will provide time and a place for contemplation, in addition to promoting appreciation of the hills of Galloway and surrounding area.

Countryside Recreation Network Seminar

"Mid Argyll Half Life"

James Johnson
Designer
Get made (working on behalf of NVA)

and

Nick Purdy
Forest District Manager
Forestry Commission Scotland

Staging an Outdoor Event

James Johnson:

Introduction

I would like to explain what NVA does, what the HALF Life project was about and what it intended to achieve. I will describe the construction and implementation of the structures for the daytime installations and nighttime event (for which I was one of the designers responsible) and the role the Forestry Commission played in realising these ideas.

NVA

NVA are an environmental arts charity that works with pioneering artists to produce highly complex and ambitious site-specific events, artworks and festivals and permanent intervention. The company works across all media, promoting strong cross- cultural community work alongside technological ground breaking initiatives. Based in Glasgow and founded by Angus Farquar in 1992, the company has built a powerful reputation through the delivery of temporary and

permanent artworks across Europe, whilst creating some of the UK's most critically acclaimed contemporary artworks and performances, such as the Hidden Gardens and the path. These include presentations in gorges, on mountainsides, and other extraordinary locations.

NVA is an acronym of *nacionale vitae activa*, a Roman term denoting 'the right to influence public affairs' - a core value of the organisation. The vision has always been to transform natural landscapes and urban settings as a basis to change the way people see their environment. It takes what is 'there' as a starting point for uncovering underlying realities about time, politics, geology, history, culture, and belief. Exploring how places shape, and are shaped by, their inhabitants.

NVA's works are mostly 'experienced' dynamically at night and are often the culmination of extensive engagement with and the participation of the communities in which they take place.

Half Life

HALF LIFE was an event that took place in Kilmartin Glen Mid-Argyll between the 4th and 16th of September 2007. The theme of the project was the decay of historical knowledge and our links with the dead and past cultures. The event was split between a daytime experience and a Nighttime event. For the daytime experiences the visitors were given a specially produced information booklet and a map and encouraged to explore sites and installations out in the surrounding landscape. The nighttime event was jointly produced between NVA and the National Theatre of Scotland and themes touched on during the daytime event were explored further during the evening.

At the center of the surrounding landscape is the Hill Fort of Dunadd where the early kings of Scotland were crowned and where the ancient Kingdom of Dalriada had been based. The surrounding area is incredibly rich in history with virtually every field having a standing stone, bronze aged burial cairn or Neolithic rock marking in it. The landscape is breathtakingly beautiful, and possesses an otherworldly quality, it is the type of place where if you looked out of the corner of your eye or into the shadows you feel it might be possible to glimpse into the past or view into worlds that are normally hidden.

Daytime sites

The aim of the project was to highlight an inaccessible and often-overlooked area rich in beauty and history. In Kilmartin Glen finding sites of interest is not a problem although a significant part of the development process of the project was

in identify a range of sites that were accessible and on property with a landowner willing to encourage open access to their land. Sixteen sites were chosen of mixed accessibility, ranging from the Millhouse (a 5 minute walk), to Castle Dounie (a three hour walk).

To heighten the feeling of ritual and historical importance the sites once had, interventions and modifications to the immediate forest around the sites where undertaken, these also acted as framing devices for the sites in the landscape. Examples of the modifications are the selected felling of the forest around the rock art of Ormaig, (reopening a view to the sea which is thought would have been fundamental in the positioning of the markings) or the creation of a part destroyed colonnade of rough tree trunks guiding the walker/audience to the stone at Creag Mhos. At a number of sites sound installations by Japanese sound recordist and artist Toshiya Tsunoda were placed. Recorded from the immediate surrounding landscape, recordings of barely perceptible sounds from each site were amplified and played back, the raindrops on a wire fence or the wind in grass. Additionally a number of sites were left untouched, the view and feeling of isolation from Castle Dounie is so inspiring it would have been inappropriate and superfluous to add to what is there.

During the design process various ideas were generated for the interventions, the common aesthetic of the interventions was that they were to appear as though the results of an unexplained force; either a natural wind or hurricane or the unexplained aftermath of an event which had taken place in the past. The intended treatments were to be rough and visceral, however it was only when discussion and experiments started with the forestry commission that ideas could become real possibilities. The concepts we were trying to achieve were difficult to explain in words, and we relied heavily on the openness, good humour and willingness of the Forestry Commission workers to try and experiment techniques to achieve the rawness of work we were looking for. The process of shared experimentation and the subsequent input from the Forestry Commission to create the finished manipulations made the project truly a joint piece of work.

Nighttime structure

The other half of the project was a Nighttime event produced in conjunction with the National Theatre of Scotland, the event revolved around a play written by Thomas Legendre that further explored the theme of the relationship between the living and the dead. Central to the performance was a structure set constructed from hundreds of felled logs. The structure was to act as a centerpiece, an object that could be used to imagine forgotten thoughts and ideas, or around which a story shifting between dimensions could be told. The geometry of the structure

expressing the dynamic of a wood henge, the curvilinear patterns on rock carvings the vortex of the local Corryvreckan whirlpool. The circular strength of a dun, the secluded entrance to a passage grave. The aesthetic quality was to evoke a diabolical machine or contraption whose exact purpose had been lost. The radial spokes creating the feeling of an explosion or implosion, and similar to the daytime sites it was to appear as though built by a forgotten civilization or something other than mankind.

The initial site chosen for the nighttime event was a piece of deforested land across from Dunadd owned by the house builder McLeod. It was a piece of landscape with all the physical shattered hardness the play suggested, with a wonderful backdrop of thirty bleached white dead trees. Unfortunately as the development of the project progressed it became apparent that the infrastructure required to get audiences safely to the site was going to require a disproportionate amount of the project budget available. To help the Forestry Commission suggested they had three sites that also might be suitable. The first site was beautiful but too picturesque in appearance for what we required, the second was suitable but on boggy ground surrounded by shrub trees, the midgie population would have made it unusable. The third and chosen site, near the rock art site of Achabreck, was a clearing in a grove of impressive Larch trees. It had the right feeling of isolation but was suitably accessible. Groundwork was undertaken for the audience seating and the performance area, care being taken to avoid destroying the untouched nature that had initially brought the project to the landscape.

The structure was redesigned to respond to the new site with the spokes of the structure intermeshing with the trees giving the appearance that the wood had grown up around it. Aided by the Forestry Commission with the use of a forwarder machine and operator, techniques were developed to smash the end of the logs rather than cutting, increasing the appearance that it had been constructed by a force other than mankind. The structure was then assembled by the timber frame specialist Carpenter Oak and Woodland.

Conclusion

The reason for undertaking a piece of work of this nature is that there are things that words do not express well, the project was about bringing to light aspects in the landscape that are intangible and cannot be explained. During the development of such a complex and ambitious project you rely heavily on openness and trust of those involved. The Forestry Commission based in

Lochgilphead developed a genuine partnership with NVA during the life of the project, a partnership that was instrumental in the projects success.

Nick Purdy:

A Landowner's Perspective

James has already given you a flavour of what Half Life was all about and what it intended to achieve. What I would like to do is to try and give you an understanding of why we decided to get involved, and the sort of things that may be important for landowners and public bodies in making that decision.

To do this I should first give you a summary of who we are and what we do...

West Argyll is one of 14 Forest Districts in Scotland, and we are responsible for the management of the National Forest Estate in Mid Argyll and Kintyre. The area is very rural, with an estimated population of around 20,000 people. Forestry is an important industry in the area, and FCS is one of the largest single employers. The mild wet climate in Argyll means that our forests are extremely productive and although our management is now focussed on making forests more diverse and natural in character, timber production remains a key objective.

The mid Argyll landscape which encompasses Kilmartin Glen, contains a uniquely rich legacy of natural and built heritage from Atlantic oakwoods and mires of international importance to the visible remains of thousands of years of human occupation. Kilmartin Glen is regarded as an area of world status for its outstanding prehistoric and early historic archaeology. The forests and intricate coastlines of Knapdale contain outstanding scenery, unusual landscape features, rare wildlife habitats and hundreds of ancient monuments. Western Scotland has a rare global status as one of the very few regions described as "temperate rainforest" (along with western North America, parts of Japan, New Zealand, Tasmania and Western Norway)

Despite all this, it is a part of Scotland that remains relatively unknown to the outside world, and remains off the main tourist routes. Rural development is a primary management objective of ours - contributing directly to the local economy through our own activities, or indirectly through the provision of facilities or events that stimulate tourism. Believe it or not, it is also about enhancing the quality of life for locals and visitors alike.

Although it is fair to say that the FC has a fairly loose policy on the arts, we do have a reasonable track record of involvement, and this has been covered already by a number of other speakers. West Argyll have been involved in a number of projects in recent years, but most have had a relatively local focus. Half Life was the first project that we have been involved with that has had a national (and international) profile. Projects as ambitious as Half Life cannot happen without the support of a huge number of organisations, companies, public bodies and individuals; although there was a great deal of enthusiasm for the project locally, getting everybody lined up in order for projects like this to go ahead is always traumatic. It is often the larger public bodies entrusted with the public purse that

are the most difficult to convince. Many are not routinely involved in funding or supporting major arts events and are therefore not always comfortable in assessing the relative merits of an artistic brief. Civil servants are by nature pretty risk-averse.

For us the possibility of having NVA produce a major landscape art event in mid Argyll was, frankly, too good an opportunity to miss. What we considered important was their track record, their obvious commitment and the professionalism of the people involved. Importantly they were people we felt we could work with. The other aspect of course was that the objectives of the project (in terms of stimulating economic activity and raising the profile of the area) were entirely compatible with our own.

We were also given a great deal of involvement in the creative process. This is something that we perhaps didn't expect, but I know we all got a lot out of it. James has talked about our co-operation and commitment, and there is no question that it came from the fact that we felt we were an integral part of the delivery of the project from a very early stage

The format of the event meant that we were able to focus our collective efforts over a number of sites. Even some of our more important historical sites remain pretty much unknown to the wider public, and are often difficult to access. Visitor numbers in the past have often been too low to warrant the investment in the infrastructure required. We are also discovering new sites on a fairly regular basis, many of these will not have been seen by anyone for a considerable period of time. Half Life provided us with the opportunity to improve access and present the sites to the public audience in new and creative ways.

Despite have a thriving arts community, Mid Argyll has lacked a suitable outdoor venue, and it has been our ambition for some time to create one. The relocation of the night-time performance of Half Life to Achnabreac provided the ideal opportunity, and the success of the event has attracted further funding to improve the facilities to make the site capable of hosting a wider range future events.

So what did Half Life achieve?

In terms of raising the profile, NVA organised an extremely effective PR campaign, ultimately reaching an estimated 8.355 million people. And the coverage focussed as much on the landscape and the natural and cultural heritage of the area as it did on the event itself. Project partners were also heavily featured achieving a level of exposure that you would find it extremely difficult to buy. For a two week period only, we had normally shy and retiring country folk transformed into fully-fledged media tarts.

It also introduced a totally new audience to the area. Normally when events are run locally it is the usual suspects that appear every time. While they did turn up on cue, this time they were heavily outnumbered by new visitors. Several people commented to me directly that they hadn't appreciated how rich the area was in terms of natural and culture heritage – for many it was simply the route to Oban. Many of the key sites involved a 2-3 hour walk to get to so we had some concerns

that visitors would simply cherry-pick the easy ones and avoid the others. That certainly proved not to be the case, and the sites at Ormaig and Craig Mhos probably had more visitors in the space of 2 weeks than they have had in the last 20 years.

In simple economic terms it is estimated that the local spend directly associated with Half Life was around £800,000 at the time, but the longer term effects, in terms of return visits etc are likely to be in the region of £2 million. Most local businesses reported a significant increase in trade as a result, and it is fair to say that it effectively extended the season by a couple of weeks in what otherwise would have been a fairly poor year.

In terms of a legacy Half Life has left us with some tangible, and some less tangible benefits. The obvious ones are the enhanced facilities at Achnabreac and the day sites. Although the sound installations have been taken away, other installations will remain in place for the next few years at least, and of course the monuments themselves are not going anywhere, but will benefit from significantly enhanced access. As I mentioned previously, increased visitor numbers brought about through return visits are expected to feature for some years to come. In addition, Half Life has also served to enhance the appreciation that local people have for the area they live in. If the area was worthy of a world class event to celebrate its culture and heritage, then maybe it is a pretty special place.

Unfortunately NVA don't tend to repeat themselves, so I am not sure we will see them back in Argyll any time soon. But there will certainly be more events, and there are already plans to celebrate Scotland's year of homecoming in 2009.

What Half Life achieved for Mid Argyll was certainly beyond our expectations, and I am certain those of NVA's other partners. It has set the standard for anything we do in future, and we were very pleased to have played a small part in it's success...

APPENDIX A

Countryside Recreation Network

**Arts in the Outdoors
13th March 2008**

PROGRAMME

09.30 Registration and refreshments

10.00 Welcome by Chair – Sally Thomas, Scottish Government

10.15 Dave Pritchard

Arts and the Outdoors: Scope, objectives and opportunities - emerging findings from a review for the Forestry Commission.

**10.45 Case Study 1. Lisa Shephard - Cannock Chase District Council
"Route to Health – Community Arts Trail"**

11.05 Refreshments

11.30 Case Study 2. Dan Hillier - Dark Sky Scotland

11.50 Case Study 3. Alistair Hudson - Grizedale Arts

"Happy Stacking – a contemporary vision of agriculture and culture"

12.10 Question and Answer Session

12.30 Lunch

13.30 Artist. Susheila Jamieson - Sculptor

**14.00 Artist. Carl von Weiler - Senior Lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University
and resident artist at Kielder Forest**

14.30 Music Festival - Liz & Simon Holmes - Knockengoroch Festival

15:00 Refreshments

15.20 Staging an Outdoor Event - NVA - Mid Argyll Half Life

15:50 Summary (Chair)

16.00 Questions & Answers

16.15 Close

APPENDIX B

BIOGRAPHIES OF SPEAKERS

**Arts in the Outdoors
The Lighthouse, Glasgow
13 March 2008**

CHAIR

**Sally Thomas
Head of the Countryside and Land Management Team
Scottish Government**

Sally is head of the Countryside and Land Management Team at the Scottish Government. She manages a policy team dealing with access, recreation, landscape and protected areas, and land management.

Sally graduated with an Honours degree in Town Planning from Heriot Watt University in 1984. She then spent a number of years working as a policy planner in local government. During this time she worked for a range of local authorities both in Scotland and south of the border. In 1999 she joined the then Scottish Executive and worked in a number of policy areas including health and transport before moving to her current post in 2005.

Dave Pritchard

Consultant

Dave Pritchard is an influential figure in contemporary agendas on art and the environment. In a 25-year career based mainly at the RSPB, BirdLife International's partner organisation in the UK, and the Ramsar Convention Secretariat in Switzerland, he has had roles as international legal and policy specialist, advocate, book author, senior manager and board director.

Dave is a Board Member of the UK Government's Joint Nature Conservation Committee, and also served two terms on the Board of Wetlands International. He has had a particularly long and central association with the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands; and has played roles in the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, in the governing bodies and technical committees of other Conventions, and in UNESCO.

In relation to cultural issues, Dave acts as an independent consultant, and persistently champions the building of stronger links between the worlds of environmental policy, cultural heritage and the creative arts. He is a practising artist, writer, researcher, member of several arts-sector working groups and Boards, and project adviser/collaborator in a number of pioneering environmental arts initiatives.

Lisa Shephard

Arts Development Officer Cannock Chase District Council

With a background in craft design and applied arts, Lisa thrived on sharing practical skills with others and began work as a community artist, whilst developing gallery work. Over 5 years of being commissioned to deliver a wide range of community projects across the Midlands, in environments such as hospitals to open spaces, Lisa developed a love of working alongside all ages and abilities, using the arts to address many issues such as domestic violence to teenage pregnancy.

Working on behalf a variety of organisations within education, health and the natural environment, the diversity of partners brought a greater understanding of how the arts can be used as a tool to engage, consult, communicate, motivate and achieve truly difficult objectives. Lisa's practice has also enabled her to spot gaps in provision, in particular using the arts to address health issues in non healthcare settings, such as health promotion and health inequalities.

Access and investment in the arts in Lisa's own community was limited. Determined to make a difference Lisa gained the confidence of her local council and other organisations to support a series of funding applications. The successful projects acted as catalysts to encourage others to take a leap of faith in supporting larger partnership projects on using the arts to engage people in living a healthier

lifestyle. The impact of the projects far outweighed their expectations and continuous support remains.

These achievements secured Lisa's permanent employment as an Arts Development Officer for Cannock Chase District Council, specialising within the area of arts, health and wellbeing. The role involves working at both an operational and strategic level, to ensure the arts in the district meets national, regional and local agendas, from Local Area Agreement outcomes to national frameworks such as 'Choosing Health'.

Eight years as an ADO and 50 organisations later, many sustainable projects have been recognised in government reports, cited in regional strategies and have contributed to the Council gaining a Beacon Status Award for Healthier Communities.

Dan Hillier
Visitor Centre Manager
Royal Observatory Edinburgh

Born and bred in Bristol, Dan studied history at Manchester University. Dan's professional life began in 1989 at the Centre for Environmental Interpretation (CEI) at the Manchester Metropolitan University. Through training workshops, advisory work and consultancy, the CEI was involved in importing and adapting ideas about interpretation from North America to the UK.

During the early 90s Dan studied part-time for an MA in Museums Studies at Leicester University. This led to a post as Environmental Initiative Coordinator at the Scottish Museums Council running a programme of museum environmental projects. Dan then worked at North Lanarkshire Museums for three years.

In 2000 Dan moved to the Royal Observatory Edinburgh to manage the public and education programmes. In 2002, they began to develop new Scotland-wide programmes. Initially, this involved running training programmes for over 1,000 primary and secondary teachers. More recently it has broadened into the Dark Sky Scotland project.

**Alistair Hudson
Deputy Director
Grizedale Arts**

Alistair has been Deputy Director of Grizedale Arts since 2004, developing projects such as Romantic Detachment, PS1MoMA; The Coniston Water Festival; Seven Samurai, Echigo Tsumari Triennial, Japan; Virtual Grizedale, A Foundation Liverpool and a public art strategy for Egremont, Cumbria.

Alistair was educated at Goldsmith College 1988 – 1992 and has previously worked at the Henry Moore Institute (1993-94), Anthony d'Offay Gallery London (1994-2000) and The Government Art Collection (2000-04) where, as Projects Curator, he devised a public art strategy for the new Home Office building with Liam Gillick.

**Susheila Jamieson
Sculptor
Rachan**

Susheila was born and brought up in Dundee. She completed an MA in psychology at St Andrews University and followed this with several years travelling and working abroad. At 28, Susheila went to Edinburgh College of Art, graduating with a degree in sculpture. Susheila returned to India for 3 months on a travel scholarship studying temple art.

Since completing a post graduate degree Susheila has continued to sculpt and has also worked for a short while as a part time tutor at ECA.

Susheila's work is inspired by nature and the wider landscape. Her work has been shown in number of group and solo shows. Susheila's preference is for hand carving in stone or wood on a large scale. She also makes peices of work available for sale to private clients. Sushelia runs workshop classes from home and has recently been experimenting with mosaics. Susheila has also been involved in a wide variety of community art projects.

For more information visit www.rachan.co.uk.

**Carl von Weiler
Senior Lecturer in Fine Art
Sheffield Hallam University**

For several years now Carl has been working across a number of different art forms, to include sculpture, video, sound and drawing, in a practice that seeks to reach out to new audiences.

Carl has been commissioned to make temporary works for several public sites, including Jesus College, Cambridge and for the city of Newcastle upon Tyne – this, as well as the gallery installations such as *Lullaby 2000* for Matt's Gallery, London and exhibitions held in 'off-site' locations form a body of work that has been shown in this country and in Europe. In 2001-2003 Carl was included in the British Council exhibition *Black Box Recorder* and this toured worldwide.

Carl was recently holder of the Art and Architecture Residency at Kielder Forest, Northumberland and nominated for the Northern Art Prize 2007.

Carl has taught at the Slade School of Art, London and is currently a senior lecturer in Fine Art at Sheffield Hallam University and lead artist for an outdoor artwork commission, through countryside agencies, for the regeneration of Skertingham Woods, Darlington.

www.carlvonweiler.com
www.axis.com

**Liz and Simon Holmes
Artistic/Site/Co-ordination Directors
Knockengoroch Community Interest Company**

Liz Holmes:

Liz was born and raised in the north-west London suburbs to parents from mainland China who had settled there in the early 1940's to raise their family of six children.. Her father was an academic and Professor of English at Nanking University who arrived in England to study in the early 1930's, her mother following him shortly thereafter to both escape the war with Japan and to marry her father. Liz attended the local grammar school and went on to study psychology at Reading University where she gained an Honours degree.

Liz subsequently trained to be a primary school teacher for the then Inner London Education Authority and took up teaching posts in St John's Wood, Paddington and Kentish Town where she became deputy head of the Infants Department. Liz was also involved in market research interviewing at all levels in the field, both in London and later in Galloway.

Simon Holmes

Simon was born in Fulmer, Bucks. His father was a New Zealander who came to fight in the Second World War and who became a distinguished and decorated pilot in the RAF.

Simon won an art scholarship to Bryanston School and attended Chelsea School of Art in London. However, he left the course early to travel, and subsequently spent time in Europe and seven years in the Middle East - Iraq, Syria, Kuwait, Jordan and North Africa. Much of Simon's time here was spent living with nomad Bedouin tribes and Simon possesses a unique understanding and appreciation of the pastoral lifestyle. Simon later worked as a professional artist in London before moving to Galloway.

Simon and Liz Holmes moved from London to settle permanently in Galloway and to start a family in 1976, although they had spent holidays and other times at Knockengoroch, a smallholding they had purchased in the early seventies and in the care of friends. Their children were born and raised in Carsphairn and educated both locally and in Edinburgh..

Once permanently settled in their smallholding in Galloway, Liz & Simon worked their way through a series of agricultural activities including pig breeding, raising orphan lambs, running a small herd of cattle and a flock of sheep, growing potato and carrot crops and operating a Christmas tree business, all at Knockengoroch. They still run a small herd of Highland cattle. Liz took on supply teaching work in Dumfries & Galloway once their two children had reached school age and still teaches today.

They both ran a mobile art business from approximately 1980 to 2004, attending air displays throughout Britain including Farnborough International to display and retail aviation art. In 1997, Simon and Liz were asked by friends to host the international Rainbow Gathering where some 1,500 people from all over the world congregated in the hills above Knockengoroch to camp, enjoy each others' company, share learning opportunities and generally 'get back to nature'. Round about 1990, with a group of friends they had organised a small local music festival, although not at Knockengoroch, which they considered too remote a location to be attractive to visitors. The impressive attendance at the Rainbow Gathering proved them to be wrong, and the first Knockengoroch music festival was born in 1998, based on a love of roots music and a desire to repopulate a once thriving valley with people again. Simon's ongoing research into the history of Knockengoroch and surrounding area underpins their festival work where music, heritage and the setting combine to produce unique and meaningful events.

Ten years later, and with the support of both their children, the festivals have evolved and grown from 350 visitors to almost three thousand per event. The year 2008 sees the twentieth and twenty-first Knockengoroch festivals

James Johnson
Designer
getMADE

James Johnson is an industrial designer whose career has ranged from the creation of exploding sofas for sugar puff adverts, to the design of jet interiors for the rich (two skills which are normally mutually exclusive).

James studied at the Royal College of Art in London and has worked in Japan for the Sekisui Design Center and in Paris for the Architect Santiago Calatrava. He then returned to London to work for leading architects Foster and Partners working with some of the world's most prestigious clients from products for Alessi to building systems for the Reichstag in Berlin. Moving back to Scotland James set up the design consultancy getMADE, specialising in the design of furniture, lighting and one off installations.

Nick Purdy
Forest District Manager
Forestry Commission Scotland

After a short career in electrical engineering and a slightly longer one in Higher education Nick joined the Forestry Commission in 1992. During the intervening Nick has worked in Easter Ross, Inverness, Morayshire and Edinburgh in a range of roles, but predominantly in timber harvesting and marketing.

Since 2004 Nick has been Forest District Manager for West Argyll with overall responsibility for the management of 64,000 ha of public land in Mid Argyll and Kintyre.

APPENDIX C



**Arts in the Outdoors
13 March 2008
Delegate List**

James	Swabey	Forestry	
Duncan	Stewart	TNS Travel and	
Jason	MacLean	Forestry	
Joe	Roberts	Countryside Council	
Fiona	Maher	Midlothian Council	
Louisa	Maunder	Edinburgh &	
Carolyn	Black	Forest of Dean	
Tess	Darwin	Scottish Natural	
Rosalind	Stoddart	Fermynwoods	
Karl	Stevens	RSPB Scotland	
Sandra	Drew	Stour Valley Arts	
Emilie	Wadsworth	Central Scotland	
Fiona	Stoddart	University of Cumbria	
Claire	Templeton		
Gavin	Smith	Scottish Natural	
Mags	Russell	Scottish Natural	
Esmee	Thompson	East Dunbartonshire	

APPENDIX D