

tidelines

Autumn/Winter 2013

Newsletter of the Solway Firth Partnership

Issue 39

Wind and tide combine for colourful procession in Rough Firth

see page 10



**New Centre
for RSPB
at Campfield Marsh**
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**OUT OF THE
BLUE**

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CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN



Gordon Mann OBE.
Chairman Solway Firth Partnership

We are delighted that the Making the Most of the Coast project has just received a Greener Scotland award at the Dumfries and Galloway LEADER Rural Awards event. The project spans education, research, engagement and promotion of the Dumfries and Galloway coast, complementing the work of the Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the southern shores of the estuary. The judging panel visited Brighthouse Bay on an unseasonably cold, wet and windy day this summer when Coastal Ranger, Nic Coombey, was helping children from Gatehouse Primary School make a film about rock-pool life. Announcing the award, visiting judge, Jill Armstrong, commented on how impressed she was by Nic's "relentless enthusiasm". We know exactly what she means! Alison Robertson also plays an invaluable role in the Making the Most of the Coast project and the award is a reflection of the dedication of both members of this talented team.

This summer has seen a major Scottish Government consultation on a draft National Marine Plan as well as sectoral plans for marine protected areas and offshore renewable energy. Several Scottish Government consultation events were held along the Dumfries and Galloway coast as well as an event in Maryport which gave people on the Cumbrian shore the chance to talk to Marine Scotland staff direct. The final versions of these plans will provide the framework for more detailed regional marine planning and we continue to make the case for the Solway Firth to be regarded as a single area for planning and management purposes as far as possible. The first Marine Conservation Zones have just been announced by Defra and include the Cumbria Coast MCZ which takes in the distinctive sandstone cliffs of St Bees Head. The area around the headland and to the south includes a rich mix of rocky and boulder habitats, honeycomb worm reefs and sandy beaches. At 27km long, from south of Whitehaven to the mouth of the Ravenglass Estuary, the designation aims to protect important shoreline biodiversity and complement adjacent seabird nesting areas.

Considerable work is underway to develop future plans for sustainable management of the Solway cockle fishery that provides as much benefit to the local economy as possible. We are pleased to be helping to co-ordinate this work and are trying to make sure that the local community understands what is happening and is able to provide feedback. More about the studies currently taking place can be found in this edition of Tidelines and we look forward to seeing management proposals develop that strike a balance between use and protection of the Solway Firth.

We are delighted that Graham Platt has joined us recently providing much needed help in our busy Dumfries office. Graham is well known to many in the area, having a background in community and business support including previous positions with Scottish Enterprise and Dalbeattie Initiative. Graham also has a keen interest in the environment and we are very pleased to welcome him to our team. We are also currently recruiting for our most recent project, Out of the Blue, which is a celebration of all things sea-foodie. Read more about the project in this issue of Tidelines and look out for lots more to follow.

Recent clear cold days have provided spectacular views across the estuary from both north and south. Enjoy your winter out and about on the Solway Firth.

Gordon



tidelines



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Walking the Tide - credit Mike Bolam.

Solway Wetlands Project, all credits to The Solway Wetlands Landscape Partnership

Main Pic - credit Keith Kirk, all others - credit Judy Baxter NTS

YES! Project Participants on beach - credit Mike Bolam, others - credit Nic Coombey

Walking the Tide, all credits Mike Bolam.

Group on beach, credit Keith Kirk, Sea Urchin, credit Nic Coombey, Hermit Crab credit Val Russell

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Bowness Common, part of the RSPB Reserve

SOLWAY WETLANDS

Landscape Partnership Project **Gathering Momentum**

The Solway Wetlands Landscape Partnership received a grant of £1.9 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund in October 2012 with the aim of celebrating, conserving and reinvigorating the ancient wetlands landscape of the Solway Plain. The project team, based at the Solway Coast AONB office in Silloth, has been very busy over the last few months and, with many of the projects having started, the Scheme is developing great momentum.

West Cumbria Archaeological Society and Grampus Heritage have been investigating the impact of the Cistercian monastery in Abbeytown on the Solway, building on investigations they have carried out previously. This summer they focused on Wolsty Castle, near Silloth, which was built to protect Holme Cultram Abbey from invading Scots. No date of construction has been found but it would have been surrendered during the Dissolution and in 1663 the building material was taken to Carlisle. All that remains now is a deep, wide moat surrounding an area 60 x 65 yards. Finds include supports for the bridge across the moat, a horse's head and a remarkably intact cobble floor just inches from the field surface.

The Education Officer, Naomi Hewitt, has engaged with many school groups and partners to encourage children out of the classroom and into their local environment. Some children have been muddier than others but they have all enjoyed it! Dave Tallentire, the Wetlands Officer, meanwhile has been talking to farmers to offer advice and encourage them into Stewardship Schemes, as well as identifying sites for habitat improvements for the marsh fritillary butterfly.



Drumburgh Moss

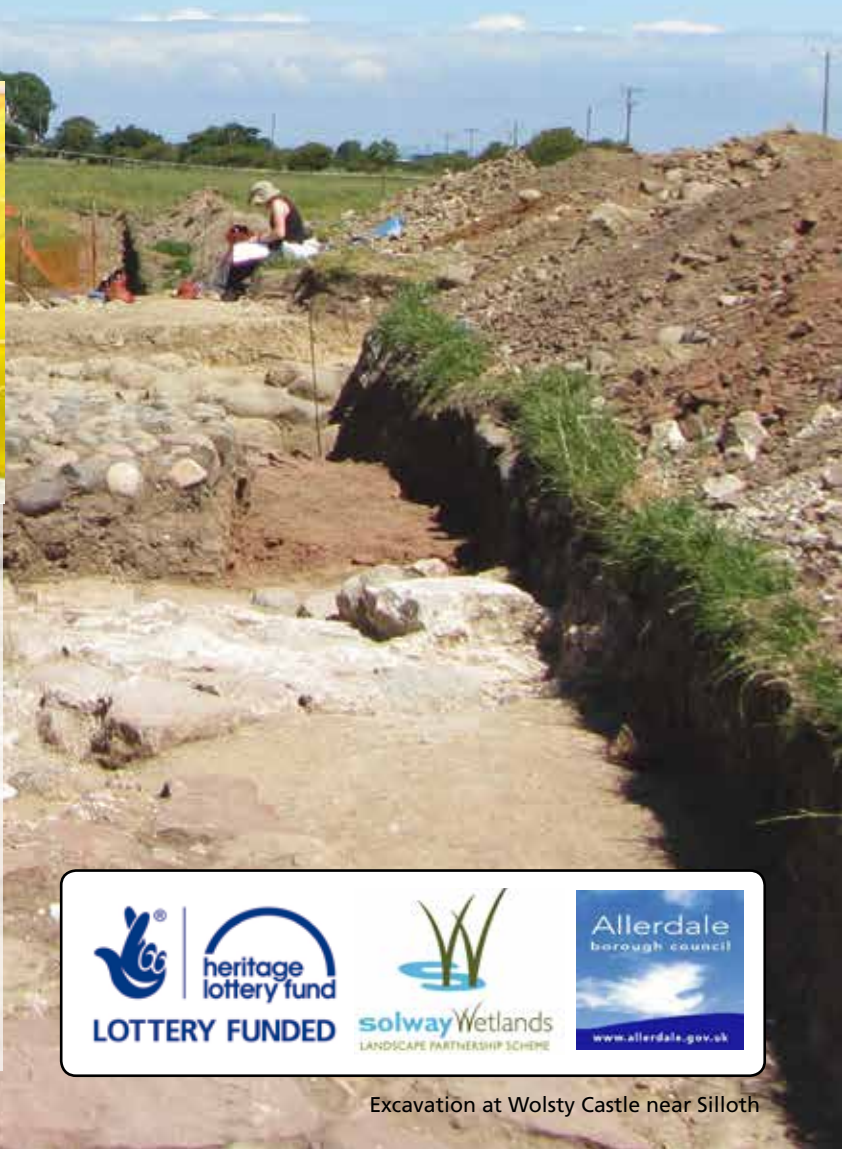


New RSPB Centre



Other projects include the opening of the Solway Wetlands Centre in Bowness on Solway at RSPB Campfield Marsh. The Centre is a renovation of a Victorian barn using green techniques such as lime pointing, bat mitigation measures, hempcrete plaster, recycled bricks and wool insulation. The Centre will provide interpretation, an education room, volunteer and staff space, and a much needed focal point for visitors to the English Solway. Tullie House Museum has also hosted a temporary exhibition which will become a moving exhibition, and an oral history project recording people's memories of the Solway is under way.

We are certainly a busy team! If you would like to get involved, would like to know more about events or volunteering opportunities or would just like to know more please contact us on info@solwaywetlands.org.uk or on 016973 33055.



Excavation at Wolsty Castle near Silloth

INVASIVE in Rough Firth



the National Trust
for Scotland

a place for everyone

Common cordgrass, *Spartina anglica*, a hybrid of the native UK small cordgrass (*S. maritima*) and the north American smooth cordgrass (*S. alterniflora*), is a vigorous coloniser of coastal mudflats and saltmarsh in parts of the UK. It is present within the estuaries of the Scottish Solway, and has been recorded adjacent to the National Trust for Scotland Rockcliffe property in Rough Firth.

S. anglica can outcompete native saltmarsh species, such as Sea aster (*Aster tripolium*), Eel grass species (*Zostera*) and pioneer Samphire (*Salicornia*) communities. Exclusion of native vegetation species can result in single species stands of Common cordgrass that encroach onto invertebrate-rich mudflat areas, affecting foraging wildfowl and waders.

Rough Firth provides an important foraging area for hundreds of ducks and waders which is particularly valuable during the winter months. In order to protect this food source for wildlife the National Trust for Scotland secured funding from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) to carry out control of Common cordgrass.

The method we used involved covering the plant to starve it of light which suppresses growth. Studies have shown that this method can be successful if carried out over a couple of growing

seasons. Strong black plastic was secured over the patches of cordgrass using heavy wire mesh and long metal pegs driven into the estuary mud.

Sounds straightforward but there were many challenges along the way including handling very large sheets of plastic in a windy environment! We used a double layer of damp proof membrane as used in the building industry to cover the plants. Some patches of cordgrass were very large so the wire mesh sheets had to be joined using loops of fencing wire. The long metal pegs were really easy to drive into the soft estuary mud but the tide was very good at lifting them back out twice a day! The second peg design included barbs like a fish hook to prevent this happening and worked very well although removing them at the end of the project was a challenge. In some areas adjacent to the shore the bedrock was very close to the surface so pegs could not be used and everything had to be secured using large stones.

Despite the practical problems the project seems to have been a success with many areas of cordgrass controlled but we know this is only the very tip of a very large problem.

You can contact us on www.nts.org.uk

E SPECIES



NTS staff fit the plastic membrane over a patch of cordgrass



Rhianon Hatfield hammers the long pegs into the mud



YES participants on the beach at Douglas Hall near Colvend

YES! Young E Citizens for a Su

Solway Firth Partnership hosted 10 young volunteers for 3 weeks as part the YES! project delivered through the European Union 'Youth in Action' Programme. The Solway Firth Campus brought together young people from across Europe so they could learn about the area and develop the promotion of opportunities for young people to get involved in raising awareness of European coastal issues.

Organisations from 4 European partner countries – UK, France, Italy and Greece - are working

together on the YES! project to inform and inspire younger members of the European public about key environmental challenges, the impact of climate change and ways in which they can become involved. The YES! project aims to develop video, photography and interactive website features which will be of practical application to the Solway Firth Partnership.

Visiting both sides of the Solway, the participants were introduced to local environmental issues ranging from warming seas and (invasive) non-native species to erosion of heritage features on the coast. Many organisations and individuals helped to reveal the varied aspects of the Solway Firth from wildlife at Grune Point, Skinburness to community led regeneration at the Mull of Galloway.

The volunteers learned about the need to gather information to help decision makers with their tasks and were introduced to projects which demonstrate best practice by involving young people. The 'Shore Thing' project is an example of an activity which encourages young people to survey rocky shorelines



Looking across to Dumfries and Galloway from Cumbria



Sustainable European Coastline

and record climate change indicator species. Another example was provided by members of the Scotland's Coastal Heritage at Risk Project (SCH@RP) team from the SCAPE Trust who gave expert guidance on their project to record and monitor heritage features.

Glasgow University delivered a workshop about developing a marketing campaign and with assistance from John Wallace, Pile-on Productions, the participants story boarded and helped produce short films to promote positive action for Europe's coasts.

Solway Firth Partnership would like to thank all those who assisted with the Solway Firth Campus by giving their time and showing young people from across Europe our amazing coastline.

For further information on the YES! Project go to **www.e-yes.eu**



MAKING THE MOST OF THE COAST UPDATES

Walking the Tide

In September a colourful 'Making the Most of the Coast' event was staged during the Environmental Art Festival Scotland 2013.

Over 150 participants, which included many young people supported through the Holywood Trust, enjoyed the experience of carrying wind catchers across the causeway between Kippford and Rough Island on the north shore of the Solway Firth creating a living chain between the mainland and island.

As the tide receded, the stunning causeway was revealed as it snaked across the mud flats to Rough Island leading up to a shell beach. With red flags flapping in the wind, Walking the Tide was a visually striking performance celebrating the Solway coast. Where the land meets the sea is always a dynamic place but this artwork developed by artists Florencia García Chafuén and Jo Hodges successfully combined wind and tide to create

an event which encouraged people to interact with an ever changing landscape.

Participants moved in a procession, from mainland to island, led by musicians with the wind catchers flowing in the breeze. On the island a choreographed performance took place on the shell beach before a gathering on the summit of the island where, led by songmaker and choir director Ali Burns, we performed a piece for voice based on the estuary and tides. A short performance using the wind catchers was provided by a group of young people from the Glenkens area of Dumfries & Galloway before everyone returned to the mainland across the causeway as the tide came in to once again cover up the causeway.

For more information contact Nic Coombey, Coastal Ranger for Making the Most of the Coast project, Solway Firth Partnership, 01387 251991 or e-mail nic@solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk

Supported by





BioBlitz at the 2013 World Oceans Day

A BioBlitz is an event where expert naturalists and members of the public work together to carry out a survey of all wildlife found in a small area in one day. This year, Solway Firth Partnership's 'Making the Most of the Coast' project working in partnership with the Dumfries & Galloway Environmental Resources Centre (DGERC) and the Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT) held a BioBlitz on World Oceans Day (Saturday 8th June) to raise awareness of our coastal wildlife. The BioBlitz took place at Brighthouse Bay near Kirkcudbright and proved to be an ideal location with more than 1,000 records being collected from a mixture of coastal habitats including rocky shore, cliff tops, sand dunes, ponds and woodland. All were found within easy walking distance of the base camp situated in Brighthouse Bay Holiday Park.

From the 1,195 records generated by this 'Year of Natural Scotland' event, a total of 473 different species were identified, adding greatly to our knowledge of the area. Around 50 volunteers attended during the day and the 24 hours of wildlife recording commenced with the opening of several moth traps which had been located in various locations the night before. During the day, 11 expert wildlife recorders helped with identification on 7

guided walks which ended with a bat walk at dusk.

Notable finds at this event, which was supported by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), included the elusive Northern Brown Argus, a small brown butterfly which likes sunny slopes by the shore but spends most of its time hiding in grass away from the wind. With the help of a bryophyte expert many liverworts and mosses were recorded, some for the first time in the area, including a Fertile Feather Moss which thrives in coastal locations and had not been recorded in the region for almost a century. Lobster pots set by a local fisherman revealed some marine creatures including Cod and hermit crabs while rockpool finds included Dahlia Sea Anemones and a Green Sea Urchin.

Brighthouse Bay Bioblitz was a great way to focus attention on the variety of wildlife that can be found in just one small area of the Solway coast. Thank you to everyone involved. Plans are already being hatched by the 'Making the Most of the Coast' project to help run another coastal Bioblitz on World Oceans Day in 2014.



Sea Urchin



Hermit Crab

OUT OF THE BLUE

Supporting a sustainable Solway seafood industry

Dumfries and Galloway's seafood industry is the focus of a new Solway Firth Partnership project called 'Out of the Blue'. The project has been enabled by support from the European Fisheries Fund awarded by the Dumfries and Galloway Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) and Dumfries and Galloway Council. This brings £155,000 of funding support to the project and enables the employment of a Seafood Industry Liaison Officer on a two year full time basis.

Pam Taylor of Solway Firth Partnership said: "Dumfries and Galloway's seafood industry is valuable in local, national and international terms. The Out of the Blue project will provide support for the sector to build on opportunities for economic development including making stronger links with the tourist industry. The project will champion sustainability initiatives by working in partnership with local fishermen, scientists and government. An important element will be raising awareness of the part that fishing plays in the culture and heritage of the region. We will be working on a range of promotional material, events and activities and helping to build closer connections between the local area and national initiatives including those led by Seafood Scotland and Seafish."

Locally, sea fisheries make a significant contribution to the character and economic wellbeing of coastal towns and villages. Kirkcudbright was ranked the tenth most

major port in the UK for quantity of landings in 2012 with shellfish valued at £3.5 million. Remote villages with limited employment opportunities including Isle of Whithorn, Port William and Drummole are the base for creel fishermen whose activity reflects the long relationship between people and the sea. The majority of landings in Dumfries and Galloway are processed locally, as well as shellfish transported into the region, which provides jobs along the coast. Much shellfish is exported from the region to supply demand in UK cities and the European market.

The fishing industry faces considerable pressure from wider issues including increased competition for use of the sea. While the sector continues to play an important part in the local economy and supports a wide range of businesses both directly and indirectly, there is a need to look to the future by exploring opportunities for diversification and added value. There is also an opportunity to develop best practice in terms of sustainability to support the long term future of the industry. High quality niche market heritage fisheries trading premium products such as wild Solway salmon provide opportunities to capitalise on the provenance of such fish. Similarly, there are marketing opportunities for other local fisheries based on links between the quality of the environment, the care applied to management of the fishery and the commercial product.



COASTAL

with DESTINATION DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

Destination Dumfries & Galloway (DD&G) represents, supports, promotes and develops Dumfries & Galloway as a tourism destination. In research commissioned by DD&G, the coastline and beaches were shown as playing an important part in attracting visitors to our region. Beautiful, unspoilt, peaceful and natural were top of the list in what people are looking for from a rural destination and The Solway coast, we believe, delivers this by the bucket load.

To promote the region, Destination Dumfries marketed the Solway Coast Heritage Trail which runs between the vast tidal flats of the Solway Firth and the towering sea cliffs of the Rhins, taking in Scotland's most southerly point at the Mull of Galloway. Visitors can plan trips along the Solway Coast Heritage Trail and visit the attractions on the route using the 4 day itinerary which can be found at www.visitscotland.com/en-au/see-do/itineraries/solway-coast-heritage-trail



WWT Caerlaverock Wetland Centre

TOURISM

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

To showcase the stunning landscape and support tourism businesses, DD&G has developed resources including a library of free-to-use high quality photographs of the region and some short video films. Our industry website, **www.dgtours4business.co.uk** is also home to a wealth of tourism news research, events and information and we recently highlighted the Kite & Windsurf Guide produced by local enthusiast Jack Cooper. The Guide profiles the coastline as one of the UK's finest wind destinations and perhaps the country's final wind frontier.

Representing Dumfries & Galloway, DD&G recently fed into the National Tourism Development Plan and lobbied on behalf of the ports at Stranraer and Cairnryan for improvements to the A75 to improve access to the region and the coastline and profiled The Solway as having great potential for developing coastal recreation and walking routes. To find out more, or to share information please contact Stacey Paul, Tourism Development Executive **Stacey@destinationdg.co.uk** or call 07851 013245



Working together towards a sustainable Solway cockle fishery

While scallops and oysters are definitely on the seafood celebrity A list, the humble cockle might be described as needing a bit of a makeover. But this is only in British terms – head across the Channel and you'll find cockles gracing the menus of the smartest restaurants in Europe. So why is there such a difference? Perhaps, in Britain, cockles have never quite lost their historic connotations as a subsistence food for people in hard times. Or maybe it's more fickle than that and it's simply down to fashion. Either way, British seafood lovers are missing a trick and, here on the Solway, efforts are underway to try to change that.

Co-ordinated work to re-open the Solway cockle fishery and maximise its benefit to the local economy is in full progress. Intertidal fisheries are notoriously challenging to manage and the Solway cockle fishery is no exception to that as many local people know only too well. The Solway is celebrated for its birdlife and cockles are a vital food source for waders including oystercatcher and knot. Balancing the needs of wildlife with the benefits that harvesting cockles can bring to the local economy is a fundamental consideration. Add to that the geographic challenge of monitoring activity in an estuary with over 200 miles of coastline, not to mention a national boundary, and the scale of the task in hand starts to become all too clear.

Despite the testing nature of the challenge, local people and agencies are fully committed to working together to develop a sustainable fishery. Well attended public consultation events held in Dumfries last winter and earlier this year set the foundations for the future. Allan Gibb, Marine Scotland's

Head of Sea Fisheries Operations, chaired the public meetings. He commented: "The overwhelming desire of everyone who contributed was for a sustainable long-term cockle fishery. The need for a partnership of local community, industry and agencies working together towards common goals was recognised as the only way to achieve this. A Steering Group chaired by Marine Scotland has now been established to co-ordinate a broad range of complementary work-streams, all geared towards building a management model which will deliver safe and sustainable fishing practices for the future."

A key part of the work currently underway includes a Scientific Study led by Marine Scotland which will test a Territorial User Rights for Fisheries (TURF) model for the management of the fishery. The TURF approach works by awarding exclusive access to fishing areas to a clearly defined group and has proved to be effective in managing issues such as overfishing and weak economic returns in other parts of the world.

The TURF study will test elements of proposed systems for:

1. Safe and controlled hand gathering of cockles on the beach

The health and safety of cockle pickers is a primary concern and a new Solway Shore Awareness course is being trialled along with means of ensuring effective communication between cocklers and authorities. Fishermen will operate to an agreed harvest plan and activity will be strictly controlled and effectively communicated to local communities.

2. Transportation between the beach and a single collection point

This includes development of bespoke documentation to track the movement of Solway cockles and to help ensure the trading of cockles only takes place at a single distribution centre.

3. Fair and transparent payment of cocklers

Testing a fair and transparent system of payment as well as building a picture of the social profile of people working in the fishery to improve understanding of the socio-economics of the fishery.

4. Single distribution point

A key part of the study will test the role of a single distribution point, controls over product quality, food and hygiene standards and administrative records. As all cockles received in the centre will be recorded and cross referenced with beach landings, and this will be the only point of sale, there should be complete traceability of all produce.

While a small group of fishermen will undertake a limited commercial fishery to help Marine Scotland conduct the study, the fishery itself will remain closed. The Inshore Fishing (Prohibition of Fishing for Cockles) (Solway Firth) (Scotland) Order 2011 remains in place and it will not be rescinded until a sustainable management model is established.

The Marine Scotland Science Study is expected to conclude in spring 2014.

In addition, Solway Firth Partnership has commissioned a Solway Firth Cockle Fishery Review of Management Options: a complementary study funded by the Dumfries and Galloway Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) under the European Fisheries Fund Axis 4 programme and Marine Scotland. The aims are to inform future management and to consider the cross border context for the fishery using Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) standards as a guide to sustainability. The work is aligned to Project Inshore, a wider partnership project led by Seafish using MSC as a way to assess and inform the management of inshore fisheries.

The approach includes an analysis of past management experience; a comparison of management practice (and supporting legislation) on both sides of the border; exploration of future management scenarios drawing on examples of good practice; and provision of a cost / benefit analysis. This work is currently underway and a final report will be produced in spring 2014.

These are just some of the elements of work underway towards a sustainable Solway cockle fishery and demonstrate the commitment to establishing a fishery for the future that protects the environment and supports local communities and businesses. The continental market for shellfish will always be an important one but, in time, it would be great to see Solway cockles on the menu of local restaurants as well adding to the culinary experience of this special region.





Boat leaving Whitehaven

Gone Fishing!

As they approach the third year of administering a £1.35 million fund from the European Fisheries Fund EFF Axis 4, North and West Cumbria Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) can look back at some of the projects funded and be proud to have made a difference in their fisheries community.

The FLAG Board were delighted to back a scheme in October 2012 by Whitby and District Industry Training School to provide Sea Fishing Apprenticeships in the FLAG area.

Selected apprentices were provided with classroom-based tuition and work-based training on suitable vessels in the FLAG area, addressing the issue of a lack of new entrants into the fishing profession and helping to maintain the longevity of the industry.

A total of nine apprentices have been enrolled on the scheme to date, with the local Skippers enthusiastically backing the scheme with their involvement in the placement of the young apprentices on suitable local vessels. Upon completion of the course and after gaining their qualifications, it is expected that the successful candidates will go on to be offered a place as crew on a fishing boat. The FLAG Board could not be more delighted with the way the first year of this scheme has been conducted. Celia MacKenzie, FLAG Chair, said: "It is at the heart of our task to ensure that future generations have access to the training and qualifications that will give them a profession for life and put the passion and energy back into this once neglected industry. We are proud to have supported this project and look forward to its continued success."

Further success is being achieved with the commencement of the Beacon Museum's "Gone Fishing" Project.

The FLAG Board know the sterling effort the Beacon team has put into bringing this worthwhile and most importantly, fun educational project to West Cumbrian schoolchildren. Launched during the busy Whitehaven Festival in June of this year, "Gone Fishing" has gone from strength to strength, developing and implementing an inspiring and entertaining educational programme to change perceptions of the fishing industry throughout schools in the north and west of Cumbria. Their aim is to reach at least 2000 school children within the FLAG area, highlighting a broad range of issues, including how the local fishing industry affects local children and their families and promoting healthy meals, using sustainable species of locally caught seafood in special cookery workshops.

As part of the project there has also been a video diary made of a day in the life of a Whitehaven Fisherman which is being shown in schools and is available to view on Vimeo, or from a link on the Beacon Museum website www.thebeacon-whitehaven.co.org

Alan Gillon, the "Gone Fishing" Project Leader at the Beacon said: "We are delighted to be working with Cumbria FLAG on this innovative and exciting project. We have relished the

chance to create an educational programme for schools which can potentially transform the perception of the fishing industry and encourage children and their families in the FLAG area to support local businesses and products."

One further recent project was "The Seafood Experience" at Taste Cumbria Festival in Cockermouth. The festival attracted visitors from far and wide to the small market town and incorporated celebrity chefs, pop up restaurants, cookery demonstrations and a wide variety of stalls selling all manner of Cumbrian produce. It was a packed event over the weekend and the festival goers turned up in force, due in no small part to the excellent weather that weekend.

The Seafood tent at Taste Cumbria included stalls with local suppliers selling their locally caught seafood, which was cooked to order, and a fish preparation demonstration. The aim of the exhibition was to increase awareness of the local catch and to provide a platform for local suppliers to showcase their products, whilst also creating links with the hospitality, food and drink industry.

Paul Crooks, Project Manager at Cumbris FLAG said "We want to use the demonstrations at the Taste Cumbria Festival to tell the story of how the seafood gets to our plates and to explore the wonderful variety and quality of the local catch in Cumbria."

With the species of fish featured at the festival being carefully chosen to help create a market for previously underutilised, but equally delicious, varieties of seafood, it will try to encourage the public to be a little more adventurous when at the fish counter, and make the most of the fabulous variety of fish available in the local area.

Membership of the FLAG is open to new members wishing to have a say in how the fund is spent and in building a sustainable future for the benefit of everyone in the coastal fishing communities. So if you are interested in becoming a member, have a project idea you would like to discuss, or would just like to know more, please contact the FLAG office direct on 01946 67182 or download an application form from our website www.cumbriaflag.org.uk



Kids enjoy the touch pool from the Lake District Coast Aquarium



Peter Hutchison with a Sea Bass caught in the nets

DOUGLAS HALL FISHERIES

"Dedicated to supplying our customers with a delicious range of Wild Scottish Salmon."

Douglas Hall Fisheries is a small commercial fishery situated on the Solway coast near Sandyhills. Douglas Hall Stake Nets have been fished for generations and are one of the few remaining stake nets left on the Solway. The nets are owned and operated by Peter Hutchison and Leslie Robertson, who were both brought up locally and watched the nets being fished when they were youngsters. Peter and Les have a passion for this method of fishing and do not want to see it die out.

A series of stakes moor a leader net to the seabed and this guides the salmon into a number of "pockets" along its length. As the tide ebbs the pockets are emptied ensuring the fish are caught "fresh off the tide". This approach ensures the fish are truly wild and results in the rich and unique flavour that comes from a lifetime of swimming and feeding in the Atlantic Ocean.

Douglas Hall Fisheries take a number of measures to ensure that the nets are operated in a sustainable manner. The nets are fished from 6am Monday until 6pm Friday, meaning only 8-10 tides are fished a week. We also voluntarily fish a shortened season from mid April, through until the end of the season, the 9th of September, as opposed to starting to fish in February.

Douglas Hall Fisheries is also a corporate member of the Nith Catchment Fisheries Trust whose objectives are "to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the River Nith catchment".

Peter also serves as a director of the trust. We also provide Sea Trout for an ongoing study by the Celtic Sea Trout Project which is trying to determine the cause of the decline in sea trout numbers in recent years.

Galloway Smokehouse in Creetown produces our gourmet smoked salmon. Prior to smoking our fish are cured with salt, dark syrup and rum. They are then smoked either hot or cold, in smokers using oak shavings from whisky barrels to give a rich strength of taste to all of our fish.

Cold Smoked Salmon - sides of salmon are smoked for anything up to 48 hours. As the salmon is not being cooked, the sawdust is only allowed to smoulder, so a layer of ice is placed on the sawdust and as this melts it damps the surface layer of sawdust.

Hot Smoked Salmon - as opposed to cold smoked salmon, the wood shavings are allowed to burn and as a result the fish is cooked.

As well as salmon we also regularly catch both Sea Bass and Grey Mullet which are both also fine examples of the bounties our sea has to offer us! We supply our delicious fish to fishmongers, restaurants and private customers.

If you would like to know more, why not come and watch the nets being fished, you will always be welcome! You can also visit our website at www.wildscottishsalmon.co.uk



Stakes in Winter



Inspecting the catch



Peter heads out to the nets



Visitors inspect the nets



News from the Dumfries & Galloway National Scenic Areas

Viewpoint Voices

The spectacular views from Dumfries and Galloway's three coastal National Scenic Areas (NSAs) have been inspiring artists and writers for many years. Recently groups of senior school pupils from across the region and members of the University of the Third Age have been writing about them too.

Working with award winning poet Jean Atkin, the groups produced short five line poems, called cinquains which were inspired by their visits. Some of those who took part were experienced creative writers and others had never written a poem before. Participants then filmed and recorded the poems and they can now be heard reciting them in a series of short films, available at www.dumgal.gov.uk/nsa. Selections of the poems have also been published in a series of leaflets which are available from local outlets.

Pupils from Lockerbie, Langholm and Sanquhar Academies visited the viewpoint at Wardlaw Hill, which stands guard over Caerlaverock on the north Solway shore.

**The tree.
A monument
To those who came before.
Their memories faded in time.
Ward Law.**

Kyle Warbeck

Across the Nith Estuary, the Poetry Lovers group from Dumfries visited Drumburn Viewpoint on such a misty day that Wardlaw, usually very prominent, remained unseen.

**Let me
stay longer here
silk-grey sheen of smooth sea
moments of mist giving glimpses
of blue.**

Ruth Thomson

Pupils from Douglas Ewart and Castle Douglas High Schools visited Knockbren Hill on the Carrick Shore, as well as members of the Dumfries Writing Together group.

**Green on blue,
rising from the mist, Ardwall,
a sometimes island, the ebbing tide
now marrying it to the land, a brief visit,
in time.**

Joy Craven

**Beaches,
fields of sand.
Barnacles conquer rock.
Islands endure, against sea force,
tidal.**

Richard Graham



The Viewpoint Voices project was funded by Creative Scotland's Live Literature programme, which is managed by the Scottish Book Trust, and Dumfries and Galloway Council.

For further information on Viewpoint Voices or other projects within the Dumfries & Galloway National Scenic Areas, contact Anna.Johnson@dumgal.gov.uk

COASTAL ACCESS IN CUMBRIA MOVING FORWARD

Many folks will remember the summer of 2013 for its fantastic weather but it was also a 'hot' and happy season for the national coast access programme, with confirmation that work to establish the England Coast Path should continue. The revised Coastal Access Scheme was also approved by the Secretary of State this summer and is now guiding delivery of the coastal access programme. Alongside this fantastic news, progress to implement coastal access in Cumbria has continued to gather momentum.

Allonby to Whitehaven:

In July, the Secretary of State approved proposals to improve access to the coast between Allonby and Whitehaven in Cumbria (36km). This approval followed careful planning and consultation over the last two years between Natural England, local authorities, local landowners, residents and other interested organisations. This new stretch of coastal access is one of the first to be approved since the inaugural stretch at Weymouth, last summer.

Liz Newton, Natural England's Director for Access and Engagement said: "Working closely with our local council partners, we're delighted that we can start making practical improvements on this stretch of coast. We'd like to say a massive thank you to everyone who has been involved in the preparations, as their significant knowledge and the expertise of landowners and other interested parties has been invaluable. This national programme to implement the England Coast Path is extremely worthwhile – not only so more people

can explore and enjoy our coastline, but for the many benefits that tourism brings to local economies in coastal areas. We're so pleased that momentum is building to make this exciting project a reality".

Over the coming months, Natural England will continue to work with landowners and Cumbria County Council to install signs and complete any other necessary works, before formally opening this new stretch of the England Coast Path in spring 2014.

Whitehaven to Silecroft:

Work to develop proposals to improve access is also progressing well on the second stretch of the Cumbrian coast, between Whitehaven and Silecroft. Natural England is currently discussing options with the owners and occupiers of land that may be affected on this stretch. Discussions with other relevant organisations are also being held so that we can achieve the best alignment for the England Coast Path and ensure that the right protection for any key sensitive features is built in from the outset.

Once the proposals have been finalised, Natural England will publish a report to the Secretary of State in early 2014. Anyone who wishes to comment will be able to make a representation on the report and owners or occupiers of affected land will be able to make an objection. Establishment works on this stretch will get underway once any objections have been considered and the report has been approved.

Along the beach to Sellafield



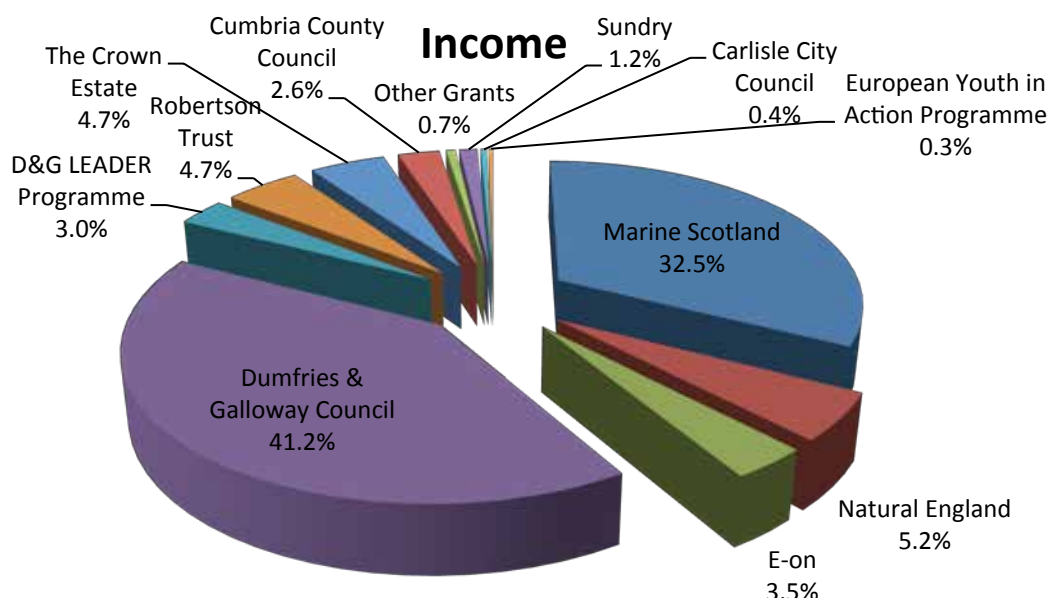
Sandy beach at Seascale



Where Next?

In order to maintain the momentum that the programme has now started to build, Natural England expects to begin work on a further stretch of the England Coast Path in Cumbria in 2014. Whilst still subject to confirmation, we expect this third stretch to extend northwards from Allonby towards the Scottish border.

Keep an eye on our website at: www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/access/northwestmappage.aspx for updates



As an independent charitable company, Solway Firth Partnership operates in a similar way to any small business. However, the aim is not to make a profit but to undertake activities in line with our mission statement:

To support a vibrant and sustainable local economy while respecting, protecting and celebrating the distinctive character, heritage and natural features of our marine and coastal area.

But we do need to stay afloat financially by making sure that we balance our income and expenditure. While most of our money comes from the public sector, we are bound by contracts that set out the services and other pieces of work we need to deliver. We have no long term commitment to funding from any organisation; contracts are re-negotiated on an annual basis. Budget cuts have brought increased competition for resources making it more important than ever that we provide a high quality and good value service to ensure the organisation stays viable.

Fortunately, our accounts for the financial year ending 31 March 2013 show an income of £190,831, an increase from £96,040 in the previous financial year. As a result of

increasing grant funding for projects, we have continued to gradually expand our staff team, and therefore the scale of the service we can provide for the local area. These are very good results in challenging financial times and represent a great deal of hard work on the part of everyone involved.

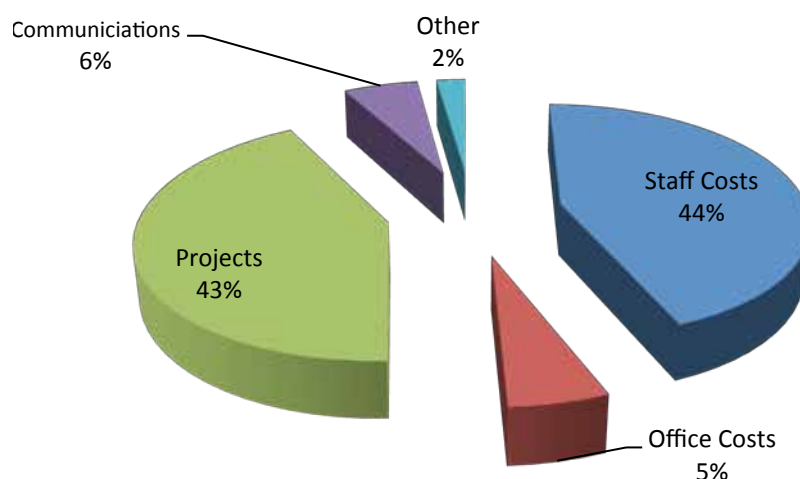
We are very grateful to all the organisations who have provided funding in the last financial year: Dumfries & Galloway Council; Marine Scotland; Natural England; The Crown Estate; The Robertson Trust; E-On; Dumfries and Galloway LEADER Programme, Cumbria County Council; and Carlisle City Council.

We would also like to thank the many people and organisations who provide their support without charge in the form of advice and practical help. This goodwill and expertise has a value that doesn't show up in annual accounts, but which adds a huge amount to the work we are able to do during the year. Thank you to everyone who has played a part.

Our full accounts for the last financial year will soon be available on our website: www.solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk

Pam Taylor: Solway Firth Partnership

Expenditure



December

Please contact event organisers to confirm details

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| Saturday 7 | Medieval Christmas at the Abbey (Holme Cultram) 11.00 – 16.00 Booking: Not required | Join in our Medieval Christmas festivities at Holme Cultram Abbey. Learn how our ancestors celebrated Yuletide through crafts, music, stories and activities. Contact: www.solwaywetlands.org.uk Venue: Holme Cultram Abbey, Abbeytown CA7 4SD Cost: Small charge may apply |
| Monday 9 | Site Maintenance (Crosscanonby Carr Nature Reserve) 10.30 Booking: Not required | Carrying out various tasks around the reserve. All tools provided but bring a packed lunch and wear warm and suitable clothing. Contact: 01697333055 or graeme.proud@allerdale.gov.uk Meet: Meet on site at 10.30 |
| Friday 13 | Removal of small trees (Wolsty Banks) 10.30 Booking: Not required | Removal of invasive trees and shrubs. All tools provided but bring a packed lunch and wear warm and suitable clothing. Contact: 01697333055 or graeme.proud@allerdale.gov.uk Meet: Wolsty Road End car park (B5300) at 10.30 |
| Monday 16 | Site Maintenance (Crosscanonby Carr Nature Reserve) 10.30 Booking: Not required | Carrying out various tasks around the reserve. All tools provided but bring a packed lunch and wear warm and suitable clothing. Contact: 01697333055 or graeme.proud@allerdale.gov.uk Meet: Meet on site at 10.30 |
| Tuesday 17 | Drop-in Event on the Development of Loch Ryan 14.00 – 19.00 | Come along to the Drop-in event to give your views on the development of Loch Ryan. Contact: 01387 702162 or info@solwayfirthpartnership.com Venue: Stranraer Library |
| Thursday 26 | Boxing Day Walk (Crook of Baldoon) 14.00 to 16.00 Booking: Essential | Need a walk after your festivities? Join the warden for a stroll along the shore and get some fresh Wigtownshire air. Bring binoculars and walking boots. Contact: Paul Tarling 01988 402130 or Paul.Tarling@rspb.org.uk Meet: Crook of Baldoon car park, DG8 9AQ, NX445530 Cost: Members £1, non-members £2 |

January

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| Wednesday 1 | Ne'erday Bird Race (WWT Caerlaverock) 10.00 to 15.00 Booking: Preferred | Blow away the Hogmanay hangover by finding and identifying as many bird species as you can on the reserve. Can you beat the warden? Bring binoculars, warm waterproof clothing and stout footwear. Contact: Brian Morrell 01387 770200 Meet: WWT Caerlaverock Wetland Centre Cost: £5 to £10 |
| Thursday 2 | New Year Walk (Crook of Baldoon) 14.00 to 16.00 Booking: Essential | Need a walk after your festivities? Join the warden for a stroll along the shore and get some fresh Wigtownshire air. Bring binoculars and walking boots. Contact: Paul Tarling 01988 402130 or Paul.Tarling@rspb.org.uk Meet: Crook of Baldoon car park, DG8 9AQ, NX445530 Cost: Members £1, non-members £2 |
| Saturday 4 | New Year Trek in the Solway Wetlands 11.30 Booking: Not required | Explore the Eden estuary on this 7.5 mile walk. Bring your Christmas leftovers for a warming picnic! Please wear warm and suitable clothing. Contact: 016973 33055 or victoria.palmer@allerdale.gov.uk Meet: Outside Greyhound Inn, Burgh by Sands Cost: Not known |
| Sunday 5 | Dawn Flight (WWT Caerlaverock) 07.15 to 0900 Booking: Preferred | Join the wardens to watch the wild geese fighting in against the dawn sky. The coffee shop will open early to serve bacon rolls and coffee (not included in price). Contact: Brian Morrell 01387 770200 Meet: WWT Caerlaverock Wetland Centre Cost: £5 to £10 |



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| Thursday 9 | Guided Circular Walk – Silloth to Grune Point 10.00 Booking: Ring the day before | Blow away the winter cobwebs on a bracing walk. Approx 7 miles, some rough ground but no hills! Bring a packed lunch and binoculars. Please wear warm and suitable clothing. Contact: 01697333055 or graeme.proud@allerdale.gov.uk Meet: Silloth Discovery Centre at 10.00 Cost: Not known |
| Weds 15 | Mawbray Banks scrub removal 10.30 Booking: Not required | Helping to remove some of the invasive scrub and gorse. All tools provided but bring a packed lunch and wear warm and suitable clothing. Baked tatties will be provided! Contact: 01697333055 or graeme.proud@allerdale.gov.uk Meet: Mawbray Yard car park off B5300 at 10.30 |
| Friday 17 | History of the Lochar Moss 19.30 Booking: Not required | Peter Norman, Biodiversity Officer for Dumfries & Galloway Council talks about the origins, archaeology and wildlife of the Lochar Moss near Dumfries. Contact: D & G Natural History and Antiquarian Society, www.dgnhas.org.uk Venue: Cumberland Street Day Centre, Dumfries. Cost: FREE but donations welcome. Non- members welcome. |
| Thursday 23 | Birch Removal (Glasson Moss) 10.00 Booking: Not required | Help with thinning out of overgrown birch at the edge of the peatland. Equipment provided but bring a packed lunch and wear warm and suitable clothing. Contact: 01697333055 or graeme.proud@allerdale.gov.uk Meet: Bowling Club car park. Port Carlisle. |
| Friday 31 | Litter Pick at Wolsty Banks 10.00 – 12.00 Booking: Not required | Help to clean up our beaches and sand dunes. Litter picking tools will be provided. Please wear suitable clothing. Contact: 01697333055 or graeme.proud@allerdale.gov.uk Meet: Wolsty Road End car park. |

February

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| Thursday 27 | Three Solway Churches 10.00 to 15.30 Booking: Essential | Join Dr David Weston for an exploration of three historic churches along Hadrian's Wall, St Mary's, Beaumont, St Michael's, Burgh by Sands and St Michael's, Bowness on Solway. Coach leaves Tullie House 10.00, returning by 15.00. Bring packed lunch. Contact: 01228-618718 or enquiries@tulliehouse.org Meet: Tullie House, Carlisle. Cost: £5 per person, £4 concessions |
| Friday 28 | Life and times of Sir John Richardson 19.30 Booking: Not required | Brian Morrell, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Caerlaverock talks of the life and times of this forgotten local hero who was a naval doctor, explorer and naturalist and sailed with Franklin in search of the North West Passage. Contact: D & G Natural History and Antiquarian Society, www.dgnhas.org.uk Venue: Cumberland Street Day Centre, Dumfries. Cost: FREE but donations welcome. Non- members welcome. |

March

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| Thursday 13 | An introduction to Insects 14.00 to 16.00 Booking: Essential | Explore the fascinating world of entomology with Curator of Natural History, Stephen Hewitt. Learn how to recognise different groups of insects that you can find in your garden and on countryside walks. Contact: 01228-618718 or enquiries@tulliehouse.org Venue: Community Room, Tullie House, Carlisle. Cost: £12 per person, £10 concessions or Natural History Society members. |
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Cover Photograph : 'Walking the Tide' event in Rough Firth. Mike Bolam

For further information, to submit an article or to join the SFP mailing list please contact:
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