



Southern Upland Way Anniversary Issue

Newsletter of the
Southern Uplands Partnership

southern uplands partnership
living land, living community

No.19 Summer 2005



The **Southern Upland Way (SUW)** was Britain's first official coast-to-coast footpath. This year the 212 mile route, which runs from Portpatrick in the west to Cockburnspath in the east, celebrates its 21st anniversary.

The SUW is a great resource for visiting and local walkers. If you need to be inspired to get out and walk all or part of the SUW get a copy of *Writing the Way* (see page 4) and see find out what you have been missing!

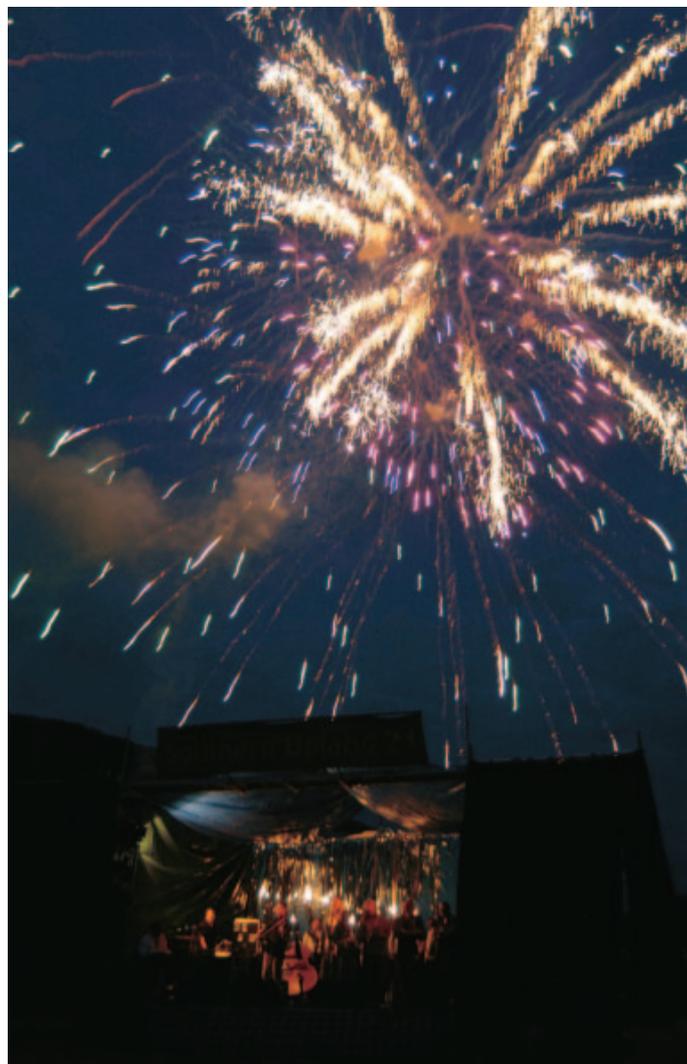
The Southern Uplands Partnership has been coordinating work to establish the potential for the SUW to contribute to the local economy and to take forward recommendations to maximise the opportunities around it.

The SUW achieves a high satisfaction rating from those who have walked it, but how does it compare to other long distance routes as an income generator? In terms of average daily spend by long distance walkers there is not much difference between the SUW and competing routes. The SUW generates a spend of £40.74/walker/day, the West Highland Way £43.40/walker/day, and Wainrights Coast to Coast £41.52/walker/day.

However, when multiplied by the number of long distance walkers using these routes, the difference becomes clearer with £4.8m and £5.8m spent by walkers on the West Highland Way and Wainrights Coast to Coast respectively. The Southern Upland Way boasts a comparatively modest £0.5m from the 1,000 or so long distance walkers it attracts per year.

Other findings from the research are positive, identifying no need for fundamental infrastructure changes. Key recommendations relate to a single point of contact for businesses and walkers, promotion of the route and improving the visitor experience. Development of shorter, circular routes linked to towns and villages along the Way for those less determined to complete the route in one go offers perhaps the best opportunity to increase the benefit of the route to communities and businesses nearby.

(The Executive Summary from the Southern Upland Way User Survey can be found on the Publications page of the SUP website – www.sup.org.uk – or a summary for businesses along the route can be obtained by calling 01644 420808).



The fireworks finale over the stage © Rob Gray/digitalpic

SUW CELEBRATES ITS COMING OF AGE

Over 600 people came to the Loch of the Lowes on the 9th July to celebrate the 21st anniversary of the Southern Upland Way and the first performance of Tom Roseburgh's new composition, *The Southern Upland Suite*. Organised by the Southern Upland Suite Trust, a committed team of volunteers, the planning, hard work and enthusiasm were rewarded with a wonderful night of music and a true party atmosphere.

On the sunniest Saturday of the summer to date, the outdoor concert kicked off with a rousing performance from the Selkirk Silver Band followed by sessions from top

This issue has been generously supported by Scottish Border Paths



Scottish Border Paths is a public partnership that formed to assist in the regeneration of the Borders countryside through the development of walking, cycling and horse riding as activities for residents and visitors alike. The partnership has been pleased to assist in the promotion of SUW 21 as a timely and valuable opportunity to raise public awareness of the south of Scotland as a place to visit and enjoy.

traditional musicians from across the UK including Scocha, Real Time, Beyond Us, James Ross, John Nichol, Pete Stewart, Shankend Mac, Julian Goodacre, Stevie Lawrence and the Wendy Weatherby Trio. Well known musician, walker and broadcaster Jimmie Macgregor took to the stage and spoke about his love of walking, his experiences on the Way and the characters he met en route soon after it opened. Jimmie went on to help entertain the enthusiastic audience by picking up his guitar for “The Stoutest Man in the Forty Twa”.

Without a doubt the highlight of the evening was Tom Roseburgh’s Southern Upland Suite . The final section of the suite, played as the sun set over the loch was a grand finale to the evening with a spectacular fireworks display drawing a very memorable occasion to a stunning conclusion.

Representatives of the Southern Upland Way 21 project organised a reception in the Glen Café hosted by SUP Convenor Sir Michael Strang Steel for guests involved with the route over the years. The SUW21 team also manned a Southern Upland Way information stand for those attending the concert throughout the evening. Scottish Border Paths generous support made the reception possible and funded the attendance of Jimmie Macgregor to launch the Writing the Way booklet (more inside). Scottish Border Paths has also supported this special issue of the newsletter, the first sponsored newsletter we have produced. We are most grateful for their support.

A CD of the Southern Upland Suite can be ordered on line at

<http://www.scottishborders.com/bigskystudios/cdstore.htm>

The Southern Upland Way 21 - SUW21 - project is working to promote the route in its 21st anniversary year. It is a partnership project comprising Dumfries & Galloway Council, South Lanarkshire Council, Scottish Borders Council, SNH, southernuplandway.com, VisitScotland Dumfries & Galloway, VisitScotland Scottish Borders, Scottish Enterprise and the Southern Uplands Partnership. SUW21 is part funded by Leader+ Dumfries and Galloway and Leader + Scottish Borders. We would like to acknowledge their support. For more information on the project, partners, Ranger Service, funders and more visit the anniversary site, www.suw21.com.

This project has been funded by the European Community, Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders 2000–2006 Leader + programmes.



Europe and Scotland
Making it **work together**

New Directors: Joan Mitchell and Ogilvy Jackson

SUP is pleased to welcome two new Directors appointed at the 2005 AGM

OGILVY JACKSON

Standing as Group Director

Personal statement:

“I was born in Selkirk in 1951. I was brought up on Wardlaw, the family hill-sheep farm in the Ettrick Valley. Since 1974 my wife Daphne and myself have been running the farm of Cossarhill at the head of the Ettrick Valley. We have two grown-up sons. In recent years I have been actively trying to improve the infrastructure of the valley, lobbying for better roads and telecommunications (i.e. mobile phone services and broadband). For the last 20 years I have been sitting on the local branch of the NFU as a committee member.”



Ogilvy Jackson, Director

JOAN MITCHELL

Standing as Individual member

Personal Statement:

“I have a long standing interest and commitment to rural development, livestock farming, upland ecology and tourism in Dumfries & Galloway. Partner in a family upland farm, academic background in upland ecology, various roles in public life associated with these themes. I am elected councillor for Cree Ward, Chair of Dumfries & Galloway Council, Chair of Planning & Environment Committee, past Chair of Dumfries & Galloway Tourist Board, member of South of Scotland Forestry Advisory Forum, member of South Scotland European programme Monitoring Committee, former member of EU Committee of the Regions (rural development agriculture and fisheries commission). I am supportive of co-operative working in rural South of Scotland.”



Joan Mitchell, Director

TREASURE IN THE HILLS

The Southern Upland Way stretches 213 miles from coast to coast. Many people find great pleasure in walking sections of the route but few manage to walk the whole length. Those who do have a strong sense of purpose. Artist John Behm considers them pilgrims. He wanted to make something to mark the success of those who completed the route. Admiring Medieval pilgrim tokens, he thought he would mint special coins. With his wife, Rachael Long, and Fi Martynoga, who coordinated the project, Waymerks (a pun on the old Scots coin the merk) was born.

John connects strongly with the makers and shapers of the past. He delights in the sense of place that changes valley by valley and hill by hill as you walk. The SUW breaks into about thirteen distinct stages. Artefacts discovered in many of them have found their way into the Museum of Scotland. The collection there furnished most of the images that he used for the coins, from Bronze Age axe heads to a Covenanter's mask. Others came from local wildlife, and one from the controversial wind farms that are starting to appear on the hills. The 'heads' side of the coins depicts an Iron Age brooch, set within the plan of a hillfort: evidence of the hand of man on the landscape.

At Fi's suggestion, thirteen modern 'makers' who live near the SUW were asked to make kists or (chest) to hold the waymerks. These are placed at remote points along the route, inviting people to look for them. Successful seekers find an unusual art object containing a hoard of hand-minted coins. Each of these is a portable artwork, designed to be taken away. The original coins were of lead and copper. Newly minted ones will be of copper and pewter.

In the four years that it has operated, Waymerks has intrigued, entertained, and sometimes frustrated people. The team receives plaintive emails from some who fail to find a kist, triumphant ones from those who collect all the waymerk coins. Only one couple succeeded in finding them all in 2002 when the project started. The record is now held by a Dutch pair in 2004. They walked the whole SUW in under two weeks and found every kist.

Originally supported by SNH, Awards for All, Leader +, FC, the National Museums of Scotland, Scottish Borders Council, D & G Council, S. Lanarkshire Council, a consortium of windpower companies, and the SUP, the project is now managed by the rangers who look after the footpath. Funding comes from SNH and the three local authorities, Scottish Borders, Dumfries & Galloway, and South Lanarkshire. To find out more about the kist-making artists, the objects that inspired the Waymerks coins, and about John Behm himself, look at the website www.waymerks.org.uk or pick up a leaflet from a tourist office in the Borders or Dumfries & Galloway.

Art in the Landscape

I was invited to a meeting about public sculpture in the Borders in early 2004. The meeting discussed the Southern Upland Way as a site for a series of sculptures as part of the Ways 21st anniversary celebrations in 2005 and to try and encourage more public interest in the walk.

A few days later I started thinking about the possibilities of making living sculpture along the Way. My idea was to have a continuous corridor of artwork, which had been grown, or made from the earth rocks and water along the route. There is nothing new in growing art or land art, but what would be new would be the overall concept, the scale on which it was done and the sheer concentration and ambition of it.

The 'Landworks' project met with an enthusiastic response, and a new meeting with Dumfries and Galloway joining in was held. Enough finance for a practical pilot project was raised jointly by Borders Region and Dumfries and Galloway, though because of financial constraints the whole project had to be sorted out by March 2005.

The first step was to find a site on The Southern Upland Way. An approach to Jeremy Thompson of the Forestry Commission brought enthusiasm and a meeting. We discussed sites and various sculptural options with the idea of cutting heather proving to be the most practical because of the short time scale.

The site I choose was overlooked by The Southern Upland Way, and was covered in old heather. The Forestry Commission were keen to see the heather cut back to stimulate new growth (to improve the food source for grouse), and to find a practical alternative to burning heather (the traditional way to manage heather). They agreed to provide machinery to the bulk of the cutting.

My idea for the sculpture was to mark out a series of forms, which from a fixed viewing point would look like circles or rings. As you moved away from the fixed point it would be apparent that these were not circles at all but huge irregular ovals. The dimensions of the largest of the forms, which are 150 by 30 metres, illustrate this point. The practical work started on 5th April 2005 and was completed in the first week of May.

The 'circles' cut in the heather will change over time and with the seasons. The new heather will come through, there will be the flowering and then gradually the heather will grow out. I thought that the artwork would last a couple of seasons but one of the rangers was confident that it would be visible for many years to come.

I hope this sculpture proves to be the first of many on the Southern Upland Way. The idea would be to bring in many artists all with their individual ideas about living sculpture, though I would also love the chance to make other things myself.

My wish is to see a whole new visionary landscape across the Southern Upland Way corridor, without taking away from the existing beauty and giving new meaning to the more lifeless parts of the walk.

Charles Poulsen, 2005



Charles Poulsen at the Point of Resolution, map ref: NT 354 337

The Alternative Energy Conference – Friday 4th November
Community and Householder Alternative Energy Fair – Saturday 5th November
at Browne House, Crichton Campus, Dumfries



To register for event information please e-mail: floramcdowall@sup.org.uk

OUT NOW – WRITING THE WAY

Writing the Way, a booklet to mark the 21st anniversary of the opening of the Southern Upland Way in 2005, has just been published. The book has been put together as part of the SUW21 project, with the aim of encouraging more people to try out the route. The booklet is an anthology of Southern Upland Way experiences from people who have walked it. Contributors include Jimmy Macgregor, the man who brought the Southern Upland Way to national TV screens, author of the official SUW guidebook Roger Smith and local walking enthusiast Jim Manson. Also contributing are SUW Rangers Richard Mearns and Tom Whitty, sled dog champion Steven Lindsay, artist Charles Poulsen and photographer Allan Devlin; the Foreword has been contributed by prominent Scottish walking writer Cameron McNeish. All the contributors for the book donated their time and their writing skills with the aim of inspiring others to try the Southern Upland Way for themselves.



The booklet costs £5 and is available from Tourist Information Centres in Dumfries & Galloway and the Scottish Borders, or by mail order from the Southern Upland Partnership. All proceeds from sale of Writing the Way will go to Macmillan Cancer Relief who celebrated the 21st anniversary of the Southern Upland Way with a sponsored relay walk along the route in July.

WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT THE WAY

"From the silence of the forest and the deathly quiet of the open hill (apart from the Stonechats!) it suddenly sounded like a radio was playing ahead of us, getting louder as we approached. But this radio was playing just natural sounds, sounds of many, many different songbirds and the Garroch burn accompanying the tune." Andrew Case of southernuplandway.com – a company which provides information, travel packages and baggage transport along the Southern Upland Way

"They say that walking eastwards, when you climb the stile taking you from one region to another, you are on your "Way in". At the head of the valley, Phawhope Bothy, sturdily built beside the bridge over the infant Etrick Water, offers welcome shelter to Upland Way walkers and hill gangrel alike." Jim Manson, experienced hill walker, retired member of the Moffat Mountain Rescue Team and author of Walks in the Moffat Hills and Lowthers.

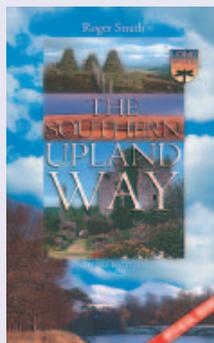
"I would urge those of us who appreciate the wilder places of Caledonia - in particular the varied landscape of the Southern Uplands, to take the time to get to know individual sections of the Way on a more intimate basis, you will not be disappointed." Steven Lindsay, current dog sled World Champion and Project Manager for Dog Sport Scotland

"I eventually touched the base of the Thistle Monument in Cockburnspath that signified the end of a wonderful, sometimes tough, but exhilarating experience. I was filled with a huge sense of achievement and left with great memories." Phil Eddey from Surrey who walked the SUW in its entirety in 2002 and revisited the route in 2005.

and coming soon - THE NEW GUIDE

September sees the publication of the completely revised Official Guide to the SUW by Roger Smith. The Guide comes with full colour photographs throughout and two specially commissioned maps of the Way covering the route and 64 short walks created with the Way as their starting point. These short walks are a few kilometres each, suited to all levels of ability and an ideal introduction to the interest and beauty of the countryside. The guide is invaluable for both the serious long distance walker and those who would rather tackle short sections.

The book will be available from bookshops for £16.99 and is published by Mercat Press.



Coast to Coast by pedal power . . . A CYCLISTS SUW?

by John W Taylor

I should explain that I am secretary of the Dumfries and Galloway Section of CTC, the UK's largest national cyclists' organisation, and have been speaking up for cycling in this region and on the Scottish scene for 20 years.

Ten years ago, it occurred to me that a cycle route could be devised using largely minor roads, forest roads and a couple of private roads/tracks/paths. Only three miles of connecting paths would need to be constructed. At that time, it did not get very far. Recently, though, especially in the climate of the new Outdoor Access legislation, I have been reviving the idea, and gaining some interest.

The route runs from Girvan and Stranraer to Berwick, all having train stations. From Girvan, I originally thought that we would be stuck with the B road to Barr, but it would be better, though more expensive, to follow the path to Tormitchell and then the track through Balcletchie to B734. I believe that a windfarm is proposed in this area; the opportunity should not be lost to gain some track to help this route.

From Barr, the forest road could be followed to Pinvalley, but the public road is nicer. After that, the route goes by FE forest road to Loch Bradan and round the head of Loch Doon. It would take only 1.3 miles to link with

company forest road to Lamloch, then old track to Garryhorn. Then it is public road to Carsphairn, Smittons and Lorg although a dramatic diversion is available (apart from 0.5 mile path required) via Windy Standard. Again, only about 1.3 miles of path would link with the public road at Polskeoch, which can be followed down Scar Glen, and to Drumlanrig and Keir (Kirkpatrick Macmillan connections), intersecting the KM Trail and the National Byway.

From Thornhill, it's public road again to Ae. My original route had to take a lot more public road to Wamphrey Glen and then by forest road over to Garwaldwaterfoot, requiring only 0.5 miles of connecting path. Thence it would go through Craik forest, by minor roads to Kelso (requiring much thought where it would cross the A7), finishing by coinciding with the Tweed Cycleway. However, the horse route has now been put into place through Ae forest to Beattock and Garwaldwaterfoot. I am not sure of its route thereafter, but it may well be that more of it could be employed, though it is likely that the Tweed route would also still have to be employed.

The Stranraer link would be by mainly minor roads to Glentool. Then by Clatteringshaws to link with the main route at B7000/B728, OR, by a path from Loch Dee to Loch Doon; now, wouldn't that be dramatic?

I have not done any recent investigation of this route. I think it could initially be established at a fairly low cost considering the length of it, with some better alternatives being constructed as time went by. Much of it is very attractive, so, even though it does not have as much off-road as the SUW, it should take some of the cycling pressure on the latter away. It would help to boost remoter economies and enable less confident cyclists to attain a taste of remoter countryside.

"Trail-blazing the path link at the head of Loch Doon."

photo credit John Taylor



Coast to Coast by motor . . . The Alternative Southern Upland Way

by Billy Davidson

An alternative Southern Upland Way? Well, not quite, but we do have an alternative to walking it. This was not a creation, but a realisation that there were many leisure groups already present on the route of the Southern Upland Way (SUW), some intentional, others by accident.

By its very nature the SUW is rural, and so too are the visitor attractions on it, therefore most visitors arrive by means of mechanical transport and many of these visitors are indulging in a leisure pursuit such as motor homes in the Galloway Forest Park, motorcycles stopping off at St Mary's Loch or 4-wheel drive enthusiasts at Abbey St Bathans. So what if there was a means to harness these groups and entice them to remain on the Southern Upland Way?

With this objective in mind, a project was launched to compile a guide to the SUW for the road user. Mobile visitors have the ability to visit more places in a shorter timescale, so great care was taken to include details of many places of interest, local and national history, the wildlife and landscape. Attention was also given to the road types and conditions, which vary from single track roads to motorway. The subject was detailed in a special note "Galloway Forest Area Roads and Large Vehicles". In order to keep directions simple and precise, it was decided to break the journey into four sections, each starting and ending in a town or village with local amenities. Indeed, this guide was shaping up in a similar manner to the SUW official guidebook. In addition to providing a guide and encouragement to stay on the SUW it is hoped that the book would have benefits to service providers along the route, perhaps even generating additional revenue for local businesses from service stations to campsites. Unfortunately, the relevant authorities did not share the authors' enthusiasm and no external funding or partner could be found. After consultations with the publisher it was decided to impose cuts and continue the project on a self-financing basis, this resulted in dropping 50 colour photographs and having the remainder in black and white. The use of mapping was also now cost prohibitive. In order to recover the maximum amount of costs it became apparent that promotions, sales and distribution would also have to be undertaken by the author, which in turn incurs separate expense. Fortunately profit was not the motive for producing this guide and all income above the unit cost of each book has been donated to the authors chosen charity, an ex-serviceman's organisation with facilities near Ayr.

The Alternative Southern Uplands Way guide for the road user is now available at most good bookshops and newsagents along the route. Price £5.99 or from the author direct by sending a cheque for £7.00 (inc. p+p) made payable to Billy Davidson, 3 Wyburn Place, Ayr, KA8 9AY.

To date the book has exceeded all expectations with over 400 copies sold. Stockists include VisitScotland Dumfries & Galloway and VisitScotland Scottish Borders TICs.

Access To Opportunity!

Countryside Consultant *Vyv Wood Gee* reviews Land Management Contract opportunities for managing public access on farmland.

KEY POINTS:

- Significant new financial incentive to provide for public access
- Generous contribution 75% towards capital costs of drainage, signage, access facilities
- Maintenance payments of £2.75/metre (within farm limit)

Land Management Contracts (LMCs) were introduced by SEERAD in spring 2005 alongside the Single Farm Payment Scheme (SFPS). All IACS registered land managers with a business reference number are eligible to apply for this voluntary scheme. Each holding has a maximum yearly allowance based on the total area of land declared in their 2005 SFPS form. Applications for 2005 were due to close on 16th May, then extended to 6th June 2005. There will be opportunity for land managers to apply in 2006, and annually thereafter, within the notified closing date. Full details of the scheme (including specifications for the option outlined below) are detailed in SEERAD publication LMCMS1 "Land Management Contract Menu Scheme 2005 - Notes for Guidance".

In summary, farmers and crofters can choose from a menu of options, one of which is improving public access. Farmers who applied in 2005 who have not fully utilised their allowance will be eligible to reapply in subsequent years up to the limit of their allowance. Provided they have sufficient remaining annual allowance, farmers who have already signed up for other LMC menu options could apply for payment for access (or other options which SEERAD might choose to add to the scheme) at a later date.

The aim of the LMC access option is to provide access routes (paths) suitable for year-round use by walkers, and if the surfaces are appropriate, for cyclists and horse-riders. Land managers can claim £2.75 per metre for maintenance of new or existing paths, provided the paths are fit for purpose, clearly signed and meet required standards (as set out in the LMC guidance notes), and provided that the farmer accepts sole responsibility for maintenance. However the obligation is to ensure that the path(s) claimed is readily accessible by the public, without necessarily an obligation to undertake any physical maintenance. Farmers can quite legitimately claim for existing paths, informal or otherwise, where vegetation is adequately controlled by public use or grazing without obligation under LMC to mow or otherwise maintain the path. Farmers with long distance paths across their land, such as the Southern Upland Way, or local paths established through an access project, could therefore apply for payment under this option, even if capital work has been undertaken by another organisation. SEERAD would expect LMC access claimants to address drainage issues as a routine part of maintenance, and to maintain waymarking/signage.

Capital support towards establishing new paths or improving existing paths is also available based on 75% of costs for signposts, waymarkers, gates, stiles, bridges and culverts (max. £150 each item), claimed against receipts submitted by 31st March of the relevant year.



The SUW means business

A summary of findings, recommendations and opportunities for businesses from the SUW User Survey has been produced and circulated to over 900 businesses within 15 miles of the route. The summary can be obtained from SUP by calling 01644 420808, as can promotional fliers and window stickers to promote the anniversary of the route. Here is a taster from the findings.

Q. Who is the customer for long distance walking on the SUW?

A. Over two thirds of the walkers are UK residents, most coming from England, most others are from Western Europe, in particular the low countries, Netherlands and Belgium.

Slightly more men than women undertake the walk (56%:44%), almost half the walkers walk in pairs.

More than half the long distance walkers on the SUW are in the 45-65 age range, the vast majority walk west to east and spend at least a week on the route.

Q. How much do long distance walkers spend?

A. The majority of walkers spend at least a week in the area, those undertaking the whole walk take on average 14.6 days to do it and spend an average of £40.75 per person per day.

The majority of total trip spend is on accommodation and luggage transfer services (72.5%). Hotels are closely followed by B&Bs in terms of use, then youth hostels. Around one fifth of those surveyed made use of a tent.

Around 48% of long distance walkers wanted to enjoy other activities during their walking holiday, such as photography, visiting attractions or bird watching.

Long distance walkers spend slightly less per day than domestic tourists visiting the south of Scotland generally, £37.66/£45.41 v. £47.50 per night (VisitScotland, 2003). However the average time spent in the region (approx one week) is greater than the overall average for domestic visitors of (3.8 days) and their overall spend is therefore higher by almost a quarter.

SCOTTISH BORDER PATHS

Scottish Border Paths (SBP) has operated as a partnership of Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Borders Council, Visit Scotland Borders, Scottish Enterprise Borders and Paths For All Partnership since 1994. It is also part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

Scottish Border Paths aims to develop a high quality access network for walkers, cyclists and horse riders of all ages and abilities, based on local community and visitor needs and aspirations, whilst providing clear economic, social and environmental benefits. Therefore the network also contributes positively to the Scottish Borders 'New Ways' community planning process.

The partnership has created a number of long-distance routes such as St. Cuthbert's Way (100km Melrose to Lindisfarne), the Berwickshire Coastal Path (24km Berwick to St. Abbs), the John Buchan Way (22km Peebles to Broughton) and the Borders Abbeys Way (104kms).

SBP has also produced a series of booklets on shorter routes around Jedburgh, Peebles, Selkirk, Hawick, Newcastleton and East Berwickshire. It's latest booklet, 'Walks Around Melrose' was launched in July. Devised by the Melrose Paths Group, the routes within this new booklet provide locals and visitors with the opportunity to explore the villages and countryside around Melrose and vary from easy strolls to more strenuous hikes into the nearby hills.

David Langworth, Chairman of the Melrose Paths Group said: "The walks have been a great co-operative effort between the Paths Group,

Scottish Border Paths and landowners. There has been a long-felt need for circular routes that both locals and visitors to Melrose can enjoy and these walks will be of great benefit to the town."

The Paths Group celebrated the launch by following one of the walks from Melrose to Abbotsford and back along the River Tweed, with lunch at the Abbotsford tea room.

SBP also assists the organisation of access based festivals including the Scottish Borders Cycling Festival, Borders Festival of the Horse and a week long Scottish Borders Festival of Walking due to be held in Jedburgh commencing 3rd September.

Leaflets are available from Visit Scotland Borders Tourist Information Centres (Information Service: 0870 608 0404).

If you would like further information on Scottish Border Paths, please email: outdooraccess@scotborders.gov.uk or telephone 01835 826 509.



The Paths Group at Abbotsford

PROJECT NEWS

Mission accomplished

Trails officially opened, on time and on budget!

On Saturday 18th June over 350km of stunning countryside trails through Scotland's very finest scenery was officially launched as one of the largest and most exciting networks of integrated multi-use paths in the UK. The "Tweed Trails" and "South of Scotland Countryside Trails" allow walkers, riders and cyclists to follow in the footsteps of cattle drovers and Reivers through one of Europe's most unspoiled landscapes.

"South of Scotland Countryside Trails" (SOSCT) is the umbrella project encompassing a linear route from Ae in Dumfries and Galloway through Moffat and Eskdalemuir to Craik in the Borders from where a spider-web of networks branches out to Hawick, Tweeddale, the Cheviots and Kielder Water. In recognition of funding through the Tweed Rivers Heritage Project and the dominant influence of the River Tweed - SOSCT routes in the Borders have been developed under the banner "Tweed Trails".

Nearly five years of meticulous planning, collaboration and negotiation have gone into the project. Drove roads, once critical to the economy of the south of Scotland are now back on the map, but in a new guise! South of Scotland Countryside Trails is already breathing new life into the rural communities through which routes have been developed with accommodation and other service providers poised to welcome new visitors.

Not only has the project been completed on schedule, delivering more than its original targets within an agreed budget. It offers considerable benefits all round - to local people, to visitors, to local businesses, community groups and the local economy.

The major strength of this entire venture is undoubtedly partnership working. "Tweed Trails" and "South of Scotland Countryside Trails" were inspired and developed by British Horse Society Scotland, Central Tweeddale Paths, East Tweeddale Local Path group, North Tweeddale Paths, Scottish Borders Council, Forestry Commission Scotland and Solway Heritage. Local community groups, farmers and landowners were involved from the outset. The voluntary local path groups which evolved from this consultation have worked tirelessly liaising with farmers and landowners, way-marking paths and erecting signposts. Local riders have been involved on a similar basis through British Horse Society Scotland. The project has been managed by the Southern Uplands Partnership.

The overall cost of SOSCT during the three-year implementation phase has been £740,000, of which £544,750 represents development and implementation of Tweed Trails routes in the Scottish Borders and £218,000 the linear route from Ae to Eskdalemuir in Dumfries and Galloway. Heritage Lottery Funding which has met 50% of costs of Tweed Trails' routes in the Borders has been co-ordinated by Tweed Forum through the Tweed Rivers Heritage Project. European Regional Development Fund have also been significant funders through South of Scotland European Partnership. Scottish Natural Heritage have funded work both in Dumfries and Galloway and the Borders as part of their commitment to developing public access to the countryside and additional financial support from Forestry Commission Scotland, Dumfries and Galloway Council and Landfill Tax has also been much appreciated. This significant in-kind contribution of local community groups and individuals, together with British Horse Society Scotland at national and local level has all helped attract the significant capital funding for the project.

The trails were launched officially at Traquair by SUP Convener Sir Michael Strang Steel, who said "This is indeed a wonderful initiative and also a hugely ambitious project. Everyone is delighted that it has gone so successfully. The venture precedes the Land Reform Act on access and builds on the very successful work accomplished by the "Tweed Rivers" project. It will open up a huge area to walkers and riders and will be of great benefit to the tourism industry in the south of Scotland." The occasion was marked with the unveiling of a commemorative obelisk incorporating a seat, weather vein and droving frieze designed by Auchencairn maker John Crosby of SeeLevel Design. Activities for riders, walkers and cyclists followed storytelling and a celebratory lunch.

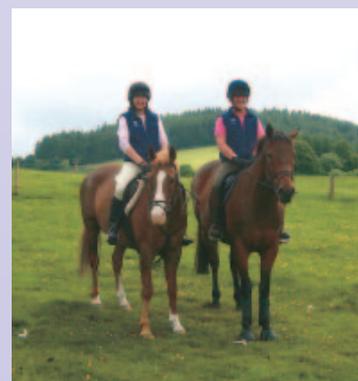
For further information:

Maps with information on accommodation providers with stabling and further information can be picked up in local TICs or sent on request from SUP, call 01644 420808 or 01750 725154

The Executive Summary of research carried out into the potential for trail riding businesses can be found on the SUP website, www.sup.org.uk



The obelisk windvein showing design commemorating the routes droving history.



Pat Somerville and Helene Mauchlen of BHS Scotland prepare to join riders for an afternoon on the trails.

NATURE BASED TOURISM MAPPING

Following earlier work to map clusters of nature based tourism activity in the Borders and Dumfries & Galloway the second phase of this work has been completed in South Lanarkshire and South and East Ayrshire. The research was undertaken by RSK ERA and has resulted in a very comprehensive report which identifies clusters and includes proposals as to how some of these could be taken forward. The Executive Summary of this report can now be found on the SUP website, www.sup.org.uk, or the full report can be supplied on disk on request from SUP on 01644 420808.

A half day seminar was held in May at Osberton Hall, Auchincruive, Ayr attracting over 70 delegates. The programme included the RSK ERA research, a workshop exploring the opportunities around nature based tourism cluster development sponsored by Tourism & Environment Forum and a lively feedback session. Additional information can be found at www.sup.org.uk

NEW PROJECTS

New projects are currently being developed, these include a rural skills audit and nature based tourism cluster facilitation - more news on these in a future issue.

BIODIVERSITY ON THE EDGE: Black Grouse in the Southern Uplands

This new project seeks to improve the conservation status of black grouse, through the employment of a black grouse project officer for a period of 2 years to work with a number of key landowners to significantly improve habitat management and predator control. The project will additionally seek to develop a longer term landscape-scale restoration plan to address the degradation of upland habitats - especially heather moorland - which will in turn benefit other species such as red grouse. The project has been developed by a broad based partnership including the RSPB, Scottish Borders Council, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Game Conservancy Trust. The project area includes the Yarrow valley west of Selkirk and parts of the Ettrick and Tweed valleys and over the watershed into Dumfries & Galloway.

Snippets

PROPOSALS ISSUES FOR REGISTRATION OF PRIVATE LANDLORDS

an update from Sarah-Jane Laing,
Housing Strategy Officer, SRPBA.

The long awaited proposals for the implementation of Part 8 of the Antisocial Behaviour Etc (Scotland) Act 2004, relating to the registration of private landlords, have been published by the Scottish Executive. The implementation guidance is in the form of a consultation paper focusing on detailed proposals developed by a working group representing local authorities, landlords, agents and consumer interests. The consultation period ends on September 23rd.

The paper also covers Part 7 of the Act which allows local authorities to act against individual landlords who fail to use normal good practice to address antisocial behaviour by their tenants. The implementation of Parts 7 and 8 has been postponed until March 2006. Link to the consultation paper:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/07/08172434/24352>

For further information on srpba: www.srpba.com

BTCV TASKFORCE SEEK ACTION BREAK LOCATIONS

BTCV are looking for partners to run new and exciting holidays as part of the BTCV Scotland 2006 Spring/Summer programme. The Action Breaks last for 7-10 days and are led by a highly trained member of BTCV staff and an assistant. The group is usually made up of ten motivated volunteers who carry out a variety of conservation and access related tasks who will stay in local accommodation. Landowners with appropriate projects who are keen to enhance public awareness and understanding of environmental management and require a work party should contact Charlie Fairbairn, Project Officer at BTCV Scotland on 01786 479 697 or email c.fairbairn@btev.org.uk



RIGHT TO BUY

Andy Wightman, author of *Who Owns Scotland*, and a leading authority on land ownership and land reform, is leading the project which is being supported by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust and Highland and Islands Enterprise. "Although community ownership is very familiar to folk in the Western Isles, it may still be thought of very much in crofting terms," Andy explains. However The Land Reform Act allows communities to register an

interest in any land, including small plots and buildings. Over 98.5% of the land area of Scotland can be registered by local communities. The project has launched a website at www.landreformact.com. Andy Wightman can be contacted on 0131 538 5175 andywightman@caledonia.org.uk.

NEWSLETTER SPONSORSHIP

We are delighted that Scottish Border Paths have sponsored this issue of the Southern Uplands Partnership newsletter. This is the first time that the newsletter has been sponsored, but we hope the first of many!

We are now actively inviting sponsorship of forthcoming issues and would be very pleased to hear from you if this would be of interest. As sponsor you will be recognised within the publication as well as having the option to contribute an editorial piece to the sponsored issue, should you wish to do so. In addition to being sent to all SUP members the newsletter is distributed by partner organisations, VisitScotland and public libraries. For more information please call Pip Tabor on 01750 725154 or Flora McDowall on 01644 420808.

WALKING FESTIVALS

3-10 September, Scottish Borders Festival of Walking

This year's week long festival will be centred around Jedburgh exploring the rich countryside.

www.visitscottishborders.co.uk/walking

7-10 October, Moffat Walking Festival

Enjoy an autumnal break in the stunning Moffat Hills with a warm welcome from locals and fellow walkers. Now in its fifth year, the walking festival team know how to help you make the most of your weekend.

www.visitmoffat.co.uk

HAVE YOUR SAY

Contributions to the newsletter are welcomed. Every article provided is considered for publication, though as space is limited it may not be possible to use them all.

INCLUSION IN THE NEWSLETTER DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT OF THE VIEWS OR SERVICES DESCRIBED BY THE MEMBERSHIP, STAFF OR DIRECTORS OF THE SOUTHERN UPLAND PARTNERSHIP.

Squirrel Alert . . .



The Red Squirrels In South Scotland project, managed by SUP and funded by Scottish Natural Heritage and Leader+ is working to protect red squirrel populations across the South of Scotland. The good news is that this has been an excellent year for red squirrels due to the high levels of natural food available; the downside is of course that it has also been good for grey squirrels.

The American grey squirrel competes with red squirrels for resources and carries squirrelpox, a virus potentially lethal to the red squirrel. Until now, Scotland, a red squirrel stronghold, has remained free from squirrelpox but last month several grey squirrels moving north from the Cumbria area into southern Scotland tested positive for the virus.

WE ARE VERY KEEN TO HEAR FROM ANYONE WHO SEES A GREY SQUIRREL ACROSS SOUTHERN SCOTLAND.

Please visit the website (www.red-squirrels.org.uk) or contact your local Red Squirrel Conservation Officer:

Dumfries and Galloway:
Sue Hearn 01750 725157/ 07733121837
(sue@red-squirrels.org.uk)

Scottish Borders:
Elly Hamilton 01750 23446/ 07733121838
(ellyhamilton@redsquirrels.org.uk)

Membership

The Southern Uplands Partnership is a membership organisation and depends on subscriptions for a significant part of its core funding. Members elect the Directors, receive regular newsletters and play a major role in determining priorities. If you are not a member, please consider becoming one. If you sign and return the Gift Aid declaration it allows us to get extra support from the Inland Revenue.

To apply for membership either use the form below or visit www.sup.org.uk and complete the form on-line.

Membership Category please tick box: Individual member Group member

Subscription Category Rate please tick box:

Individual waged per year £10 Individual unwaged per year £5 Individual life £200

Group(voluntary group/community council) per year £40 Group (National/corporate body) per year £100

If you would like to pay by standing order please contact the office for the necessary form.

Please make cheques payable to the SOUTHERN UPLANDS PARTNERSHIP.

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone email

GIFT AID You can increase the value of your subscription or donation (by 28p in every pound) if you pay income or capital gains tax in the UK. By signing and dating below, you will enable the Southern Uplands Partnership to claim back the tax on your subscription or donation under the Gift Aid Scheme.

Return to: The Southern Uplands Partnership, Freepost SC05012, Studio 2, Lindean Mill, Galashiels TD1 0BR

Signature Date

My interests are (please tick up to 3 of the following):

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> conservation/environment | <input type="checkbox"/> archaeology | <input type="checkbox"/> forestry/woodlands | <input type="checkbox"/> equestrian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> buildings | <input type="checkbox"/> sustainability | <input type="checkbox"/> communities | <input type="checkbox"/> local foods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture/land use | <input type="checkbox"/> water/fish | <input type="checkbox"/> economics | <input type="checkbox"/> housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> land reform | <input type="checkbox"/> renewable power | <input type="checkbox"/> access | <input type="checkbox"/> tourism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> employment | <input type="checkbox"/> local arts and crafts | <input type="checkbox"/> ornithology | <input type="checkbox"/> rural transport |



The Southern Uplands Partnership

The Southern Uplands Partnership was established as a company limited by guarantee with charitable status in 1999, with the aim of promoting sustainable land-use in the Southern Uplands of Scotland and thereby keeping people living and working here.

Company No 200827 Charity SC029475

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