

Bun-sgoil Shlèite/Gàrradh fiadh-bheatha

Tha an luchd-teagaisg agus na sgoilearan aig Bun-sgoil Shlèite air leasachadh a chur ris na seòmraichean ionnsachaidh aca le bhith a' cruthachadh gàrradh fiadh-bheatha aig an Sgoil aca.

An deidh dhan Bh. P. Stephen Twigg a' radh aig Seachdain talamh nan Sgoiltean ann an 2003 gun robh an talamh mun cuairt air sgoiltean na aite far am faodar cothroman air leth fhaighinn air tuise a thoirt do chlann de gach aois, comas agus gach neach eadar-dhealaichte a' reir an comais, air an t-saoghal a tha gan cuartachadh, thainig a' choimhearsnachd comhla airson a' phròiseact a thoirt gu buil.

Tha seo air an talamh mun Sgoil a' leasachadh, le bhith cruthachadh slighe shàbhailte dhan chlann bhon Sgoil agus bhon Sgoil-àraich gu cuid den ghàrradh (a' chiad ìre).

Bi a chuid eile de'n ghàrradh ga ghleidheadh nàdurach do na beathaichean agus dhan eunlaith a tha fuireach ann.

An nis gabhadh obair ceangailte ris a' chlàr-oideachais a' dheanamh a bharrachd air uine phriseil ag obair agus a faighinn tlachd ann. Chaidh airgid airson a' phròiseact seo fhaighinn bho Dualchas Nàdur na h-Alba, an Crannchur Nàiseanta, Iomairt ann am Foghlum agus neach prìobhaiteach. Thug luchd gnìomhachais ionadal taic le bhith toirt seachad stuth an asgaidh neo aig prìs ìosal. Bha Jewsons, R J MacLeod agus Urras Chlann Domhnaill am measg na bha taiceil.

Chaidh an obair a' dheanamh troimh gach am de'n t-seachdain, le pàrantan a' cuideachadh. Anns a' chiad àite bha mòran gearradh air ais ri dheanamh airson faighinn

troimh'n tiughad de dh'fhàs a bha air tachairt thairis air uine, cladhach ri dheanamh agus na ghabhadh de luibhean a ghlanadh as an talamh. Chaidh ceuman a chur air doigh agus talamh ullachadh airson na bha ri chur. Bha buidheann de dhaoine a Dùn-Bhreatainn bho Urras a' Phrionnsa ag obair ann airson latha agus rinn iadsan mòran den obair bu thrìomma.

Aig toiseach na bliadhna seo chaidh an cladhach mu dheireadh a dheanamh agus chaidh a' challaid agus na preasan a chur. Chaidh seòrsaichean de chraobhan agus preasan a thaghadh a bha nàdurach dhan sgìre, nam measg caorann, calltainn agus sgitheach. Tha iad sin cudthromach nam feum a thaobh biadh agus fasnachadh na bhios a' fuireach gu nàdurach anns a ghàrradh, mar eisimpleir buddleia, preas an dealan-dè.



Before



After

Sleat Primary School Wildlife Garden

The staff and pupils at Sleat Primary School have taken the classroom into the great outdoors by developing a wildlife garden in its grounds.

With Stephen Twigg MP saying that school grounds offer 'uniquely rich and rewarding learning experiences for children of all ages, backgrounds and abilities, giving them a greater understanding of the world around them' at School Grounds Week in 2003, the project pulled together the whole community.

It has improved the school grounds, to allow safe access for primary pupils and the adjoining nursery to at least part of the garden (phase 1). The rest of the garden is being managed as a wilder area to provide good habitats for the animals and

birds which have made their home there.

Curriculum-linked activities as well as a place to spend 'golden time', working in and enjoying the surroundings can now be carried out. The project was funded with help from Scottish Natural Heritage, Awards for All Scotland – a National Lottery Grant, Enterprise in Education and a private donor. Several local companies helped out with discounted or free materials, including Jewsons, RJ McLeod and Clan Donald Lands Trust.

Work was carried out during weekend and weekday action days with parents coming along to help out. Most of the initial work involved cutting back the huge

thickets of vegetation, digging over the area and removing as many 'weeds' as possible. The central bed and new footpaths were marked out, dug over and filled. A Princes' Trust group from Dumbarton spent a day on site and gratefully carried out much of the heavy work.

Early 2006 saw the final digging over of the beds and planting of the hedge, central beds and borders. Species chosen were native varieties and included rowan, hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn and dog rose. These varieties are of wildlife value in that they provide food or cover for wildlife, including species such as buddleia, the 'butterfly bush'.

KEALY WINS SNH POSTER COMPETITION

A primary six pupil from Inverloch Primary School and Nursery has won an SNH poster competition and raised funds for the Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team.

Kealy Tomlin was the eventual winner of the competition as each class at her school was asked to illustrate one of the themes suggested by various local sponsors.

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code was the theme suggested by SNH and an array of impressive,

colourful and informative posters showing people using the outdoors responsibly was produced by the pupils.

SNH area officer Lorraine Servant, who is based at the Fort William office, judged the entries with Kealy's emerging as the overall winner. The winning entries were displayed in a colour page spread in the Oban Times, and twenty per cent of each sponsor's advertising fees went to Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team.



Winning entry by Kealy Tomlin, P6



Pictured are members of Kintail Watch Club who recently planted native trees in an area of Morvich Farm which had previously been infested with non-native Rhododendron bushes. The new trees were purchased thanks to a donation made by the South West Ross Field Club. The Woodland Trust also provided The Kintail Watch Club with a hedge pack. The club will continue to visit the site regularly to maintain the new woodland.

WORKING IN A WADER WONDERLAND

To the residents of the Uists, some of the first signs of spring are the tumbling, displaying lapwings with their 'squeaky toy' calls; the parachuting redshank toot-tooting away; the drumming of snipe; the incessant 'kleeping' of oystercatchers; the trilling of hovering dunlin; and the piping ringed plovers that scuttle away ahead of you. It's the very evocative soundscape of the machair.

Whilst locals live with these sounds on an everyday basis, visitors – many of whom have never seen a

lapwing or a snipe – travel miles to see these Uist birds – collectively known as waders. Many visitors to the islands are taken aback by how widespread and 'tame' many of them are. Here it sometimes feels like it is the birds who tolerate people on their islands, rather than the other way round!

Breeding waders of Uist are indeed special. Some are now a rare sight on mainland Britain and a substantial proportion of the country's populations of these nest on the Uist machairs. They are also internationally

important, with two Special Protection Areas on the machair designated specifically for waders under the European Union Birds Directive.

When first surveyed in 1983, there were around 17,000 pairs of waders on the machair and crofts of the Uists and Barra. The most important species in conservation terms were dunlin and ringed plover. Over a quarter of all British breeding dunlin are to be found on Uist, and a similar proportion of ringed plover. On the machair at the west side of Loch Bee on South Uist there was an especially high density of nesting dunlin, the highest recorded anywhere in the World!

There are three reasons why these high populations occur here:

1. the natural habitats with a mix of wet grasslands, marshes, lochs and pools;
2. the rotational crofting agriculture and seasonal grazing which provide short grazed grassland and open cultivated and fallow habitats; and
3. the lack of ground predators on the islands.

Over generations, crofters have modified and improved an already suitable landscape into an even richer mosaic of habitats and wildlife.

However, the wader survey repeated in 1995 revealed a startling drop in breeding waders on both South Uist and Benbecula. More work in 2000 showed that wader numbers and breeding success still remained low, and that distribution, especially of dunlin, had altered significantly since 1983.

The reason for this drop was that predators such as hedgehogs, mink and ferrets had been introduced, and these were eating up the ground nesting birds eggs. Proactive measures by SNH and others has spearheaded action to eradicate these threats to ensure the Uists continues to be a unique and irreplaceable resource for its breeding waders, and that this in turn continues to contribute significantly to



Redshank

PHOTO: John Love



Lapwing

PHOTO: John Love

tourism in the islands. Hopefully, 20 years from now, locals and visitors alike will still be able to enjoy the sounds of spring due to the work currently being done to protect them. It is vital that these beautiful and special birds, often celebrated in Gaelic poetry and song, are safeguarded for future generations to come.