

# tidelines

Issue 54 Spring / Summer 2021

newsletter of the Solway Firth Partnership



## **Wildflowers of Coastal Cliffs**

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20/21  
**COASTS  
& WATERS**





SFP Team, left to right: Morag, Nic, Georgie, Paul, Clair

## A Note from Solway Firth Partnership

We are still limited in the work we can do at Solway Firth Partnership (SFP) due to current government advice but we are moving forward into spring with a positive feeling about the future. In this edition of Tidelines we showcase work that continues on both sides of the Solway despite the ongoing difficulties. SFP has come to the end of the 2018 – 2021 business plan and so has produced a review of this plan and also a new business plan for 2021 – 24. If you'd like to see the review and the plan, they are available on the SFP website at [www.solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk](http://www.solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk). So, get out and enjoy the Solway Coast but don't forget to follow the government advice on Coronavirus (COVID-19).

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**You can find the latest guidelines for England at**  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>

**and the latest guidelines for Scotland at**  
<https://www.gov.scot/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance/>

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# FOCUS ON Drumburgh Moss Nature Reserve



Drumburgh platform



**D**rumburgh Moss is a place which is alive with the sounds and sights of the Solway Coast AONB, particularly striking on a warm summer's day, when the bog is alive with dragonflies, lizards and birds. Curlew, adders and roe deer are some more of its characteristic inhabitants.

This is a place that can be enjoyed at any time of year thanks to a viewing platform which is accessible from waymarked trails as well as a new wildlife hide. From the winter frosts to

the springtime blooming of the bog's plant life, through to the colours of the autumn, there is always something to see. You may spot geese in the winter, short eared owls in the autumn and skylark and reed buntings in the spring.

This Cumbria Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve is a site of international importance. It is made up of a broad expanse of raised mire, bogs which have become threatened habitats due to human influence and environmental pressures.

## Facilities

- **Free parking** – access is via a rough track from Drumburgh Village (look out for brown sign).
- **Waymarked trails**
- **Information boards**

## Did you know?

Ponies and longhorn cattle are used to manage this landscape through grazing.

## Look out for...

The boggy pools which are a haven for dragonflies.



Sundew

# Farming Advocacy on the Solway Coast

Farming is changing - we are now at the start of a 4 year transition period leading up to the new Environmental Land Management programme, or ELM, which comes on board in 2024. The detail in these new schemes is undergoing much development at present so we are still discovering what this might look like, but it will be based around rewarding farmers for delivering public goods that improve the environment, landscape and public engagement. Farming in a nationally protected landscape such as an AONB or a National Park is going to be an important part of this new programme.

Between December 2020 and March 2021 we have been working on a national farming advocacy project, where all AONBs and National Parks in England have come together on a piece of work to improve our communication with farmers and bring resources together to help farmers in protected landscapes start to prepare for the current funding opportunities out there that will eventually lead up to the new ELM system.

We have been working with the Farmer Network who have been helping us carry out several pieces of work:

- Putting together a flyer which has been sent out by post to farmers and landowners within and just outside the AONB boundary
- Putting together a contacts list of farmers who are interested in keeping in the loop about grants and opportunities available
- Carrying out a telephone survey to talk to a wide range of farmers about the issues and opportunities of farming on the Solway - and what needs and support they might have in the future
- Promotion of a series of national online workshops for farmers run by the National Association of AONBs
- Running an online Solway-focused online meeting for farmers and the offer of a follow up clinic on Countryside Stewardship and other opportunities around slurry and animal health, changes to the farm payments over the next couple of years and what we know so far about ELM.

Supporting farmers and land managers to make improvements to the Solway landscape and to help support their businesses is very important to us, and is an integral part of our new Solway Coast Management Plan 2020-2025.



Coastal dunes

## How is Nature doing on the Solway Coast?

When someone says the word 'nature' to you, perhaps a special place or animal or tree springs to mind that you would like to protect from harm. We all connect differently with the natural world, but most of us know that nature needs a helping hand from time to time.

Join in a conversation about nature in the Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB): what's changing, and what you think is important to look after. This could be species, seasonal events or special places and habitats. Come along to one of three online sessions which will be held on **Tuesday 25th May at 6.30pm, Wednesday 26th May at 5.30pm and Thursday 27th May at 2pm**. Meetings will be held using Zoom so all you will need is a computer, phone or tablet and access to the internet. Register here to attend:

[www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/news-events](http://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/news-events)

Your words and feelings will feed into a piece of word art by Cumbrian writer Zosia Wand who will attend the sessions and create something to reflect on afterwards.

We would also love you to make a short video (60 seconds max) on your mobile phone or tablet showing or telling us about your favourite aspect of nature on the Solway or your favourite natural place, whether this is your garden or a local walk. All you need to do is film your special place and say a few words to explain why it is important to you - or even let the video speak for itself. These short films will be collated to record how important nature is for you and your communities in the landscape around you. Once you have made your film email it to [nature@cumbriaaction.org.uk](mailto:nature@cumbriaaction.org.uk) by 19th May.

These conversations will feed community voices into the emerging Nature Recovery Network for Cumbria, and will highlight community interests in the Solway Coast AONB Nature Recovery Strategy. (If you're wondering what that really means then do join the conversation to find out more!) All of this will feed into the national programme of Nature Recovery Networks, restoring natural connections right across the country and giving threatened species and habitats some of the extra help they need.

For more information, to register your interest for one of the sessions or to send in a video, contact Fran Richardson, from ACTION with Communities in Cumbria, on [nature@cumbriaaction.org.uk](mailto:nature@cumbriaaction.org.uk).



# Walk or Bike Ride: Allonby to Crosscanonby Carr and back

Length: 5 miles  
Terrain: Easy

A nature reserve, a Roman milefortlet and an ice cream, what more could you ask for?



Views across the Solway to Scotland

**T**his 5 mile out and back route has lots to offer as well as being easy to navigate. The level terrain mainly consists of paved cycleway and a few boardwalks, proving a good choice for an easy walk or cycle. If you like to carry a map, OS Outdoor Leisure L4 covers the whole route.

Park up in Allonby, a small town situated midway between the towns of Silloth and Maryport, on the B5300 Coast Road. There are a number of free car parks to choose from. I would recommend the car park across from Twentyman's Ice Cream Parlour, not just because of the

close proximity to alluring ice cream – although that would be enough for me – but also because it has toilet facilities.

Once you are ready look around and spot the cycle way, a hard tarmacked path, within easy walking distance from any of the car parks. This is the cycleway from Silloth to Allonby and route of the England Coast Path. On a clear day you can see right across the Solway Firth to the Scottish hills. Head south, with the coast to your right.

Continue along the cycleway, which will cross the B5300 road at Blue Dial Farm. Depending on restrictions you could have a cheeky treat at the Moody Cow, which provides delicious refreshments. Normally this opens 6 days a week 10am-3pm, but is closed Tuesdays.

Carry on along the cycleway until you come to a point where the track crosses a minor road. Turn left, being careful along the road as there isn't a path, and you will see Crosscanonby Carr Nature Reserve on your right.

Crosscanonby Carr Nature Reserve is home to a mosaic of habitats. An unusual combination of meadow, wetland and woodland creates a wildlife

haven with much to see throughout the year and a peaceful little spot to enjoy the tranquillity of nature.

Once you've had some fun exploring, head back the way you came, across the road. On your right there is a small sign leading the way to a Milefortlet 21, the site of a small Roman fort.

Milefortlet 21 was built on the orders of the Roman Emperor Hadrian who visited Britain in 122AD. The site was excavated in 1990. This is the only example to have been fully uncovered and well worth a visit. The views from this spot, one of the highest points along the coast, are fabulous and if you look down to the shore you can see the remains of some 17th century salt pans.

Once you have had fun, pretending to defend the coast from invading troops and soaking up the history of the site, turn around and head back the way you came, picking up the cycleway where you left it to visit the Milefortlet and heading back to Allonby. Take in the lovely views across the Solway and look forward to a delicious ice cream from Twentyman's Ice Cream Parlour, open 10am till 5.30pm every day.



Aerial view of Milefortlet 21







# Allonby to Silloth Cycleway

## Enjoy the Solway Coaster route



There is now another reason to get out and enjoy the fabulous coastline between Allonby and Silloth, thanks to a new path for cyclists and walkers, the southern part of which is described in detail in the previous article.

Work to create the new cycleway along the stunning Cumbrian Solway Coast was completed in March 2021. At just over 14km, the 'Solway Coaster' route has been created to join onto the already popular path between Maryport and Allonby.

Exploring the Solway Coast by bike has been something enjoyed by locals for years, but cycling tourism is now playing a bigger role in the local economy with long-distance travellers taking on National Cycle Network Route 72 (Hadrian's Cycleway), which runs from Ravenglass in Cumbria, to South Shields in Tyne and Wear.

In total just over 4.5km of the new route between Allonby and Silloth is 'off road' and nearly 9.5km 'on road'. The 'on road' sections of the route utilise the existing carriageway and local country lanes, which have benefitted from new signage, markings and line painting. It is hoped that the new route will open the coast up to those cyclists who are a little more wary of cycling too much on the roads, including families and many visitors to the area. The tarmac, off-road sections of the new path also provide safe and easy walking routes for pedestrians and those with pushchairs and in wheelchairs.

The project's been led by Allerdale Borough Council and has been developed by the Silloth-on-Solway Coastal Community Team, which is a mix of public, private and

community partners. To pay for the new path, the team secured £1m from the Coastal Communities Fund which is administered by the Department for Communities and Local Government. A further £250,000 was secured from DEFRA's Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), which is part of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

The cycleway project forms part of Allerdale Borough Council's drive to boost tourism across the west coast of the borough and its wider Visit Allerdale initiative. By encouraging people to use the cycleway it will also promote healthy activity for local residents and visitors alike. Further information about the Cumbrian Solway Coast, including some great walking and cycling routes, can be found at [www.visitallerdale.co.uk](http://www.visitallerdale.co.uk).

Joe Broomfield, Tourism Development Manager for Allerdale Borough Council said: "This project has been a long-held ambition for the Silloth-on-Solway Coastal Community Team and it's wonderful that it has now become a reality. The last 12 months has reinforced the benefits of being able to enjoy the great outdoors and more and more people are discovering what our great coastline has to offer. This new cycle path will improve access to this beautiful coastal environment for all, boost cycling tourism in the area and encourage more of us to get out on bikes or on a good walk breathing in the sea air.

"I'd like to say a big thank you to the project funders and our development partners Eric Wright Civil Engineering and Tetratch, who have helped to bring this project to completion."

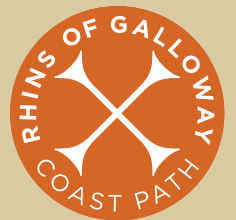






# Appearing Live This Summer! Wildflowers of Coastal Cliffs

The Rhins of Galloway Coast Path Facebook posts have been featuring flowers every Friday over the winter months and now summer is on its way you can also see them appearing live!



To help you find out more about flowers that thrive on the coast there will be a Wildflowers of Coastal Cliffs Exhibition hosted by Logan Botanic Garden during May and June 2021. To accompany the exhibition a guide to common coastal flowers will also be published helping visitors to know their Scot's lovage from their golden samphire. There are also plans to run events to reveal the amazing wildlife on the Rhins coast so keep an eye on the @Rhinsogallowaycoastpath Facebook page.

Where the land meets the sea is always a demanding place for plants to survive and rock faces are particularly exposed to extremes of weather making coastal cliffs even more precarious. There is a wildness about the vegetation on cliffs along the Rhins of Galloway coast that is uplifting, and it is probably the nearest habitat to 'natural' that can be found in Scotland. Over thousands of years people have modified the

countryside, but the ancient world survives on our windswept coasts.

Plants living on cliffs must withstand the harsh conditions of salty sea spray and drying winds but also benefit from the warmer winter temperatures of a maritime climate. Several plants reach the northern limits of their distribution in the Rhins of Galloway and are unlikely to be seen elsewhere in Scotland.

With a few exceptions most plants associated with sea cliffs do not have a requirement for coastal habitats but instead thrive in places where more vigorous plants struggle to survive.





## Three Seaside Stars



### Spring Squill

*Scilla verna*

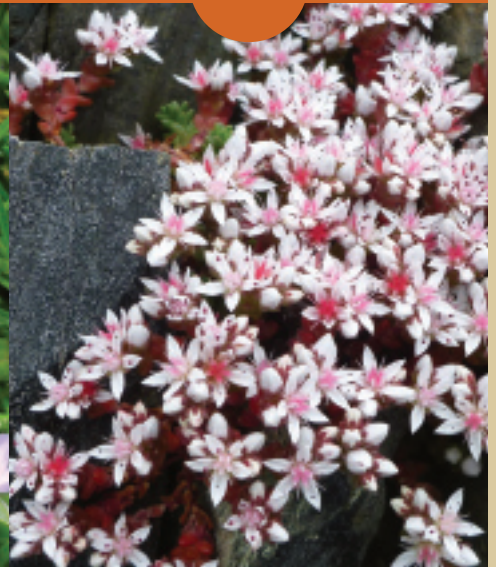
One of the first flowers to appear in the spring with a cluster of starry blue flowers at the top of its short stems. Favouring well drained areas of short grass the leaves are narrow like grass but are fleshy and often curl close to the ground. Scattered in grass they are easy to miss but sometimes they can be found in large colonies on a headland creating a violet-bluish haze to a clifftop.



### Rock Sea-spurrey

*Spergularia rupicola*

This plant has adapted to be very tolerant of salt and is only found in the extreme western coasts of Britain. Growing in crevices, on ledges and in thin soils on clifftops the small pale pink star-shaped flowers have yellow stamens but can be easily overlooked unless you are specifically searching for it. Rock sea-spurrey is a low growing hairy plant with trailing stems and slender, fleshy pointed leaves.



### English Stonecrop

*Sedum anglicum*

White starry flowers with a pink tinge grow on a dense cushion of succulent leaves that have adapted to enable the plant to survive in very dry conditions. It prefers full sun and grows in crevices on rocky outcrops or clifftops and is also frequently found inland where conditions are suitable. Sometimes spreading to form large mats the grey green leaves turn red as the plant matures.

## The Rhins Revealed Online

The early success of an exciting community archaeology initiative to complement the Rhins of Galloway Coast Path improvement works has been hit hard by the COVID-19 restrictions but all is not lost! A new Rhins Revealed Online Project has been developed to overcome the constraints. It aims to use a variety of digital media to start activities that make new connections with historical sites on the coast.

The project will produce an online guide to help families discover the past and enable 'digital exploration' of places that have been difficult to visit as well as resource for path users in the future. A series of events will be developed including online talks and socially distanced guided walks as well as a VR (virtual reality) reconstruction of the remains of Doon Castle broch near Ardwell Bay.



Supported by Kilgallioch Community Fund the project will be led by Solway Firth Partnership using expert archaeologists to bring the local coastal heritage to life.





Work at Auchencairn Community Garden



# Robin Rigg Community Fund

In the winter 2020 edition of Tidelines we gave an update on some of the projects that had been funded in 2020 through the RWE Robin Rigg Community Fund.

**RWE**

**C**atch up with the progress of another two projects which focus on enhancing nature and helping the community to get outside and engage more with the environment. They managed to get fantastic results over the summer of 2020 despite the difficulties caused by COVID-19.

## Auchencairn Community Garden

Auchencairn community had a desire to develop their green areas within the village, to teach the children about local nature and to grow food locally. A five-acre site was donated to the community for rewilding and planting trees which they were keen to grow from locally sourced seeds and saplings. The Link Park has developed over the last few years into a multifunctional open space playing a key role in the cultural and social well-being of the community.

Over the summer of 2020 the community further developed the Link Park community garden to include a nature trail and improved recreation spaces. This helped create opportunities for education for youngsters involved in the project as well as inspiring lifelong learning and interest in the local environment.

Another great addition to the community space was the development of allotments and tool storage. Local food production helps to reduce food miles and reflects the need for a low carbon community. The allotments in the Link Park also facilitate opportunities to be a healthier, sustainable and cohesive community.

And finally, the Robin Rigg Community Fund has also enabled the community to create a tree nursery to grow trees for the new community woodland and green spaces. Trees grown from locally sourced seeds and saplings are also available for local residents to plant on their land.





Work at Kippford Community Nature Reserve

## Kippford Community Nature Reserve

Work started on the creation of Kippford Community Nature Reserve in 2018. Since then the community have planted over 5000 trees, created ponds and wetland scrapes for wildlife, erected information and directional signs and laid a wheelchair friendly path network complete with benches.

The funding from the Robin Rigg Community Fund in 2020 has enabled the community to carry out even more work on the reserve. This has included creating a new entrance with field and pedestrian gates, repairing dry stone dykes, restoring an ancient well and carrying out essential tree surgery to maintain visitor safety on site.

The community have helped create an easily accessible open space for able and disabled local people and visitors.

It is open to all so why not visit the reserve and enjoy the wildlife that is attracted by the new habitats? A great addition to the beautiful coastal village of Kippford!

## The Robin Rigg Community Fund is provided by RWE Renewables

The Robin Rigg Community Fund will be open for another round of applications in late summer / early autumn for projects taking place in 2022. Sign up for the SFP newsletter from the homepage of the website to hear about the opening of the fund for applications in late summer 2021 -

<https://www.solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk>





Spitfire moving along



# Launch of the Solway Review Online Storymap

Have you seen our new Solway Review?

**T**he Solway Review holds so much information and data, images and maps, it would take up hundreds of pages in a traditional document format. An online platform for the Review also means that you can watch videos, interact with online maps and locate sections quickly and easily as a reader. From the perspective of Solway Firth Partnership, we can update and add to the Review in minutes, without needing reprints, saving time and energy and minimising paper waste. This is hugely beneficial when it comes to marine information, which is updated annually for many topics, and is constantly changing.

For the Solway Review, we wanted to make all of these benefits over a traditional paper-printed document a reality, and now...they are!

Launched in February 2021 the Solway Review Storymap is now live!

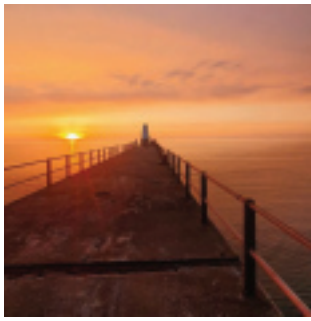
We are looking for any feedback you have about the Review so we can factor it into adapting the platform to maximum accessibility and usability. The Solway Review is best viewed on a desktop or laptop device. Although accessible from tablets and mobile devices the smaller screen does not give the same, high quality, user experience and accessing it from larger devices is advised.

The Review is made up of 8 chapters, with the main information being found in the; Productive, Physical, Healthy and Biologically Diverse, and Clean & Safe chapters.

Take a look at our website for more information and to access the Solway Review online

[www.solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk/solway-review/](http://www.solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk/solway-review/)





Maryport Harbour



# The Solway Photo Series

Within the platform you can also find our new project element; The Solway Photo Series.

There have already been over 150 photographs submitted for this element of the Solway Review, which is seeking submission of Solway photos from the public. All photos sent in will be considered for inclusion in the final Solway Review. With so many photos already received we have been able to divide the Series into a 'Dumfries and Galloway', and 'Cumbria' Series. Images are organised by location, with the Series covering the whole Solway, from the inner Solway in the east, to St Bees Head, and Loch Ryan in the west. All the beautiful images you see on this page are submissions for the Solway Photo Series. Access the Solway Photo Series through the 'Engagement' chapter in the Solway Review. We are so excited to be including this element in the SMILE Project, and can't wait to see where the Solway Photo Series takes us next!



Seal at Mullock Bay



Oystercatcher at Dhoon Bay



Stranraer Marina

Tides out at Balcary







# Some Thoughts on Coastal Photography

By Keith Walker Abbey Camera Club

Some folk, who know that I am a member of a camera club, occasionally ask me if their photograph is any “good”. My answer is always the same, inasmuch as if they like it, then I tell them it is a good photo. Period. However, if they want to put it into a competition or have others critique it, then other things start to come into play. In this brief article, I simply want to offer a few ideas that might be worth bearing in mind when taking images of our wonderful coast and sharing them with others.

Before that however, a word about cameras. There is a well-worn cliché in photography that the best camera is the one you have with you. Cliché it may be, but it is absolutely true. To take successful images you do not need expensive cameras and lenses, simply the phone in your pocket. Digital images cost nothing, so check out how the camera in your

phone works and have a play. If you want to then edit them, again, see what your camera can do, or if you want to go a bit further install the free Snapseed app. Knowing how to use the camera in your phone and do basic editing will help you produce the kind of images you want

So back to the pictures themselves. First and foremost, what is the subject of your image. Is it the nice colours of a sunset, the view across the sea or the waves crashing against the rocks? Images which have a definite subject help the person looking at it know what it is you want them to be looking at. The pictures of the stake net poles and of Southerness lighthouse opposite, make it clear what the photographer wanted you to look at. Of course, if you can then add in nice light, colours, or interesting textures, then this will also help.





Balnakeil Beach



Southerness Lighthouse

In terms of light, the best times of day are around sunrise and sunset. Late in the day the light gets quite red in colour and because it is quite low in the sky, it emphasises the colours and textures of the rocks. Of course, the water in the Solway also often produces the possibility of nice reflections. (Please note the image above is shown for illustrative purposes and was not taken on the Solway, but on the Pentland Firth in November 2019).

Park Hill



Stakenets on the coast



The picture on the opposite page shows another useful 'tool' to help identify your subject i.e., the use of a leading line. In this image, of a couple walking their dog at Rockcliffe, a small stream leads the eye from the bottom of the picture to them and then on to Hestan Island beyond. This can also make the viewer spend longer looking at your image as their eyes look for other details.

This image above of Park Hill from Rough Firth near Rockcliffe, uses a leading line from the bottom left-hand corner. As with the other images shown in this article, this show what magnificent cloudscapes can be seen round the Solway Firth. Have a look at a weather forecast and if it's cloudy, this can be a good day to go out. Of course, if venturing out on to the mudflats, which was necessary here, be very mindful about the state of the tide and also wear appropriate footwear.

So, why don't you get out there and submit your photos to the Solway Photo Series hosted by the SMILE (Solway Marine Information, Learning and Environment) Project and Solway Firth Partnership?

Full details can be found at [www.solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk/planning/solway-photo-series/](http://www.solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk/planning/solway-photo-series/)





Cumbria Coast



Bowness Common boardwalk

# Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy Pilot Scheme

In August 2020 the government announced that Cumbria was to be one of five pilot areas in England trialling the development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). Cumbria County Council has been leading this work as the Responsible Authority, working with a wide range of partnerships, organisations and individuals that have an interest in or influence on nature recovery.

The Environment Bill 2020 introduces new statutory requirements for local authorities in England to deliver biodiversity net gain and also to produce a LNRS.

The LNRS is comprised of two elements – a written Statement of Biodiversity Priorities and a Local Habitat Map. Essentially these will identify what is good for nature recovery already within the county, what we need to do to make it better, and where are the best locations to do this.

The purpose of the LNRS is to enable nature recovery through the creation and restoration of habitats brought about by changes in land management. It is not a project plan of individual schemes but an agreed set of priorities for habitat management and creation across the county, with details of the actions needed to bring about these changes.



## Further information

Further information on the LNRS Pilot can be found on the county council website here – <https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/planning-environment/lhrs/default.asp>.

For any enquiries regarding the LNRS Pilot please contact:

Rachel Whaley – Planning Officer, Cumbria LNRS Project Manager,

Tel: 07917 076 815, Email: [rachel.whaley@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.whaley@cumbria.gov.uk)

View across to  
Scotland from  
Mawbray





Lily pond Bowness Common

## Working with stakeholders

The pilot scheme ran from September 2020 through to May 2021. During this time we held on-line engagement events for stakeholders to understand what outcomes or achievements for nature recovery were most important to them and what measures or actions would be necessary to help deliver these outcomes. Smaller focus groups have helped to develop the thinking further.

Solway Firth Partnership has been actively involved in these events and members of the SFP have helped us to develop the outcomes and measures for coastal habitats in the draft LNRS.

Key nature recovery outcomes identified so far for coastal habitats include finding innovative ways to restore and manage sand dune and salt marsh habitats; taking a catchment approach to improving water quality recognising the connection between freshwater and marine habitats; and

supporting native and characteristic coastal species such as seagrass, mussel and cockle beds as well as creating and protecting undisturbed sites for breeding terns and gulls.

Whilst the primary purpose of the LNRS is to create and enhance habitats for their biodiversity value, raising awareness of the wider environmental benefits is also an important role of the LNRS. For example, the benefits of 'blue carbon storage' through restoring seagrass.

## Taking the strategy forward

The majority of measures identified will need funding or other delivery mechanisms to make them happen. For the LNRS to 'deliver' its identified nature recovery outcomes, it needs to link in with the appropriate funding streams and work programmes, such as the Borderlands Natural Capital Investment Zone or the Cumbria Coastal Strategy group. It is intended that individuals and organisations seeking financial or other support should be able to refer to the LNRS as evidence that the works proposed or chosen location is an appropriate option to pursue or seek investment for.

The learning from all five pilots will be used to inform the final legislation and guidance that will be issued when the Environment Bill gets Royal Assent (currently anticipated to be Autumn 2021) and the production of a LNRS will then become a statutory requirement for all local authorities in England. The final Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Cumbria will therefore not be completed or adopted until after this official roll-out commences, which is anticipated to be from April 2022.

In the meantime we want to continue working with everyone interested in contributing to the LNRS for Cumbria so that we are in a good place to produce a final version when it becomes a statutory requirement.



Cumbria sunset



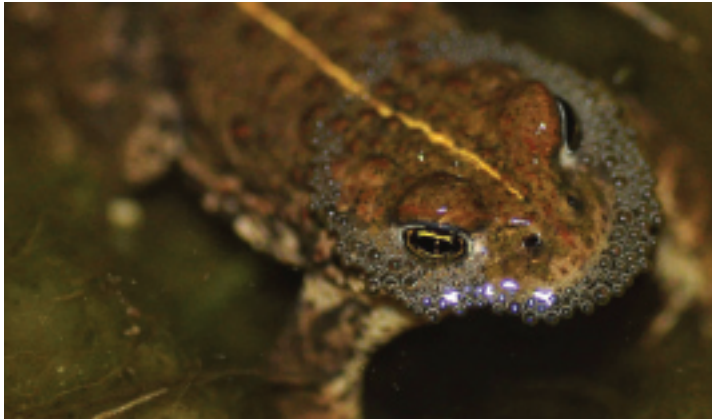
Coastal habitat

# Species on the Edge



Scotland's coast and islands are amongst the most biodiverse areas in the UK. They provide a last refuge for some of our most beautiful and unusual, but also most vulnerable, species. Many are in decline and some are on the cusp of extinction.

**Species on the Edge** is a partnership of eight of Scotland's nature conservation organisations; NatureScot (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage) and the 'Rethink Nature' organisations - Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, Bat Conservation Trust, Buglife, Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Butterfly Conservation, Plantlife and RSPB. With the support of the National Lottery Heritage Fund, we are developing a programme of work to improve the survival chances of over 40 nationally and internationally vulnerable species in seven landscape areas around the coast, one of which is focussed on the Scottish Solway.



Natterjack toad

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation is co-ordinating the development work in the Solway landscape area, where the natterjack toad is at its northern limit in Britain. Here it has only a tenuous foothold, having seen a major decline in recent years and is thought to be now down to just a few hundred adults, mostly at RSPB Mersehead. Between there and Annan the Solway natterjacks need many more breeding pools (warm, shallow 'scrapes') to be created, and improvements made to their terrestrial hibernating and feeding habitats, which will also help to ensure that colonies are less isolated.

Additional target species along the Solway coast include the northern brown argus butterfly, medicinal leech, purple oxytropis, chough, Greenland white-fronted goose, tree sparrow, and the extraordinary tadpole shrimp, within the UK found only here and in the New Forest.

Tadpole shrimp, *Triops cancriformis*



Northern brown argus butterfly





Saltmarsh pond



Northern brown argus butterfly



Medicinal leech



Purple oxytropis



Natterjack toad

Threats facing these species include habitat loss, land use change, and the impact of the warming climate coupled with rising sea levels.

Other landscape areas that are part of **Species on the Edge** include the Outer and Inner Hebrides, Shetland and Orkney, where development work is being done by the other partners, and where work is focussed on species such as great yellow bumblebee, slender scotch burnet moth, short-necked oil beetle, lapwing, curlew, Scottish primrose and bats.

The development phase will continue until September 2021 and thereafter we hope to receive additional funding for implementation, extending over four and a half years. The project would aim to achieve a substantial part of its work through local communities, engaging and empowering them to conserve their local heritage. Practical advice to achieve multi-

species benefits will be developed for landowners, with demonstration events used to encourage wildlife-friendly management techniques.

Research and learning will be supported through local schools who will be invited to be Species Ambassadors, learning about species and leading activities to support their conservation, inspiring the next generation to care for nature. The project would also serve to strengthen a partnership approach to conservation work in Scotland.

For more information about the project please contact [paul.kirkland@arc-trust.org](mailto:paul.kirkland@arc-trust.org) or visit our project pages at <https://www.nature.scot/scotlands-biodiversity/species-edge-sote/species-edge-about-project> and <https://www.arc-trust.org/coastal-treasures>





Lapwing and pied wagtail

# A Management Turnaround at RSPB Campfield Marsh

By Mhairi Maclauchlan, Cumbria Coast Warden, RSPB Campfield Marsh



Here at RSPB Campfield Marsh on the south of the Solway we have been busy over the last three years with an exciting new shift in management practices.

Flock of lapwings



We have been working hard to transform fields of tired and unproductive wet grassland into a haven for breeding waders and birds. When we say unproductive, we aren't talking about crops or livestock, we are talking more about the environmental value of the land. Some of our target species include lapwing, redshank and curlew.

At Campfield we have 34 hectares of our wet grassland under Environmental Stewardship which is now managed with these birds and ecosystems in mind. We've created wet muddy areas for birds to feed in as well as rough grassland pasture for them to breed on. One of the most exciting aspects of this work is the dynamic water system we've installed. The definition of dynamic is characterised by change, activity, or progress. If we think of a natural untouched largescale wetland it is in its very nature, dynamic. Areas dry out and wet up with the seasons and this fluctuates depending on a variety of factors such as soil structure, vegetation and weather patterns. We've tried to recreate this albeit in a more controlled way and on a smaller scale here at Campfield Marsh. With a network of pipes and sluices we've been able to funnel rainwater and runoff water onto the reserve – this is water which would have normally gone into the estuary. This water can be used to flood up areas of the grassland periodically while we dry out other areas which we can then manage through rush removal, scrape creating, muck spreading and rotavating of scrape edges.





After work

The images show the change that the site has gone through. The image to the right is before the work has been done and the image above is what this site looks like now. Loads more amazing wetland habitat available for birds.

Belted Galloways have also become an important tool in our management. A hardy breed which helps us to further manage the land by splodging about in the mud and munching on some of the less palatable vegetation on the grassland. They really suit the landscape and the wetter habitat.

The diggers left last year and 2021 will be the first full year of testing our dynamic system. We had some tweaks to do and it's working as it should so far. During March, lapwing pair and breed with nests forming from the end of March through to April. As I write our numbers are looking healthy and they are using all parts of the wet grassland. Redshank numbers have also increased greatly and there is even the possibility we may see curlews nesting on the farmland for the first time. They normally favour the more secluded bog or bog edge areas.

As the breeding season progresses it will become more about giving the birds room to raise their chicks without being disturbed. In order to help with this and to stop birds being predated by foxes and badgers we have enclosed the entire site in an electric predator fence. If you visit the site, you may have seen it – it's hard to miss. This has been extremely effective and last year we managed to allow birds to raise chicks to fledgling stage without issue.

Before work



Belted Galloways going onto the site for the first time last year





# Solway Stories

## By Stuart A Paterson

Needle's Ee

I've lived by the Solway Coast for some time now. Originally from Ayrshire, I grew up speaking the Scots language which so many of my family and pals did and still do.

Although not now 'officially recognised' as a language, try telling that to over 1.5 million people who identified as Scots speakers in the 2011 Scottish Census. Or anyone who ever composed a poem, story, song or map in Scots going back almost 1,000 years. Try telling that to the very landscape in which so many of us live here on the Scottish side of the Solway (the Sulwath) in Galloway, Dumfriesshire and Annandale. And across the Firth (another old but still common Scots word) in Cumbria and across The Sheuch (the trench, what Gallovidians and their Ulster neighbours still call the Irish Sea) in Northern Ireland. We live in a landscape populated not just by people but, more lastingly, by the names within it left behind as a rich topographical legacy by its people over such a long period.

Until relatively recently, the vast majority of people lived on and from the land. The language they spoke and which is still so common was and still is very much the language of landscape, place and weather. As I hope my poem shows, even a short journey of a few miles round the Colvend Coast where I live is a walk through its languages. The Solway Coast is an area with as rich a cultural heritage as anywhere in the UK. Trading, settlements, indigenous industries and localised customs here go back long before written history. Much of that history was written into the land itself and has remained in places long vacated (naturally or otherwise) by the people who lived there. Many still believe that Gaelic in Scotland was only ever spoken north of Perth and in the

Hebrides. And yet Galloway Gaelic, Galwegian, was spoken in the centre and west of the region and around the Solway until as recently as 300 years ago. Place names don't come about by accident or aren't left scattered like postcards by early tourists. They are left by those who lived there. And Galwegian is still all round us in Galloway. Galloway, Gall Gaidhealaib, land of the Foreign Gael, in reference to our long history of mixed Gaelic and Norse communities, leaving their linguistic and cultural heritage in every stake net or haaf net, many a town or hill name, in the very names of the people themselves. And in the tales and stories still being made and told in so many places right round the Solway.

So for me a dauner by the Sulwath sometimes feels like a dauner through the ages. It's a landscape which has formed, existed and changed over a timescale which humans have only inhabited for the briefest of relative times. But we've very much left our mark in a way that's as diverse and lasting as anywhere else on these islands. Scots is my first language, a language I love and which sings and even brays at full volume wherever I dauner in Galloway. I can't close my ears or eyes to it because it's in them every day of my life. I like to help people, especially young people, open ears and eyes to what's around them and to see and hear the language of the stories spoken every day to them by the very places in which they live, play and work. There's been a lot of folk doing a lot of dauner during Lockdown. Listening to and learning the language of the land and weather we all dauner through can inspire more folk to reply, start conversations, tell our own stories and make our own maps for others to follow long into the future.





Broken Heugh

## DAUNER

*Oor bus pechs up the Whinny Hill,  
sklents by Kirkbean, Bay of Carse,  
ablo the Riddlings of Creation,  
rummles heeliegoleerie by Loaningfoot,  
Mainsriddle, Linnet Hall, Merseheid, staps tae  
lowse me bi the yetts at Heughs o Laggan.*

*Daunerin doon by Dinnings an Powbrade  
Ah loup owre Cairngill Burn tae reach The Smiddy,  
hae a notion fir stravaigin lang the strand  
by Wattie's Nets, the Needle's Ee, Torrs Hill abuin  
an mak fir Port o' Warren, Blackneuk Craigs.*

*Thornkip Hill, the Broukit Heugh, the Bogle Hole  
hae nae tourist signs nor markers sae bi  
Gutcher's Isle an Tinker's Loup Ah'm mindit o  
the time we scriverit maps wi tongues,  
prentit them oan harn an een, kennt fine  
aa weys an whaur they led in Gallowa  
wi nocht mair nor a blether nor a skeck,  
nae need tae read but jist tae ken an reck.*

*Fae Muscle Clauchan, Stanefauld, Craigie Knowes  
an Sluice it's no sae faur tae Muckle Lands, nae  
mair nor twae mile oan tae White Hoose  
an The Scaur whaur the thocht o yill  
an gettin baukit in the ingle-neuk  
o The Anchor gars me pit a step on.*

*Oangaun's the dauner, backweys, furrit,  
owre, abuin, ablo, athort an ben thir lanes  
an braes an cleuchs an pads we maun gie names tae,  
hae nae claims tae much ayont the need  
for makkin maps that never chyngie forby the leid.*

Port o' Warren



## WALK

*Our bus puffs up the Whinny Hill,  
zigzags past Kirkbean, Bay of Carse,  
below the Riddlings of Creation,  
jolts confusedly past Loaningfoot,  
Mainsriddle, Linnet Hall, Mersehead, stops to  
let me out next to the gates of Heughs o Laggan.*

*Strolling down past Dinnings and Powbrade  
I jump over Cairngill Burn to reach The Smiddy,  
get a whim for rambling along the shore  
past Wattie's Nets, the Needle's Ee, Torrs Hill above  
and make for Port o' Warren, Blackneuk Craigs.*

*Thornkip Hill, the Broken Heugh, the Bogle Hole  
have no tourist signs or markers so by  
Gutcher's Isle and Tinker's Loup I'm thinking of  
the time we wrote maps with tongues,  
printed them on brain and eyes, knew well  
all routes and where they led in Galloway  
with nothing more than a chat or a glance,  
no need to read but just to understand and consider.*

*From Muscle Clauchan, Stanefauld, Craigie Knowes  
and Sluice it's not so far to Muckle Lands, no  
more than two miles on to White Hoose  
and The Scaur where the thought of beer  
and settling comfortably by the fireside  
of The Anchor makes me hurry along.*

*The walk's ongoing, backwards, forwards,  
over, above, below, across and through these streams  
and hillsides and ravines and paths we must give names to,  
have no claims to much beyond the need  
for making maps that never change except for the language.*

*This poem was first commissioned and exhibited by  
Wigtown Book Festival in 2019 as part of its The Lost  
Province of Galloway multimedia collaborative project.*

## Glossary of Scots

**Whin** – gorse | **Kirkbean** – body of land on which a church is built | **Carse** – low, fertile land adjacent to a river | **Riddlings** – siftings (from a sieve, or 'riddle') | **Loaning** – pathway | **Mains** – home farm of an estate | **Merse** – marshy land by an estuary | **Heughs** – crags, cliffs | **Powbrade** – broad head | **Dinnings** – loud noises | **Smiddy** – blacksmith's | **Wattie** – Walter | **Ee** – eye | **Blackneuk Craigs** – Blackcorner Rocks | **Bogle** – hobgoblin | **Gutcher** – grandfather | **Tinker's Loup** – Traveller's Leap | **Muscle Clauchan** – Mussel Hamlet | **Stanefauld** – stone layer | **Knowes** – low hills | **Sluice** – gate for controlling water flow | **Muckle** – big | **Hoose** – house | **The Scaur** – scaur is a rocky crag. The Scaur is the old name for the village of Kippford on the Solway Firth and is originally a Danish word.









Meikle Ross from the Mull of Ross

**R**ashy Field, Thunder Field, The Bents, Slech Field and Inks - the names of coastal fields have been passed down by generations of farmers and although the meaning has sometimes been lost, a little investigation can tell us about how people in the past viewed the place they farmed. Field-names can help us understand changes in the countryside, past farming practices and notable wildlife or landscape features.

As part of the National Lottery Heritage Fund Great Place Scheme, the 'PLACE in the Biosphere' Project - the Borge Field Name Project has successfully combined traditional survey and research techniques with modern media to help tell the story of their place and create resources for future generations to use.

The seeds of the Borge Field Name Project were sown by 'A PLACE in the Biosphere' talk about Borge by historian Professor Ted Cowan and place name enthusiast Michael Ansell. Local realisation that the local countryside was evolving as farms are merged and fields are changed provided the inspiration for the project. A plan was hatched by people living locally to gather field-names, map and analyse meanings and share the information to a wider audience.

Over 50 farmers, landowners and farmworkers were questioned and were keen to find out more about the names of fields. More than 800 fields have been mapped and transferred onto a painted map created by Ann Barbour. Some fields have had several name changes so nearly 1,000 names have been recorded and can be interrogated on an interactive map on the Borge website;  
<https://www.borge.org/borguemap/>

It is not surprising that the most common field-name on the coast is Shore Field, while other names can be classified under different headings.

#### Views

Lighthouse Field and Isle of Man Field are names that refer to landmarks that can be seen from the field.

#### Shore features

Thunder Field is located adjacent to Thunderhole Bay where a cavity on the shore creates a thunderous sound in rough seas.

#### Land use

Fields named Inks and Machar both refer to coastal pasture. Inks is derived from the Old Norse eng meaning meadow or outlying pasture and Machar is the Scots form of the Gaelic word machair meaning coastal land used for grazing.

#### Soil type

Slech Field must be a variant of the Scots word sleech which describes an oozy or slimey silt deposited on foreshores and probably refers to the soil as the shore was reclaimed as farmland. Sand Beds is a field-name which refers to the sandy soil of a field reclaimed from sand dunes.

#### Vegetation

Rashy Field and The Bents are field names that refer to vegetation where rashes is the Scots for rushes and bents is a Scots word to describe coarse grasses that usually grow on the coast or on moorland.





Elbe monument

# McMillan's Galloway, A Creative Guide by an Unreliable Local

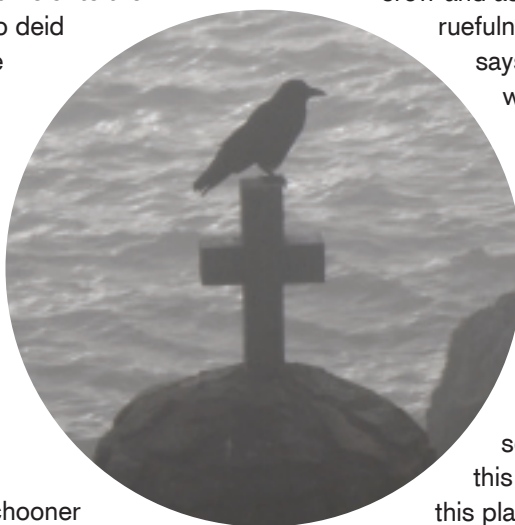
The best way to give you a flavour of Hugh McMillan's fascinating book, 'McMillan's Galloway, A Creative Guide by an Unreliable Local' is to feature some extracts that relate coastal tales.

## No Deid Yet: Two Galloway Memorials

The traditional response of a local 'auldheid' to the salutary greeting 'How are ye?' is 'No deid yet.' This sums up in just three words the indefatigability of the human spirit while simultaneously giving a glimpse of the depths of terrible suffering experienced by them in the course of their long existence. No deid yet could be also said to provide the inspiration for two interesting memorials in Galloway. Memorials are usually about dead people but some unusually buck this trend, commemorating some other thing, in these cases luck, and frugality.

Near Port o' Warren is a memorial to Captain Samuel Wilson. It reads: The Schooner Elbe Captain Samuel Wilson of Palnackie after providentially landing her crew here backed off the rocks and sank off Rascarrel 6 December 1866. You might read that as meaning the captain saved his crew before sacrificing himself

as the ship went down, therefore being well worthy of a nice granite stone, but in actual fact he survived along with the crew and as a consequence there's a kind of implicit ruefulness about this memorial. 'Providential', it says and seems to be adding, 'how lucky were you lot to be no deid yet?' Captain Wilson lived to the age of 94, by the way, and even then only died as a result of an accident in which he cut off his hand.



The other memorial is not far away, near Colvend School, a bench commemorating a couple called Sarah and Willie Robertson. I'd always thought I'd like a seat overlooking the sea as a memorial to me and I mentioned this to my companion while we were passing this place and he muttered, 'Aye, except he's no deid yet. When his wife passed away, he just got his name put on it too to save time.' Apparently Willie is still walking about, no deid yet, and so the bench is also a memorial to that great Scottish virtue, thrift.



## Away with the Fairies

A term, sometimes derogatory, used to describe someone with an unworldly aspect, or lacking in common sense, practicality or logic, as in 'Don't ask him, he's away with the fairies.'

Of course being away with the fairies was once a literal condition in Scotland, and especially in Galloway, one of Scotland's most fairy-infested parts, and the area of the country where, the legends agree, the fairies held their last strongholds. Infestation is rather a cruel term but it's certainly true that being away with the fairies was a mixed blessing. George Douglas, in his *Scottish Fairy and Folk Tales*, described Annandale as;

*the last Border refuge of those beautiful and capricious beings, the fairies. Many old people yet living ....continue to tell that in the ancient of days the fairies danced on the hill ... Their visits to the earth were periods of joy and mirth to mankind, rather than of sorrow and apprehension. They played on musical instruments of wonderful sweetness and variety of note, spread unexpected feasts, the supernatural flavour of which overpowered on many occasions the religious scruples of the Presbyterian shepherds.*

Powerful food indeed, to do that. The Corriedale fairies described by Douglas interbred with the locals in a kind of mixed race Brigadoon-like harmony. There are many other stories too of the fairies' benevolence to humans, especially in return for kindness. When the Knight of Myrton, Sir Godfrey McCulloch, received a visit from the King of the Fairies

complaining that a sewer he was having built was undermining the fairy kingdom, he immediately diverted it. This was a good move because the King of the Fairies turned up at Godfrey's execution in Edinburgh and spirited him away just before the axe. The classic story of the brownie Aiken Drum is another example of supernatural co-operation between the old folk and the new.

Many other sources show the fairies' dark side, however. The beautiful fairy girl of Cairnywellan Head near Port Logan, for instance, was a rose-complexioned 12 year old who could be seen dancing and singing wildly when fugitives of the Irish rebellion of 1798 were found in the Rhinns and summarily shot or hung by the militia. She disappeared for 50 years but couldn't contain her glee when the Potato Famine broke out and was soon out in the hills, again, dancing to celebrate the mounting body count. The story of the fairy boy of Borgue can be found in the records of the Kirk Session there. This boy would disappear for days or weeks on end, saying he had been with his 'people'. His grandfather sought help from a priest who banished the fairies. Thereafter the boy was shunned in the community, not because he'd been away with the fairies but because he'd got the help of a Catholic. Trust Dumfries and Galloway to have the only anti-Catholic fairy stories.

As Alastair Findlay so eloquently puts it "a journey through history and imagination, through hyper reality even. I learned more about the soul of Dumfries and Galloway in an afternoon with this book than through all the others I'd ever read."

To buy a copy of Hugh's book 'McMillan's Galloway, A Creative Guide by an Unreliable Local' recently published in paperback visit [McMillan's Galloway](http://McMillan's Galloway) — Luath Press — [www.luath.co.uk/hugh-mcmillan](http://www.luath.co.uk/hugh-mcmillan)

Cairnywellan head







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