



Annual Report 2020



The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society

VIRTUAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 21 November 2020 at 11am. In the light of the restrictions resulting from the pandemic, Directors have decided to hold the AGM as a virtual meeting by Zoom. This will require access to a computer or mobile device with access to the internet via a web browser, but there is no requirement to download any software to take part. If you would like to attend, you must first register using this link: <http://bit.ly/ScotWaysAGM2020>. Details for joining and participating in the AGM will be sent to you along with guidance notes nearer the time. Other groups have found that their attendance at such meetings has increased as the travel and weather are no longer a deterrent, so we are hoping the same applies here.

The formal notice and agenda appears on page 11. The AGM papers are available on our website: <https://www.scotways.com/news/654-scotways-agm-2020>. To obtain a printed copy, please email info@scotways.com or leave a message on the office answering machine with your details and when a member of staff is next in the office, they can print and send it to you.



At 10.30am, prior to the formal business, John Home Robertson will speak on "Rev A E Robertson, 1870-1958; the first Munro 'Compleater'; a director of the Scottish Rights of Way Society from 1923; and the man who "knew too much" about Highland rights of way.

John Home Robertson was educated at Ampleforth College and West of Scotland Agricultural College. A Berwickshire farmer, he was Labour MP and MSP for East Lothian until he retired

in 2007. He is now an active volunteer for Edinburgh Direct Aid, most recently with Syrian refugees in Lebanon, and also an amateur archaeologist and his researches into family history brought to light his connection with the Rev A E Robertson, who was his father's uncle.

Directors' report

GOVERNING DOCUMENT

The Society is a company limited by guarantee and is a charity registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator. It is governed by its Articles of Association. Each member of the society has undertaken to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards any deficit arising in the event of the Society being wound up.

The Directors present their report and the accounts for the year ended 30 June 2020.

PREPARATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Society's governing document, current statutory requirements and the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP FRS 102) (second edition – October 2019, effective 1 January 2019).

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MANAGEMENT

Directors of the Society are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law and are listed on page 23. The Articles of Association provide that any director who has held office for a period of three years since their last appointment shall retire from office and may seek re-appointment. Directors may not seek re-appointment if they have held office for a continuous period of nine years.

The Directors are appointed by the members at the annual general meeting and the Chair is appointed by the Directors from among their number. Muriel Robertson was Chair until December when she retired from the post after three years. The Directors, who appointed John Elliot as her successor, are very grateful for Muriel's wise leadership which guided the Society through significant

change. The Directors all have an interest in the outdoors and in rights of access and bring a balanced mix of skills and knowledge about access matters.

Day to day running of the Society is the responsibility of the Chief Operating Officer, Richard Barron, and National Secretary, Alison Riddell, supported by staff and volunteers.

OBJECTS

The charitable objective of the Society is "the preservation, defence, restoration and acquisition, for the public benefit, of public rights of access in Scotland, including public rights of way, and related amenity."

The Society is the independent charity which upholds public access in Scotland. Founded in 1845, it combines three main roles: expert authority and adviser on the law of access; custodian and manager of the national resource of information about access routes and rights; and practical guardian and advocate of public access on the ground, in town and country, across Scotland.

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The year was important for three events: the Covid-19 pandemic – which dominated all activity from March onwards – our 175th anniversary and the installation of a new computer system.

Members who were personally affected by the pandemic are in our thoughts as we hope for a resolution to this dreadful disease.

We celebrated our 175th anniversary on 3rd April 2020. Naturally, celebrations were muted and held on-line. In June, Richard Barron gave an excellent talk on Zoom for the National Library of Scotland on the history of the Society which attracted 380 viewers (several times the number who could have attended it in person). Unfortunately, our Anniversary Walks

Directors' report (continued)

programme was cancelled, but in July, we launched our “virtual challenge” which asked participants to replicate, in their own way, the 126 miles of the historic walk installing the first signposts along rights of way in the Cairngorms in July 1885. Throughout the year historical facts about the Society, outdoor access in Scotland and the personalities involved have appeared on social and traditional media.

Other activities continued as usual but to a restricted extent after the office closure in March due to the pandemic. The Society is consulted by a wide range of individuals and organisations about public access. This includes legal searches checking the existence of rights of way but such enquiries dropped off sharply after lockdown. From March onwards, however, enquiries from members of the public almost doubled as the value of outdoor access came to be more widely appreciated.

One positive result of this activity is the increasing numbers of people joining as members. Increased membership is important to the Society's future, increasing our heft in upholding access as well as fortifying our finances. We shall invest in increasing membership in the year 2020/21.

COVID-19 ISSUES UPHOLDING PUBLIC ACCESS DURING LOCKDOWN

Working alongside other organisations, ScotWays brought Covid-19 related issues to the attention of the Scottish Government. We provided input for the Ministerial statement released at Easter and associated guidance issued by Scottish Natural Heritage. We also raised concerns about the agricultural-centric focus of the advice. Malcolm Combe, author of our Law Guide, blogged about such access restrictions and wrote a paper for our

website. As lockdown gradually eases, we are updating our website to amplify the message about access rights and responsibilities.

ACCESS QUERIES DURING LOCKDOWN

In common with reports from access officers, access queries from the general public increased during lockdown – some related specifically to Covid-19 restrictions, but by no means all. Our responses pointed to specific guidance, provided contact details for the access authorities and noted the usefulness of reporting issues in relation to our work.

IT SYSTEMS AND MODERNISATION IT SYSTEMS

The Society moved the Catalogue of Rights of Way onto a new software platform through the last months of 2019 and early 2020 at a cost of £55,000. This huge project, ably led by Richard Barron, has proved vital during the pandemic. It allows on-line access to both maps and text records, enabling staff to work from home. Substantial work is still being undertaken to create a fully accessible portal and to verify all the data transferred to the new system.

DIGITISATION

Scanning of all paper records was delayed by the office closure and is now planned for completion by 30 June 2021.

SHARING KNOWLEDGE LAW GUIDE

The Law Guide continues to sell well and we intend to review its content in 2021/22. The Short Guide, published in October 2019, was widely distributed to members, Councils and other bodies and to members of the public.

GUIDES

The Society has commissioned a new edition of the popular *Scottish Hill Tracks* guide. The existing edition, published in 2011, may

be reprinted to meet demand before a new version is produced. Routes will require surveys and the guide may be reformatted as well as published in electronic form. It is expected to be ready (at the earliest) in 2022. The task of verifying data for this publication feeds into a further initiative of the Society in checking path data more widely.

MEDIATION

ScotWays has continued to investigate the use of mediation to resolve access disputes. As part of the National Access Forum's working group, ScotWays has helped produce a Guidance Note to promote its use.

TRAINING

ScotWays worked with Ramblers Scotland in hosting an access workshop for Local Access Forum representatives in September 2019. This successful event was attended by more than 50 people. A signpost training day in April 2020, in conjunction with Paths for All, had to be postponed.

OTHER POLICY AND AWARENESS EVENTS

The Society is represented on the National Access Forum and is a keen participant in the Scottish Outdoor Recreation Alliance and the Scottish Outdoor Access Network. ScotWays believes in co-operation with other bodies with similar concerns in order to promote responsible public access.

PLANNING

The Society is consulted in relation to proposed on-shore wind farm and other planning applications. During the year, planning permission was refused for the proposed golf course development at Coul Links. John Mackay appeared at the enquiry on behalf of ScotWays, expressing our concerns about public access and enjoyment. This success was a last hurrah for John's work on our behalf in connection with planning enquiries and he is due all our thanks for his dedicated and expert work over many years. He remains however an Honorary Adviser and has indicated he is willing for us to continue to

seek his advice: we fully intend to do so.

OUTDOOR PROJECTS SMALL GRANTS

This scheme, for which a designated amount of £10,000 was set aside in 2018, has made 4 grants to a total of £4,091. The Society welcomes applications for relevant projects.

BRIDGES

The Carnach bridge, Knoydart, was completed and opened in August 2019. If the pandemic and conditions permit, we hope to see works on the Eidart bridge on the Glen Feshie drove road and Bedford Memorial Bridge over the river Tarff, in Glen Tilt, start in 2021.

VERIFYING RIGHTS OF WAY AND OTHER ROUTES

The Society provides support to local groups to protect paths they believe to be rights of way. It does so in consultation with the relevant Council and it assists these groups in information gathering. For example, we assisted an investigation of potential right of way status by Dirlerton Village Association in relation to a popular circular walk from the village which also linked with the John Muir Way. In another case, we supported local and Council efforts to investigate the right of way along the 12km Acharacle Drove Road in Ardnamurchan, as part of efforts to uphold public access rights generally.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Society's deficit for the year is £128,883 (2019: £94,149 surplus). The deficit on unrestricted reserves is £118,653 (2019: £112,639 surplus) and the deficit on restricted reserves is £10,230 (2019: £18,490 surplus).

RESERVES POLICY

The unrestricted funds represent the free reserves of the Society. Unrestricted funds not tied up in fixed assets amounted to £136,267. The Board considers it appropriate to hold the equivalent of 12 months' core expenditure, around £125,000,

Directors' report (continued)

and £175,844 to finance its rolling 3 year plan. More details on the designated funds are set out in Note 2 on page 10.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Throughout the year risk remains under formal and informal review by the Board, sub-committees and staff. Business continuity planning for a disaster or major disruption has aided the excellent work undertaken by the staff in coping with the pandemic.

INVESTMENT POLICY

Investec Wealth and Investment Limited advises the Society on an investment portfolio. The agreed investment objective is to maintain the real value of the portfolio over time as well as provide an income. At 30 June 2020, the portfolio's value had increased by 3.2% since inception and the annual income was £9,000. In addition, the Society has an investment in M&G Charifund units. The investment powers of the Society are general ones conferred by its Articles of Association.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The Society will continue to act in pursuit of its Objects in the coming year, as described above. In addition, a rolling 3-year plan is in four parts with significant costs earmarked through the designated funds:

- to challenge work practices, to enhance its information management and to re-configure its office;
- to make the Society's expertise and informed views available through the publication and review of law guides and other material;
- to maintain access to land either through the work of its volunteers, including training, or by making a financial contribution and
- to raise the Society's profile to put it in a

stronger position to campaign and attract members.

CONTRIBUTION OF STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND DIRECTORS

This has been a very difficult year for all at ScotWays. With limited office access during the pandemic, staff have had to work entirely at home. They have been resilient and inventive in doing that and we owe them our thanks for working productively and cheerfully in unique circumstances. A return to the office will be kept under review.

Sadly, it has not been possible to have our valued volunteers in the office and we are considering how to enable their important work to continue. We do hope to restart outdoor volunteers checking routes soon.

I want to thank all directors for their contribution to the Society and in particular to salute the work of David Dixon and Douglas Wright, who retire this year by rotation. They have brought their own expertise and character to our work and deliberations. David has tirelessly promoted the cause of bridge repairs and renovations and Douglas has been our representative on the National Access Forum. We shall miss them both on the board but hope to continue to benefit from their knowledge and skills as volunteers.

SMALL COMPANY SPECIAL PROVISIONS

The report of the Directors has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

This report was approved by the Board on 10 September 2020.

*R John Elliot
Chair*

Independent Examiner's Statement to the Trustees of The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society

I HAVE examined the summarised accounts of The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society set out on pages 8 to 10.

This report is made to the directors, as a body, in accordance with the terms of my engagement. My work has been undertaken to enable me to report my opinion as set out below and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the directors, as a body, for my work or for this report.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRUSTEES AND THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the summarised accounts in accordance with applicable United Kingdom law and the recommendations of the charities SORP. My responsibility is to report to you my opinion on the consistency of the summarised financial statements within the Annual Report with the full annual financial statements.

This statement, including the opinion, has been prepared for and only for the

charity's Trustees as a body and for no other purpose. I do not, in giving this opinion, accept or assume responsibility for any other purpose or to any other person to whom this statement is shown or into whose hands it may come save where expressly agreed by my prior consent in writing.

BASIS OF OPINION

My examination involved agreeing the balances disclosed in the summary financial information to the full annual financial statements. My Independent Examiners report on the Society's full annual financial statements describes the basis of my opinion on those financial statements.

OPINION

In my opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements of The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society for the year ended 30 June 2020.

*James Davidson CA
12 September 2020*

Summary Financial Statements

The summarised accounts set out on pages 8 to 10 are not the statutory accounts, but comprise an extract of the information in the full accounts. The full accounts were approved by the Board on 10 September 2020, and the Independent Examiner's report on the full accounts raised no concerns.

Copies of the full report and accounts

can be obtained from the Registered Office: 24 Annandale Street, Edinburgh EH7 4AN or from our website, www.scotways.com.

The full accounts will be submitted to the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator in the near future.

*R J Elliot, Chair
10 September 2020*

Abstract of accounts for the year ended 30 June 2020

Statement of Financial Activities
(incorporating the income and expenditure account)
for the year ended 30 June 2020

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2020 £	Total 2019 £
Income from:				
Donations and legacies ¹	38,282	15,000	53,282	171,864
Charitable activities	92,369	-	92,369	117,537
Investments	9,205	-	9,205	6,898
Total	139,856	15,000	154,856	296,299
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	(3,164)	-	(3,164)	(2,507)
Charitable activities	(240,421)	(25,230)	(265,651)	(210,103)
Total Expenditure	(243,585)	(25,230)	(268,815)	(212,610)
Unrealised (losses)/gains on investments	(2,466)	-	(2,466)	10,460
Realised (losses)/gains on investments	(12,458)	-	(12,458)	-
Net income/(expenditure)	(118,653)	(10,230)	(128,883)	94,149
Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	(118,653)	(10,230)	(128,883)	94,149
Funds brought forward at 1 July 2019	706,864	22,449	729,313	635,164
Funds carried forward at 30 June 2020	588,211	12,219	600,430	729,313

Balance sheet
as at 30 June 2020

	2020 £	2020 £	2019 £	2019 £
Fixed assets				
Tangible assets		104,081		104,441
Investments at valuation		347,863		362,941
		451,944		467,382
Current assets				
Stock	1,003		1,325	
Debtors	19,470		17,976	
Cash in bank and at hand	151,248		272,885	
	171,721		292,186	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(23,235)		(30,255)	
Net current assets		148,486		261,931
Total assets less current liabilities		600,430		729,313
Reserves				
Unrestricted funds				
– General	326,314		386,518	
– Revaluation	11,844		26,768	
– Designated	250,053		293,578	
		588,211		706,864
Restricted funds		12,219		22,449
		600,430		729,313

These financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board on 10 September 2020.

Terry Holmes, Director

Notes

1. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2020 £	Total 2019 £
Annual subscriptions	14,739	-	14,739	14,969
Life subscriptions	2,300	-	2,300	400
Corporate subscriptions	2,882	-	2,882	2,037
Local authority subscriptions	5,750	-	5,750	6,750
Donations	7,441	15,000	22,441	11,500
Bequests and legacies	500	-	500	131,504
Gift aid	4,670	-	4,670	4,704
	<u>38,282</u>	<u>15,000</u>	<u>53,282</u>	<u>171,864</u>

In 2019 income from donations and legacies was split £169,679 unrestricted and £2,185 restricted

2. DESIGNATED FUNDS

	Balance at 1 July 2019 £	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfer between funds £	Balance at 30 June 2020 £
Office & information systems	117,614	-	(84,990)	60,748	93,372
Intellectual property	31,690	-	(1,313)	-	30,377
Outdoor projects	34,862	-	(6,845)	-	28,017
Profile raising	36,445	-	(14,924)	2,557	24,078
Life members	6,182	2,300	-	(1,058)	7,424
Property	66,785	-	-	-	66,785
	<u>293,578</u>	<u>2,300</u>	<u>(108,072)</u>	<u>62,247</u>	<u>250,053</u>

The draft minutes of last year's AGM and the full accounts are available on the ScotWays website. If you would like a paper copy, please get in touch with the office.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020 AGENDA

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 21 November 2020 at 11am by Zoom.

At 10.30am, prior to the formal business, John Home Robertson will speak on "Rev A E Robertson, 1870-1958; the first Munro 'Compleater'; a director of the Scottish Rights of Way Society from 1923; and the man who 'knew too much' about Highland rights of way."

FORMAL BUSINESS

- 1 Apologies
- 2 To approve the minutes of the previous AGM
- 3 To receive the Report of the Directors
- 4 To receive the accounts.
- 5 To elect the Directors
 - David Dixon and Douglas Wright have completed their three year terms of office as a director and are not eligible for re-election, both having served three terms.
 - Muriel Robertson and Katharine Taylor have each completed a three year term of office as director but are eligible and willing to stand for re-election, having served fewer than three terms.
- 6 In addition to those standing for re-election, the Directors recommend the election of Stephan Hennig, Helene Mauchlen and Tim Simons.
- 7 To appoint the Independent Examiner of the Accounts
- 8 Our 175th anniversary activities
- 9 ScotWays in action – what we've been doing, what we plan to do and how you can get involved
- 10 AOCB

Members are reminded that they may appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf if they are unable to attend the meeting. The proxy form is available on our website, or on request from the office.

Support three new directors



HELENE MAUCHLEN

HELENE has been employed by the British Horse Society since 1999 and is currently their National Manager for the British Horse Society in Scotland. She has undertaken their national access role since 2013, representing horse riders on the National Access Forum (NMU); defending off-road riding and educating equestrians in responsible access. She works hard at producing shared use resources with other recreational bodies and champions all-abilities access – as the horse is a high spec user, if horses can get through so can most NMUs.



TIM SIMONS

TIM has volunteered in the office for several years and is currently leading the group working on the new edition of Scottish Hill Tracks. An active mountaineer and cyclist since 1976 both in the UK and further afield, he

started walking in Scotland as a member of Edinburgh University Mountaineering Club. As a civil engineer, he has spent most of his career with the Scottish Office/ Executive/Government including a three-year secondment to the EU in Brussels. He completed his first round of Munros in 1984 and the second in 2019, and has enjoyed walking along many Scottish hill tracks and rights of way over 43 years. Shortly after retiring in 2017, he started volunteering with ScotWays, Sustrans and the Edinburgh Bike Station. His wife is also a double Munroist and cyclist and his three grown-up children are also keen walkers and cyclists.

STEPHAN HENNIG

STEPHAN is a civil servant working for the UK government and he deals with maritime emergency response; when a ship is involved in an accident anywhere at sea around the UK, he is in charge of dealing with any risk to safety or risk of pollution. After completing his degree in Germany, he moved to Scotland in 2004. For 15 years, Stephan worked in Shetland and Aberdeenshire before moving to Dollar last year with his partner and their two young sons. He enjoys exploring the local area on walking, cycling and rafting trips with his family and tells us that he can often be found pushing his mountain bike up one steep Ochil hill or another.



Volunteer for us!

If you have some time on your hands, we would appreciate your help

FOR the first nine months of our financial year, our volunteers were very active, both the regulars in the office and a good number undertaking path and signpost surveys. New signs were installed by volunteers in West Lothian, Fife and in various parts of the Highlands. A survey found that City of Edinburgh Council contractors had removed a ScotWays sign near Ratho during some construction work and had not reinstalled it. After some discussion the Council agreed to pay for and reinstall the sign. We also persuaded Scottish Forestry to improve access on a right of way near Knockhill, Fife, as part of which they installed a sign for us. We were planning to run a signpost installation training day in the spring, which of course had to be cancelled. As there is no likelihood of this taking place for the foreseeable future, we are instead planning, along with Paths for All, a virtual training session on signpost installation which we hope will take place in January.

With the imposition of lockdown in March, all our formal volunteering activity had to come to a halt both within the office and out of doors. No 175th Anniversary walks, path or signpost surveying or even envelope stuffing. As lockdown has eased, we have been assessing the Scottish Government advice and watching what other organisations have been doing. At the time of writing, we have produced guidance for keeping everyone safe in restarting our outdoor surveying activities which you can find on the Downloads page of our website www.scotways.com/downloads and by the time you read this our signpost and path surveying activities should have restarted.

Sadly, we can't say the same for our office volunteers. Working from home makes us all the more aware of everything they do to help, since we are now having to do it all ourselves! As staff have yet to return to the office it looks unlikely that volunteers will be back before 2021. There will be an update in our spring newsletter.



175 years recognised

We were delighted to hear from **Andy Wightman MSP** in late July that he had lodged a motion in the Scottish Parliament to mark our anniversary. It read:-

*Motion S5M-22300: Andy Wightman, Lothian, Scottish Green Party, Date Lodged: 21/07/2020
ScotWays' 175th Anniversary*

That the Parliament congratulates ScotWays on its 175th anniversary; welcomes its tireless work to uphold public rights of access over this period; notes that the organisation was founded as the Association for the Protection of Public Rights of Roadway in Scotland;

understands that it is the oldest outdoor recreation body in the UK; acknowledges that the first signposts erected by the Association were in the Cairngorms in 1885, which led to conflict and the famous House of Lords case concerning Jock's Road in Glen Doll; welcomes the long history of legal action by the Association to defend public rights of way, and wishes the organisation well in its anniversary year and for the future.

Twenty-eight MSPs put their names to the motion in support of it, which was an excellent response. We're very grateful to Andy and his MSP colleagues for their recognition of our auspicious anniversary.



LAF REPRESENTATIVE TRAINING

Last Autumn, ScotWays, in conjunction with Ramblers Scotland, ran a very successful workshop to provide training and support for our representatives on local access forums (LAFs). Under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, local authorities were to establish such bodies to advise them on and to help with disputes relating to the exercise of access rights, the existence and delineation of rights of way or core paths. Generally speaking, the access officer on each local authority runs/chairs the forum and ScotWays tries if possible to have a representative on each one. The training session was attended by about 50 people and it covered the role of LAFs, what was happening around the country, dealing with access issues and how different user groups felt about access. It was intended to repeat it this year, such was the demand, but of course the lockdown has put a stop. We plan to run it again when circumstances permit.

PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD BARRON

Christmas cards

This year we have two new designs of Christmas cards, 'Cairn Lochan' by Bob Aitken and 'Towards Beinn A'Ghlo' by Richard Barron



Message reads: Season's Greetings



Notecards

Notecards are Arklet Water, Inversnaid, by Arthur Shepherd and Union Canal at Slateford aquaduct, Edinburgh by Tom Watson



Blank for your own message



All packs contain 10 cards of a single design, size approx 15cm x 10cm, with envelopes. See the enclosed order form for more details. They cost £6 per pack. UK post and packing is £2.10.

Mapping Scotland

DURING the year, two ongoing projects will be of interest to members. Firstly, Ramblers Scotland set up the project *Mapping Scotland's Paths* which aims to fill the paths blanks on the Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping by creating a digital map layer that shows all the paths in Scotland. We are on the steering group for the pilot project which focused on west central Scotland.

Using path information from a variety of sources, including ourselves, local authorities and others, the group has mapped a path network of over 2,500km (1,553 miles). In the West Dunbartonshire area alone more than double the number of paths recorded on the OS Outdoor Leisure maps were found.

In the next stage, the project will expand to cover more of Scotland and a small test project will trial an on-the-ground auditing process. If successful, there may be another job for our path surveying volunteers!

The second project, the *Slow Ways Project*, aims to map routes that connect settlements throughout Great Britain. Backed by Ordnance Survey, the project initially had volunteers gathering to check routes but a new approach was needed after lockdown. Using OS Maps, Google Docs, Skype and Zoom, 700 volunteers have been poring over maps to create a network of 7,000 routes that stretches for 100,000km (62,137 miles).

Originally, the project results were to be a digital overlay made freely available by the OS. Now there is a wish to see routes highlighted both on OS Outdoor Leisure maps with a unique Slow Ways symbol and on the ground. We wish them more success than ScotWays has had in having our signposts shown, or Scotland as a whole in getting core paths highlighted!

Richard Barron

SCOTTISH HILL TRACKS UPDATES

THE book *Scottish Hill Tracks* (SHT), first published in 1947, has seen five editions with the last update in 2011. It includes 344 routes covering some 4,591 miles (7,375km) of tracks across Scotland from Galloway to Caithness. Some routes are short, on the urban edges and reasonably straightforward, but others are very long, crossing the whole country and in remote countryside, so there is something to suit all tastes and abilities.

Work started in 2019 to check if the existing SHT text is correct, but that was halted by Covid. A Steering Group has now been set up to oversee this work and we are looking for as many volunteers as possible to survey the routes and report any essential changes required.

People may know particular routes well because they live locally, but volunteers may also consider helping if they are going on holiday to a different part of Scotland or are passionate about the tracks in a favourite area of the country.

If you or anyone you know might like to help with this project, please email scottishhilltracks@Scotways.com outlining the tracks or area you would like to survey. If volunteers don't have the book then we can let you have a digital or print version of the text of the relevant routes.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Tim Simons



40 years of the West Highland Way

A celebration of ScotWays supporters who made the Way a reality

THE sixth of October marked the 40th anniversary of the opening of the West Highland Way, in its time an entirely new (and, strange to say now, controversial) form of access provision in Scotland. Probably none of those present at the launch of the WHW in a torrential rain at Balmaha in 1980 anticipated that 40 years later the Way would have become a Scottish outdoors icon, an internationally celebrated 'must-do' long distance route, enjoyed by thousands of walkers each year.

This notable anniversary gives us an opportunity to pay tribute to several people associated with ScotWays who made notable contributions to the creation and evolution of the Way. Foremost among these is the late Tom Hunter, a long-time member and active supporter of the Society

with his wife Margaret, who is happily still very much with us. Tom conceived the idea and surveyed the route of the Way, but rarely gets the credit he deserves. Alex Sutherland, who as Project Officer with Highland Council did much of the arduous groundwork in negotiating and establishing the northern half of the route, went on to give sterling service to ScotWays as a Board member from 1987 to 2003. Bob Aitken (Hon Vice-President & Director since 1997) wrote the original 'official' guidebook, now in its 11th edition; and the late Donald Bennet (Board member, Chair & Hon President between 1989 and 2013) contributed the photographs to the first edition of that guide.

Besides the plethora of Way guidebooks and maps now available, there have

even been at least three novels with the Way as a central theme, including one in French: and notably one from the indefatigable pen of Hamish Brown, a ScotWays director from 1975-83.

The northern section of the West Highland Way runs along historic rights of way where you will find some of our oldest signs. Between Bridge of Orchy and Fort William are four of our oldest cast metal signs. Three fingerposts and one plate, they date from around 1920. Watch out too for the handpainted black and white sign as you head down to Kinlochleven. Very easy to miss as it points towards Glencoe!

PHOTOGRAPH: BOB AITKEN

COMMENTS WELCOME!

OUR Senior Access Officer Eleisha Fahy continues to represent ScotWays in its work as part of the Scottish Outdoor Recreation Alliance, an informal affiliation of outdoor recreation bodies working together towards their common interests. Together SORA has developed a draft Manifesto for the Outdoors ahead of the Holyrood elections in 2021. This draft manifesto has been circulated to the policy teams of the various political parties with an invitation to get in touch if they would like to discuss any of the issues mentioned. Some meetings have already taken place and we hope this will positively influence the content of the respective party manifestos. In due course, the final version of the SORA manifesto will be circulated to all MSPs prior to next year's election. For those who are interested, SORA's draft manifesto is available from the Downloads section of the ScotWays website – comments are welcome and may help inform the final version.
http://bit.ly/ScotWays_SORA

IMPLEMENTING ATLAS

WORK to update the CROW software and bring our disparate digital data sources together has continued during the year, but in March took on much more significance than had been anticipated. The migration of information from our old systems to the new one took place between December 2019 and January 2020 and the new system became partially operational in early February 2020.

The plan was to introduce the new system slowly, build up experience and modify our processes as necessary. Then lockdown happened, and everything changed. The Atlas Project proved crucial as lockdown was imposed and it was brought into full operation for all enquiries. Processes were assessed and developed and digital mapping brought into operation. Within three weeks the Atlas Project was being successfully used to manage the entire ScotWays enquiry workload.

Whilst the Atlas Project has been the saviour in allowing ScotWays to operate fully from home, we have not yet taken it as far as we had hoped. Our first priority was to ensure the desktop version used by staff is fully working.

The next stage is to enable the web interface to allow our volunteers to add their survey results directly to the system without having to email or post the information to the office for staff to log. Then the plan for checking all the transferred data can be revisited and we can get back on track again. We hope to provide an update on this at the AGM.

GLENBORRODALE

PUBLIC access to the old drove road between Acharacle and Glenborrodale is currently hampered by obstructions like locked deer gates at the Glenborrodale end. ScotWays has been working behind the scenes to support local and Council efforts to resolve the access issues here. As part of their efforts to uphold access rights, The Highland Council's (THC) access team is investigating the route's right of way status. Information is sought from anyone who has used the route regularly and over a long period of time. If you have used this route in this way, but have not yet been in touch with THC's Access Officer, Stewart Eastaugh, we'd appreciate you contacting him: Stewart.Eastaugh@highland.gov.uk
See: www.heritagepaths.co.uk/pathdetails.php?path=72

We're online!

Our website is doing very well, with Twitter and Facebook figures healthy too



4,010

Twitter followers
(up 7.8%)



1,576

followers
(up 24%)



45k

views per year
to the ScotWays
website

We've been busy

Just some of the things we've been involved with in 2019/20

TALKS

- *Probus group at Royal Burgess Golf Club, Edinburgh*
- *North Bute Literary Society, Rothesay*
- *Blairgowrie Hill Walking Club*
- *Perth & Kinross Paths Group training day*

EVENTS

- *National Library of Scotland online presentation – May*
- *Local Access Forum representative training – September 2019*
- *Dundee Mountain Film Festival – November*

PRESS COVERAGE

- *St Andrews in Focus*
- *Scottish Farming Leader*
- *Land Business*

PARTICIPATION

- *National Access Forum*
- *Paths for All*
- *Ramblers Scotland, Mapping Scotland's Paths*
- *Scottish Outdoor Access Network*
- *Scottish Outdoor Recreation Alliance*
- *Transport Scotland consultations*
- *COSLA – meeting September 2019*

Corporate members 2020/21

COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

B: Balfron Community Council
 Benholm & Johnshaven Community Council
 Bennachie Community Council
 Blackford Community Council
 Broughty Ferry Community Council
C: Cambuskenneth Community Council
 Carlops Community Council
 Catrine Community Council
 Cove & Altens Community Council
 Crossford Community Council
 Culross Community Council
D: Dunpender Community Council
E: Echt & Skene Community Council
 Elderslie Community Council
G: Gargunnoch Community Council
 Gifford Community Council
H: Harthill & Eastfield Community Council
 Heldon Community Council
I: Inchinnan Community Council
J: Jackton & Thorntonhall Community Council
K: Killlearn Community Council
 Kirkliston Community Council
 Kirriemuir Landward East Community Council
 Kirriemuir Landward West Community Council
L: Ladybank & District Community Council
 Letham & District Community Council
 Lilliesleaf, Ashkirk & Midlem Community Council
 Low Valleyfield Community Council
M: Monkland Glen Community Council
 Muirtown Community Council
 Musselburgh & Inveresk Community Council
N: Newburgh Community Council
 Newport, Wormit & Forgan Community Council
 North Berwick Environment Trust
 North Kincardine Rural Community Council
 North Queensferry Community Council

P: Polmaise Community Council
R: Royal Burgh of Cupar Community Council
 Royal Burgh of Falkland & Newton
 Falkland Community Council
S: Strathard Community Council
 Strathblane Community Council
 Strathmartine Community Council
 Symington Community Council
T: Tayport Community Council
W: West Lochfyne Community Council

OTHER SUPPORTER ORGANISATIONS

A: Aboyne Paths & Tracks Group
 All Year Ramblers Club
B: B T Hillwalking Club
 Banffshire Field Club
 Biggar & District Community Heritage
 Blairgowrie & District Hillwalking Club
 Border Bothies Association
C: Cairngorm Club
 Caledonian Hillwalking Club
 Carnethy Hill Running Club
 Central Tweeddale Paths
 Cioch Mountaineering Club
 Craigencaht Rural Community Trust
 Crieff & Strathearn Drovers Tryst
D: Dunblane Development Trust
 Dunblane Rambling Club
 Duncanrig Rambling Club
 Dunfermline Rambling Club
E: East Kilbride Mountaineering Club
 Easter Ross Rights of Way Association
 Edinburgh & Forth C H A Club
F: Ferranti Mountaineering Club
 Fife Mountaineering Club
 Fife Walking Club
 Forfar & District Hill Walking Club
 Friends of the Pentlands
 Friends of the River Almond Walkway
G: Gatliff Hebridean Hostels Trust
 Glasgow Glenmore Club
 Glasgow Health Culture Rambling Club
 Glenboig and Moodiesburn Ramblers

Glenrothes Hillwalkers Club
 Gorebridge and District Environmental Group
H: H F Edinburgh Walking Club
 Historical & Covenanters Trail Group
 Huntly & District Development Trust
K: Kaimhill Strollers Two
 Kyle & Carrick Civic Society
L: LP22 Geriatric Walking Club
 Lumphanan Paths Group
M: Markinch Heritage Group
 Midweek Walking Group
 Monifieth Hillwalking & Rambling Club
 Mountain Bothies Association
 Muckhart & Glendevon Amenity Society
 Muthill Paths and Walking Group
O: Ochils Mountaineering Club
P: Paisley Hillwalking Club
 Paths for All
 Peebles Gutterbluids Society
R: Ramblers Scotland
S: Scottish Borders Hill Walking Club

SPOKES
 St Leonard's Rambling Club
 St Monica's Ramblers
 Stirling Hillwalking Club
 Stirling Rambling Club
 Strathaven Climbing Club
 Strathearn Ramblers
 Strathearn Riders Access Group (StrathRAG)
T: Tayside Walkers
 The Long Distance Walkers Association
 Tryst Walking Group
U: United Clyde Angling Protective Association
W: Wilson's Walkers

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

A: City of Aberdeen Council
 Aberdeenshire Council
 North Ayrshire Council
 South Ayrshire Council
B: Scottish Borders Council
C: Clackmannanshire Council
D: West Dunbartonshire Council
 East Dunbartonshire Council
E: City of Edinburgh Council
F: Falkirk Council
 Fife Council
G: City of Glasgow Council
H: Highland Council
L: East Lothian Council
 West Lothian Council
M: Midlothian Council
 Moray Council
O: Orkney Council
P: Perth & Kinross
S: Shetland Islands Council
 Stirling Council

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITIES

Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park
 Cairngorms National Park
 Forestry & Land Scotland
 Scottish Forestry



PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD BARRON

Subscription increase

THE new rates shown below took effect from the subscription year starting on 1 July 2020.

	Old rate	New rate from 1 July 2020
Ordinary	£25	£30
Joint/family	£36	£40
Concession	£18	£20
Joint concession	£24	£30
Life	£400	Unchanged
Joint life	£500	Unchanged

We are grateful to all members paying by standing order who have increased it to reflect new rates. To those who have yet to do so, you need to contact your bank to amend the standing order: ScotWays cannot change it for you. For all categories of membership, it is helpful if you confirm to us what category of membership you are paying.

We are very grateful for your continuing support for ScotWays and its activities, both financially and by giving your time to help us – thank you!

Subscriptions by Direct Debit

HAVE you thought about paying your subscription by direct debit? It's a great way to do so and it saves you having to remember to change the amount you pay if our subscription rates change. We'll always notify you before collecting any payments so you will always be able to let us know of any changes and all payments are backed by the Direct Debit Guarantee.

Interested? You can find a direct debit mandate on the Downloads page of our website, or contact the office and we'll send you one.



SCOTWAYS WALKS PROGRAMME

AT THIS stage of the year, we would normally be keen to tell you about all our plans for next year's members' walks programme so that you can keep your diary free for any that are of interest. You will not be surprised to hear, we expect, that we have decided to delay confirming detailed plans until the Spring. Much water will have flowed under many bridges by then and it is impossible to predict at the time of writing whether the official guidance will enable us to run our normal programme or what changes we may need to make.

Further details will appear in our Spring newsletter in early March.



SCOTTISH RIGHTS OF WAY AND ACCESS SOCIETY (SCOTWAYS)

HON. VICE PRESIDENTS

Bob Aitken, George Menzies

DIRECTORS

Bob Aitken (Edinburgh)
John Elliot (Chair) (Edinburgh)
Terry Holmes (Edinburgh)
Helene Mauchlen (Perthshire)
Tim Simons (Edinburgh)
Peter Wood (Edinburgh)

David Dixon (East Lothian)
Stephan Hennig (Clackmannanshire)
David Langworth (Borders)
Muriel Robertson (Edinburgh)
Katharine Taylor (Edinburgh)
Douglas Wright (Borders)

STAFF

National Secretary and Treasurer
Chief Operating Officer
Senior Access Officer
Access Assistants

Alison Riddell
Richard Barron
Eleisha Fahy
Lynda Grant
Ashley Napier (until February 2020)
Jane Gibson (from February 2020)
Shenja Erismann (from March 2020)
Karen Inkster

Field Officer

HONORARY ADVISERS

John Mackay, John Pope

Our volunteers

Volunteers are essential in every area of our work. We have missed them all during lockdown but hope to have them involved again in some way before long. In the field, volunteers survey routes, help with signposting and path clearance, and check on problems. Board and Committee members are all volunteers, and we have volunteer representatives on most local access forums. In the office, volunteers help with research, recording enquiries, our website and IT systems.

WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL TO THEM ALL

A company limited by guarantee. Company registration number SC024243
Charity registration number: SC015460

Registered Office: 24 Annandale Street Edinburgh EH7 4AN
Telephone: 0131 558 1222

Email: info@scotways.com

www.scotways.com

OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY

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

*Cover photograph: rainbow over Dumgoyne from the West
Highland Way near Arlehaven.*

By Richard Barron



www.scotways.com