

Trustees on the 31st March 2010

Name

Carol Cooper (Chair)
Louise Lomax (Vice Chair)
John Box
John Dixon
Nick Downes
Jayne Greenaway
Steve Miller
Jean Jones
Sean Kelly
Bob Hill
Gina Rowe
Jacqui Seymour
Liz Swift
Michael Swift
Judy Walker
Neil Willcox

Nominated by:

Broseley Town Council
Telford & Wrekin Council
Shropshire Wildlife Trust
Telford & Wrekin Council
Barrow Parish Council
Telford & Wrekin Council
Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust
Shropshire Council
Telford & Wrekin Council
Sutton Maddock Parish Council
Community Trustee
Telford & Wrekin Council
Madeley Parish Council
The Gorge Parish Council
Small Woods Association
Shropshire Council

Trustees during the year but not at 31 March 2010

Veronica Cossons

Shropshire Wildlife Trust

Staff

Russell Rowley
Kate Chetwood
Cadi Price
Julia Dunnett
Carrie Hallam
Jackie Cornish
Andy Cutts

Manager
Company Secretary and Finance Officer
Telford Access to Nature Partnership Officer
Trainee Countryside Officer (from 12 April 2010)
Community Development Officer
Volunteer Officer
Countryside Projects Officer (to 5 March 2010)

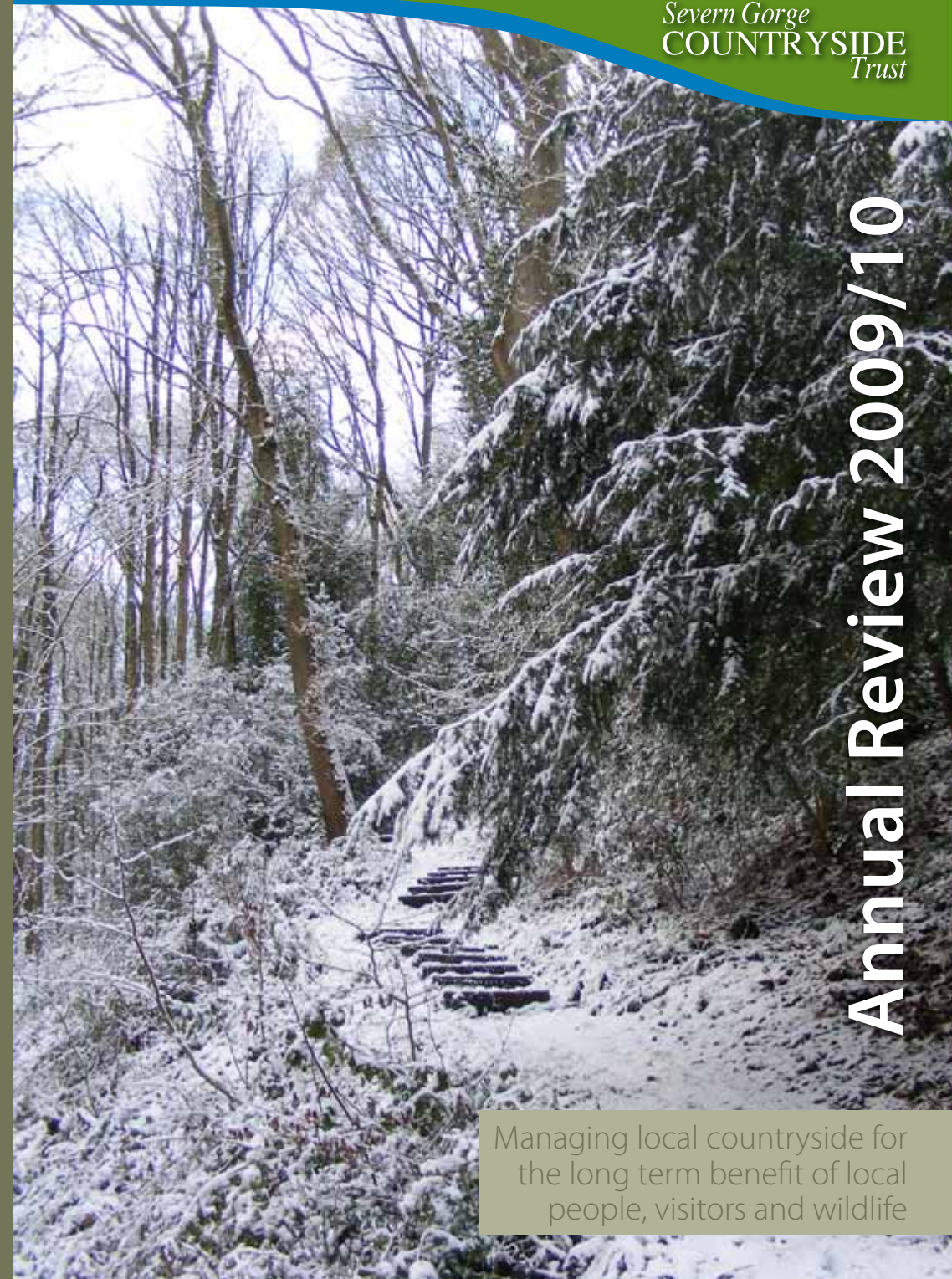
Where to find us

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Email: info@severngorge.org.uk

Website: www.severngorge.org.uk



Managing local countryside for
the long term benefit of local
people, visitors and wildlife

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust:

- Is a registered charity, founded in 1991
- Is the principal land manager within the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage site, having responsibility for over fifty per cent of the land for the long term benefit of local people, visitors, and wildlife
- Manages an internationally important landscape, which includes nationally important wildlife habitat full of key species such as orchids and scarce birds like the marsh tit. The landscape in itself is a key tourism attraction contributing to the region's economy
- Is unique in offering free public access over all of its 265 hectares of land, equivalent to 240 football pitches
- In addition to its staff, employs at least 25 local contractors on a regular basis thereby contributing to the local economy
- Manages 70 structures and over 25 kilometres of rights of way
- Manages a volunteer and community development programme which contributed over 3,400 hours of work this year and helped people reconnect with their local heritage and environment

Its main aims are:

- to record and maintain features of cultural and historical significance
- to ensure a landscape that retains its locally distinctive characteristics
- to ensure that key habitats and species on its land are sustainable and thriving
- to maintain a comprehensive network of paths and trails that give high quality access for informal recreation to all sectors of the community and visitors
- to provide a wider awareness and understanding of its work
- to encourage the local community to use its land and to become involved in its work

The Trust works to balance the conservation of landscape, wildlife and public access and to conserve the cultural value and character of the land it manages.

Foreword by Carol Cooper, SGCT Chair

The past year has been a time of great change within the Trust. We bade farewell to Andy Cutts (Countryside Officer), who set off on an adventure of a lifetime to Australia. Carrie Hallam our Community Development Officer went on maternity leave, Jackie Cornish joined us as the Volunteer Officer to run the volunteering programme for the year and last, but by no means least, we started building the Trust's new office on Darby Road.

Veronica Cossons also stood down as a Trustee and we welcomed John Box, a local ecologist, in her place. Veronica was one of the original Trustees who helped establish the Trust on firm ecological principles and we are indebted to her for her many years of service.

Despite the changes much has been achieved over the year. The Telford Access to Nature Partnership has begun to deliver improved access throughout Telford, which has encouraged many more people to visit their 'doorstep countryside'.

The centre spread of this year's review celebrates our work with local contractors. Over the past fifteen years the Trust has built up a good network of solid professionals who can be relied on to deliver high quality work. Being a contractor often involves buying and maintaining a variety of machinery, getting trained in many different skills, providing insurances, dealing with the public on site, as well as the often unpredictable British weather. But it also may involve running a small business, learning about book keeping, VAT returns, tendering for work, ordering materials, managing people, updating skills such as first aid and applying for grants. Much of this has to be done in the evenings and weekends. So our warmest thanks are due to all of these people. Your hard work is appreciated.

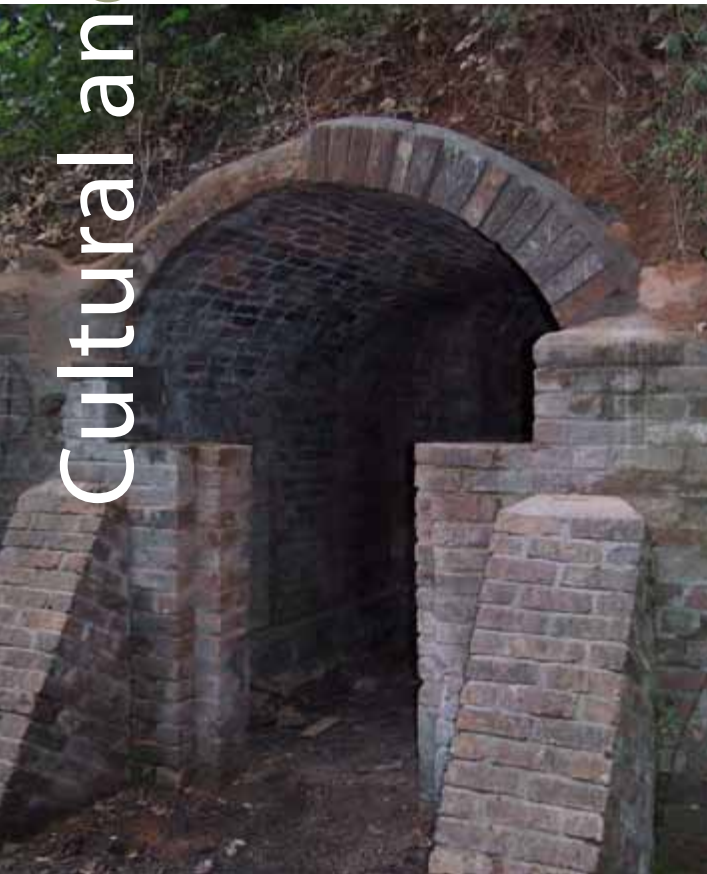
The Trust has also been successful in its Higher Level Stewardship application to continue to manage its wildflower meadows to a high standard, and is working with local people to build up the native breed sheep flock which is proving a great success. With its fabulous new, highly sustainable timber framed offices now completed on Darby Road, the Trust is well placed for the future. There are financial challenges ahead, in terms of the downturn in the rental income we receive from some of our business properties so careful monitoring of next year's budget will be vital.

We as Trustees will work with the staff to support them in meeting these challenges.

Thank you to everyone- staff, volunteers, Trustees and all those who help us in so many ways. Your support is vital to the continuation of the work we do.

'all features of cultural and historical significance are recorded and maintained'

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust
Development Strategy 2006-2011



Archaeological Site Alert System

The Trust has an archaeological site alert system which is consulted before undertaking any operational work on site. Archaeological surveys are commissioned whenever required to ensure no features of cultural and historical significance are damaged work and also to record anything found or uncovered for future reference. An archaeological survey was undertaken by Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust on the site of the Trust's new office headquarters. The historical research identified that the site had been in use as a meadow and woodland since at least 1849. The potential for artefacts associated with the industrial processes to be unearthed was a possibility and a watching brief was undertaken whilst intrusive groundworks were carried out in the construction of the new building.

Ice House – Lloyd Coppice

At the eastern end of Lloyds Coppice is the site of Madeley Wood Hall, a late 19th century manor house belonging to the Anstice family, local industrialists who operated the Madeley Wood Company. They owned mines, ironworks and brickworks and for some considerable time were influential figures in the history of the Gorge. Although the Hall was demolished in the 1920s,



Maintaining Hedgerows

Hedgerows are a distinctive feature of the local landscape as well as often being of historical significance. They are also valued by a wide range of birds, insects and other animals. This year we have regenerated 50 metres of neglected hedge at Sutton Wood through traditional practices such as laying or coppicing. Trust volunteers carried out the work under the guidance of Access and Habitat Management. Hazel hedge stakes and binders were taken from trees growing on Trust land in Loamhole Dingle. These are used to support the hedge as it grows. To maintain the hedge it will be re-laid in ten years.



Jiggers Bank

The raking drains, that were drilled deep into the lower rock face of Jiggers Bank as part of the stabilisation works carried out in 2008, draw out water and prevent pressure building up behind the concrete toe buttress. These raking drains require an annual check to ensure that they are functioning correctly and are not becoming blocked with debris. CAN Geotechnical Ltd who were the company that carried out the stabilisation works, undertake an annual monitoring of the drains which are inspected with an internal camera. It has been re-assuring to note that the annual reports have shown that the drains are working as they were intended.



Woodside Orchard Culvert

Following damage caused by the summer storms in 2007, work to repair Woodside Orchard Culvert was undertaken by Trust Contractor; Nick Watkins. A reinforced concrete pad was laid in front of the grills and an additional section of grill was added to prevent access to the culvert. This culvert carries water from New Pool under the upper Coalbrookdale area and discharges it into Upper Furnace Pool. Additional works are required to repair this structure and the Trust is currently working in partnership with Telford & Wrekin Council, the Environment Agency and Network Rail to pull together a larger tender package for this and other works within the watercourses project.

there are surviving remains of the former cold stores. In the days before refrigerators, many of the more wealthy families constructed ice houses near to a pond. These were typically sunk below ground level or set into a hillside, built of brick or stone insulated with straw and mounded with earth or thatch. If filled with ice from the frozen winter ponds the ice house was able to keep it frozen for up to two years! The ice was then available for domestic purposes especially

keeping food fresh during the summer months. The remains of the cold stores are one of the structures that the Trust is responsible for conserving. Unfortunately during 2009; the cold stores were being abused by vandals who were lighting fires, leaving litter and graffiti. The front of the arch was deteriorating and 2 internal cracks were widening. The structure was inspected by Telford & Wrekin Council's Structural Engineers who advised that work needed to be undertaken to repair

the front of the brick arch and repointing works. Local contractor, Nick Watkins started work in May to carry out these works, rebuilding and pinning most of the front arch and removing an area of laurel surrounding the structure to try to prevent antisocial behaviour. This work is particularly challenging because the structure is slowly moving. This movement is being closely monitored by Telford & Wrekin Council's Structural Engineers.

Landscape

‘a landscape that retains its locally distinctive characteristics’

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Tree Maintenance & Safety Work

The Trust has an ongoing programme of tree maintenance and safety work. A professional arborist, Dougald Purce is contracted to assess tree condition and recommend the appropriate work required. Using an external specialist provides an independent appraisal of Trust trees alongside roads and key footpaths. The Trust remains responsible for prioritising and implementing all work recommendations. If any trees are considered dangerous, then work is carried out immediately. Other recommendations are scheduled accordingly.

This year the independent survey recommended work at Bower Yard, Ladywood and Dale/Vane Coppice where a large group of dead birch next to the path were felled.

Higher Level Stewardship

The Countryside Stewardship Scheme which the Trust embarked on in 1999 came to an end in 2009. In order to continue with the Trust's aim to conserve and enhance the meadows and pastures under its management, Trust staff have been working hard to enter the land into a 'Higher Level Stewardship Scheme (HLS) with Natural England. HLS involves more complex types of management and agreements are tailored to local circumstances. HLS applications will be assessed against specific local targets and agreements will be offered where they meet these targets and represent good value for money. If the application is successful, the HLS scheme will continue for 10 years.

Ragwort control

Common ragwort is a plant that is toxic to livestock and horses and is classified as an 'injurious weed' under the Weeds Act of 1959. It is not an offence to have these weeds growing on your land, however, the Trust is responsible for controlling the plants that do grow on its land. This year the Trust ran a trial using extract of Citronella on ragwort against hand pulling with 'Lazy Dog' tools. The results obtained with the extract of Citronella were good and our overall conclusion was that this was a convenient way to remove ragwort from infested grazing pastures, requiring much less effort than pulling or digging and giving comparable if not better results.

Woodland Improvement Grant

This year the Trust was successful in applying for a Woodland Improvement Grant from the Forestry Commission for Lydebrook Dingle. A Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG) funds capital investment in woodlands, over an agreed period, to create, enhance and sustain an increase in the quantity and quality of public benefits delivered. Lydebrook Dingle is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and work has been carried out to reduce the amount of sycamore trees (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) in the canopy and understorey. Sycamore is classified as both non-native and 'invasive' and this has led to concerns of its impacts on native and ancient woodland. The reduction should allow other native trees to naturally regenerate.

Coalbrookdale Water System

Coalbrookdale lies at the confluence of two streams making their way to the River Severn. It is this natural occurrence which assisted the large scale manufacture of iron products in the Ironbridge Gorge. The use of water power, was a vital factor in the growth of the iron industry. All year round working only became possible with the construction of a series of pools.

Not a single pool in Coalbrook-dale is natural. They have all been dug out by teams of men with only horses and carts to carry away the tonnes of spoil. Once the pool was dug, the same horses would then begin to bring in cart loads of clay to make a waterproof lining to the pool. To make sure the thick layer of clay covering the pool was watertight it was trampled or 'puddled' by gangs of men. Once puddled, it was imperative the clay was not

allowed to dry out – a single crack could empty the pool, wasting the precious water and the power it held. Today, the pools that were once central to the hive of industrial activity in the Ironbridge Gorge now form part of an idyllic landscape that offers recreational pursuits for the local residents and visitors alike. They have also provided a haven for wildlife. The management of these pools is vital as unless constantly managed, they

would have a limited life. Silt carried by streams collects in the bottom of the pool, and is also trapped by vegetation growing at the pool edge. Over a number of years the silt builds up, the pool becomes shallower, changing to marshy ground, finally becoming dry land. The removal of the silt is therefore a prime task carried out in conjunction with Telford & Wrekin Council who manage the Coalbrookdale Watercourses Project.



‘ensure key habitats and species are sustainable and thriving’

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Otters

The Otter *Lutra lutra* is a secretive species of river and coastal habitats. Generally nocturnal in habit, Otters frequent the River Severn without being noticed by the majority of locals and visitors to the area. A closer look along the riverbank can provide evidence of their presence. Footprints, spraints (Otter droppings), and signs of feeding can be found in the form of empty mussel shells. However, this evidence is not to be mistaken for the non-native American Mink *Neovison vison* which competes, directly and indirectly, with Otters for food and habitat. During the floods of November 2009 a female Otter was seen hunting for prey during daylight. It turned out that she had two cubs with her on the riverbank at Jackfield.



Balwen Sheep

Church Road Fields, Coalbrookdale, are relatively small in size yet are particularly important for biodiversity. Amongst the intimate and historic landscape of Coalbrookdale this site is rich in species of flora and associated fauna. In line with the site management brief we would like to manage the site as close to a traditional hay meadow as possible. However, due to the steepness of the site it is difficult to cut the sward safely for hay. Because of the difficulty associated with using machinery on site the Trust decided to introduce livestock to graze the sward. The Trust has secured the services of a small flock of 18 Balwen Welsh Mountain Sheep from Littlehales Environmental.



Workhouse Coppice Survey

An ornithological survey was carried out at Workhouse Coppice and Benthall Edge this year, the results obtained showed a marked increase in the number of breeding birds within the area of cleared holly and thinned trees from 53 to 89. This result appears to strongly vindicate the Trust's approach to managing ancient woodland for both timber products and wildlife. The results were particularly exciting as a pair of breeding Spotted Flycatchers was recorded for the first time on Trust sites as well as two breeding pairs of Marsh Tit, an endangered 'red data book' species.



Butterfly Monitoring

This year butterfly monitoring was carried out by expert, Ian Cheeseborough. White letter hairstreak was recorded on heather in Lloyds Coppice. The White-letter Hairstreak is one of our more-elusive butterflies as it flits high in the treetops. It gets its name from the letter "W" that is formed from a series of white lines found on the underside of the hindwings. Elm is their sole foodplant and this species suffered as a result of Dutch elm disease in the 1970s and early 1980s. There was great concern that this species of butterfly might become extinct in the British Isles as a result. The good news is that several new colonies have been discovered which gives new hope for the future of this butterfly.

Bat Survey

Bats are amazing mammals, and an important part of our natural environment. There are 18 species of bat in the UK (17 of which are known to be breeding here). British Bats and their roosts are protected by law as their numbers have dramatically decreased over the last decade. Loss of natural habitat and a decline in insects to feed on are both reasons for this decline. Of the 18 species of bat in the UK, two are listed as 'Vulnerable' and three as 'Near Threatened'.

Bats are a sign of a healthy, diverse environment because they use all aspects of the landscape from parks and gardens, pastures and hedgerows to woodlands and wetlands.

This year the Trust commissioned a bat survey to be carried out by Churton Ecology, the objective of this survey was to identify whether bats were present on Trust sites and to identify which species of bat were using the sites. The results were encouraging and show a great deal of activity on Trust sites with several of the

18 UK species represented. It was particularly exciting to discover a maternity roost of Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) bats in a roof space adjacent to Sutton Wood; 413 bats were counted leaving the roof to forage for food one evening during July. The Trust hopes to continue to undertake surveys every few years to monitor the presence of bats on its land. The data collected will help to identify any rapid declines in the population but surveying will need to continue over a long period in order to ascertain whether there are long term

trends or simply short term fluctuations. The surveys will also enable the Trust to select conservation priorities and update management plans for sites so that resources are directed where they are most needed. Summer Bat Walks are a great way for the whole family to experience bats and this year the Trust ran a successful walk and presentation by bat expert, Peta Marshall. The walk was attended by 25 people and the children that attended found the night vision monocular 'cool'. Praise indeed!

'a network of paths and trails which gives high quality access for informal recreation'

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Graded Walking Routes

The combination of the A2N project – which aims to encourage people to get out into green spaces - and our recently installed finger-posts, has led to the beginnings of a project to develop way-marked, circular routes on some of the SGCT land. These walks will be colour coded and graded in terms of length and accessibility. A small group of volunteers is plotting the routes, identifying where further signage is needed and aiming to come up with a range of walks which vary in length and ease. Look out for new way-markers in Dale Coppice and Lincoln Hill later in 2010 which will confidently guide you in a loop back to your starting point.



Guided Walks Books

Everyone is welcome to enjoy and walk in all of the Trust's sites. To encourage more people to visit our sites and enjoy their natural beauty we have published several guided walks books so that people can find out more about the forces that have shaped these sites – natural and man -made. Each book offers a number of self- guided walks that offer opportunities to explore the history of the area as well as the diversity of landscape, geology and wildlife. All the books can be purchased from the Trust Office, and are also available at Ironbridge Gorge Museum Sites, Tourist information and some local shops.



Dale Coppice Steps

During March, if you were walking through Dale Coppice woodlands, you may have come across our hard-working team of volunteers constructing a new flight of forty steps on a popular walking route which takes in the Sabbath Walks and The Rotunda. Replacing a set on worn-out steps, twenty volunteers worked tirelessly over 4 volunteering days to complete the project. Working in small groups, old steps were removed, new steps built and installed, and finally completed with staples for improved walking grip. Step building is a popular task with our very supportive volunteers and their skills were demonstrated with the overall finished project.



The Rope Walk

If you have enjoyed a peaceful walk along the Ropewalk, Coalbrookdale, in the past few months, you may have seen an access improvement at the gated entrance on Darby Road. This was initiated by a local lady, Mrs Margaret Bunting, who lived near to the Ropewalk and asked the Trust if it was possible to widen the opening to enable her to take her dog for a walk while using her electric scooter. With funding from Telford Access to Nature, this was accomplished by removing a barrier from just inside the entrance. For several months, Margaret has been able to enjoy daily walks along the track leading towards the meadow and Lydebrook Dingle.

Access to Nature Partnership

Following a successful grant application to the Big Lottery, (administered by Natural England) this year has seen the launch of the Telford Access to Nature Partnership. This partnership is made up of Severn Gorge Countryside Trust, Telford & Wrekin Council, The Small Woods Association, Telford & Wrekin Community Health Service, The Gorge Parish Council and Shropshire Wildlife Trust. The objectives of this Partnership are to improve

environments to enable more people to have access to high quality green spaces for leisure and physical activities; to engage and involve communities, particularly those communities that have experienced exclusion from green space, such as disabled people. By tackling issues around access, people will have greater opportunities to make healthy choices. By improving access to natural spaces and conservation activities, this project will contribute to these opportunities.

The Access to Nature project aims to engage and involve almost 2,000 people from priority communities, and individuals experiencing social exclusion with local green spaces. To achieve this aim, the project will provide a series of opportunities to reconnect with nature. These will include volunteering activity sessions, training for people in OCN (Open College Net-work) certificates, Green Gym sessions, Forest Schools and environmental arts activities for the whole family. Several access audits have been undertaken by

volunteers this year. The volunteers received training from the Fieldfare Trust who work with people with disabilities and countryside managers to improve access to the countryside for everyone. The results of the audits will be used to determine which sites are suitable for disabled access and which will benefit from improvement work to make them more user friendly. To encourage people to access their local countryside, Shropshire Wildlife Trust will be running arts events, celebrating the environment and promoting sites to visit.

Contractors Working in the Gorge

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust regularly uses over 25 local contractors to carry out a variety of work on its land. From landscape maintenance to tree surgery to repairs of historic brickwork, each self-employed contractor brings their own skills and knowledge to the work. Some of these contractors have worked for the Trust since its creation in 1991 and have built up a wealth of knowledge about the sites that the Trust manages.

Without the skills and knowledge of these contractors the Trust would not be able to fulfil many of the day to day tasks required to manage the complex nature of the land in the gorge. The Trust would like to thank all of its contractors, past and present for the high standard of work that they have given over the years. Some of the contractors have managed to take time out from their busy schedules to provide us with an insight into the work they do, and what they enjoy about it.

We would also like to mention, Alex Howden, Brian Corfield, Benbow Brothers, Nathan Home, Samco, Derek Asbury, Dave Gwilt and all the other contractors who have worked for us over the years.



JP Brayford of Access & Habitat Management has worked for the Trust for over 12 years

Most Memorable Job:

"One of the most memorable and satisfying jobs for the Trust was working on the long flight of steps up Benthall Edge, this was hard work over two summers, working alongside other contractors and leading BTCV working holidays"

Favourite spot in the Gorge:

I tend to prefer the more remote or hidden areas; the southern end of Sutton Wood and Loamhole/Lydebrook spring immediately to mind.



Peacock Landscapes Ltd has worked for the Trust 15 years

Most Memorable Job:

Over the years we have very much enjoyed working on the Trust sites, which we find to be more peaceful and rewarding than many of our other contracts.

Favourite spot in the Gorge:

We cannot choose any site as a particular favourite as they all have different characteristics. Over the years of looking after your areas we have tried to vary our work to aid more growth of wild flowers within the grass, especially near the Shakespeare Public House where due to the river flooding we were late in grass cutting because the area was so wet, but the wild flowers in the spring made the most marvellous display.



Rob Littlehales from Littlehales Environmental has worked for the Trust for 17 years

Most Memorable Job:

"There have been many memorable jobs, but one of my favourites was working on the benches for 'The Workers Walks' in 2003, working with Care Ironbridge was also a great experience."

Favourite spot in the Gorge:

'The Rotunda, simply for the views and the peace and quiet!'



Nick Watkins from NW Tree Services has worked for the Trust for 10 years

Most Memorable Job:

Lots really, one of them has to be Workhouse Coppice and Benthall Edge felling work. Another would be installing a gully and culvert in Sutton Wood.

Favourite spot in the Gorge: Sutton Wood as it is a really nice wood and undisturbed.



Ira Jones has worked for the Trust for 10 years

Most Memorable Job:

"There has been too many to choose from really, I have enjoyed many of them for different reasons".

Favourite spot in the Gorge: Pattens Rock Quarry as I spent some time there helping to open it up. It is such a beautiful spot, really quiet and peaceful. I think it is gorgeous when the orchids are flowering.



Sam Rickards has worked for the Trust for 7 years

Most Memorable Job:

Planting out Lime Trees propagated from ancient specimens alongside the Rope Walk, and climbing an enormous ash tree at the base of Benthall Edge, in order to remove a torn limb.

Favourite spot in the Gorge: Loamhole/Lydebrook Dingle, its plunging ravines and ancient sweet chestnut stools give the site an unusual quality that doesn't feel like home to me.

'a wider awareness and understanding of the Trust's work'

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust
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Open Evening

This year's Annual Open Evening was at Coalbrookdale Primary School, over 70 local people attended. The main speaker for the evening was Peter Crow from Forest Research, 'An aerial survey of archaeological features of the Gorge' was the topic for the main speech. The Trust Manager gave a presentation of the work the Trust had carried out over the previous 12 months and there was plenty of opportunity for residents to ask questions and speak to staff and trustees about any issues or concerns they might have about any aspect of the Trust's work. The venue for the evening changes annually to provide equal opportunity for all local residents to have easy access to meetings.



Trees of Knowledge

The Trees of Knowledge community group was set up in 2007 to provide opportunities for people to learn about, understand, input their own knowledge and become involved in the long term management of the Trust's land. This year a meeting was held at the Green Wood Centre and on site to explain the work that was being planned for Oilhouse Coppice under the Woodland Improvement Grant that the Trust had been successful in applying for from the Forestry Commission. This work will concentrate on removing *Rhododendron ponticum* which will shade out young tree seedlings, as well as opening up areas to provide habitat for woodland birds.



Coalbrookdale Arboretum

This year the Access to Nature Partnership Officer had the opportunity to work with the 'Friends of Coalbrookdale Arboretum', this group of enthusiastic volunteers is working hard to restore the arboretum in Coalbrookdale which has been sadly neglected over many years. The area has become overgrown and in many places inaccessible. The Access to Nature Partnership Officer carried out an access audit which gave recommendations for improving the accessibility of the paths, including resurfacing of the access routes, adding resting places, introducing signage, information and interpretation of the Arboretum in different formats.



Ironbridge Woodland Products

The Trust manages its land on sustainable principles and uses timber produced from its woods to support community projects and its own work through the Ironbridge Woodland Products project which adds social and environmental value to Trust timber. Ironbridge Woodland Products provides sawn timber, free of charge, to a series of local schools and colleges for student courses and activities. This year the Trust has also been able to use timber from its own woods in the building of the new Trust office in Darby Road. Timber produced through woodland management is sawn using a mobile sawmill, transforming the trees into planks, which can then be used by the project partners.



'Lookerers' Scheme

The introduction of sheep to graze meadows at Crackshall Lane and other sites has led to the launch of a new project. In a spin off from the Trees of Knowledge group, a number of people stepped forward to be trained up as 'Lookerers' – volunteer shepherds who will check on the sheep on a rota basis and will inform SGCT of any problems or issues they notice. The scheme helps the Trust to keep a check on the livestock and benefits the volunteers in terms of learning

more about our meadow management systems as well as shepherding.

The scheme began in earnest in May when a training course was held. Talks were given by a livestock welfare lecturer from Harper Adams College and a local vet, providing lots of classroom information as well as hands on experience in the field.

Two types of native sheep are grazing the meadows; a flock of about 50 Balwen and Hill Radnor sheep have been provided by Rob & Alison Littlehales and 14 Soay sheep provided by Harry & Gill Pettit.

Balwen Welsh Mountain Sheep originate from one small area of Wales – the Tywi valley. Because of this, during the disastrous winter of 1947, the breed was nearly wiped out. The breed was at its lowest ebb, with only one ram surviving. It is not surprising therefore that Balwen Sheep, as a breed are considered 'at risk' by the Rare Breed Sheep Trust.

The Soay sheep is a primitive breed of domestic sheep that originated from a population of feral sheep on the 250-acre island of Soay in the St. Kilda Archipelago, about 65

kilometres from the Western Isles of Scotland.

The seven volunteer lookerers now visit our native breed sheep on a regular basis and observe for signs of discomfort or potential dangers. To date the scheme has been running very successfully, with each of the volunteer lookerers visiting the sheep on a weekly basis, providing an excellent base for maintaining our sheep welfare. Over the coming months we are hoping to involve the lookerers in more hands on activities with the sheep, for example, hoof trimming and shearing.

'a local community that enjoys and uses the Trust's land and is involved in its work'

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Guided Walks

To encourage people to use the network of paths and trails throughout the Gorge the Trust runs a variety of guided walks throughout the year. They continue to be very popular with both local residents and visitors alike. In conjunction with the World Heritage Site Festival the Trust led a 14 mile walk around the Gorge which gave participants the opportunity to discover many miles of footpaths within the woodlands. Other themes throughout the year have included a geology walk with Shropshire Geology Society across Benthall Edge. Conservation walks have covered glow worms, bats, butterflies and birds.

8 guided walks were organised by the Trust and attended by 96 individuals.

Events

The Trust continues to work with other organisations to support local community events which attract a great many visitors. Supporting such events allows the Trust to reach many people that might not be aware that they are able to use and enjoy the Trust's land. Events the Trust supported included the Ironbridge Gorge Walking Festival, the World Heritage Site Festival, Madeley Green Day and Apple Day.

At Madeley Green Day and Apple Day children had the opportunity to make clay mobiles using natural materials and adults completed surveys regarding access on to the Trust's land which provided valuable information for the access audits that were undertaken.

Forest Schools

Since the 1990s, Forest Schools within the UK have grown steadily within school grounds and local woodlands engaging with young children. The Telford Access to Nature Partnership aims to engage children and teaching staff from local schools in the priority communities offering the Forest School initiative as a new experience to reconnect with nature while learning new skills and gaining increased confidence and motivation.

Telford Access to Nature Forest School will be managed by the Green Wood Centre. Initially, a year-long programme will be introduced to 4-5yr old children in primary schools in Woodside and Donnington, two of Access to Nature's priority communities.

Green Gym

Via our volunteering project we have been able to host 21 Green Gym sessions on our sites this year. Telford Green Gym is a Community Health Service project that provides a fantastic opportunity for people to improve their physical or mental health as well as their local environment. The Green Gym offers an alternative to conventional methods of exercise to all ages and abilities. Local Green Gym volunteers have contributed to several of our projects this year including the steps at the Rotunda and Sutton Wood and scrub clearance at Patten's Rock Quarry and Oil House Coppice.

Volunteering in the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site continues to flourish with the implementation of 'Telford Access to Nature', funded for 3 years by Natural England and the Big Lottery Fund. This funding has enabled the volunteering project to continue. Every Thursday, local people come together to put their skills to projects within the woodlands and meadows. Our current and loyal group of volunteers have had training in hedge-laying and some attended an OCN Coppicing course at the Green Wood Centre, funded by

Telford Access to Nature. New people have been recruited over the past 12 months, several of whom now attend regularly.

The weekly programme, managed by the Volunteer Co-ordinator, is varied and available to all who wish to volunteer. The projects undertaken are integral in improving the access to this local countryside: step building in Dale Coppice, guided walks by local specialists, heathland and woodland management, bat box making and their installation.

Several of our volunteers have been trained by the Fieldfare Trust in access audit training. These volunteers together with people from throughout Telford have formed the User Group and have utilised their skills in auditing woodlands and green places throughout Telford in order to improve walking routes and to remove physical barriers in order to make the natural environment more accessible to all.

The Trees of Knowledge group is made up of a variety of local people and

volunteers keen to learn and share in the management of the Trust. Meetings are held quarterly and are usually site visit based.

This year the Trust took the Trees of Knowledge Group around Oilhouse Coppice to explain why work was being planned to remove the Rhododendron, Poplar, Sycamore and Beech under a Forestry Commission funded Woodland Improvement Grant. This work is aimed at improving the woodland for birds.

Summary Statement of Severn Gorge Countryside Trust's Finances

This is a short financial summary taken from the full audited financial statements for the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010.

If you would like to see a copy of the full Auditor's Report and Financial Statement, it is available on our website:

www.severngorge.org.uk

Or printed copies can be obtained by writing to:

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust,
Darby Road
Coalbrookdale
Telford TF8 7EP

(01952) 433880

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES for the year ended 31st March 2010	General Fund	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2010	Total Funds 2009
£	£	£	£	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES					
INCOMING RESOURCES FROM GENERATED FUNDS					
Rents Received	241,407	—	—	241,407	305,757
Grants	37,979	—	78,903	116,882	337,992
ACTIVITIES TO GENERATE FUNDS					
Investment Income	1,533	6,508	—	8,041	25,228
Other Income	695	10,300	—	10,995	1,484
Total Incoming Resources	281,614	16,808	78,903	377,325	670,461
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
COSTS OF GENERATING FUNDS					
Costs of generating voluntary income	4,767	—	—	4,767	4,760
CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES					
Woodland/Countryside Management	190,916	2,652	—	193,568	163,677
Access	973	989	73,976	75,938	51,254
Community Projects	40,797	383	5,020	46,200	459,081
GOVERNANCE COSTS	17,079	971	—	18,050	18,391
Total Resources Expended	254,532	4,995	78,996	338,523	697,163
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES BEFORE TRANSFERS	27,082	11,813	(93)	38,802	(26,702)
Transfers between Funds	(77,174)	69,777	7,397	-	-
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR	(50,092)	81,590	7,304	38,802	(26,702)
OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES					
Gains/(Losses) on investments - realised	431	—	—	431	(18,528)
Gains/(Losses) on investments - unrealised	—	23,420	—	23,420	(25,658)
Pension Scheme Actuarial gains/(losses)	(76,000)	—	—	(76,000)	27,000
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	(125,661)	105,010	7,304	(13,347)	(43,915)
BALANCES BROUGHT FORWARD AT 31ST MARCH 2009	197,388	489,513	117,477	804,378	848,293
BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD AT 31ST MARCH 2010	71,727	594,523	124,781	791,031	804,378

BALANCE SHEET as at 31st March 2010	2010	2009
	£	£
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible Assets	286,784	51,921
Investments	244,315	209,513
	531,099	261,434
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	69,643	27,403
Investments	350,165	445,906
Cash at Bank and in Hand	40,236	155,278
	460,044	628,587
CREDITORS – amounts falling due within one year	(39,952)	(7,961)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	420,092	620,626
Pension Scheme Funding deficit	(160,160)	(77,682)
NET ASSETS	791,031	804,378
FUNDS:		
General Fund	71,727	197,388
Designated Funds	570,595	489,005
Restricted Funds	124,781	117,477
Revaluation Reserve	23,928	508
MEMBERS' FUNDS	791,031	804,378

Grants to help us with our work

Thank you to the Heritage Lottery Fund, The Big Lottery in conjunction with Natural England (Access to Nature) Defra (Countryside Stewardship Scheme, Single payment scheme) the Primary Care Trust, Alcoa and the Forestry Commission for the grants that we have received this year. Without their support and assistance a lot of the Trust's activities would not have been possible.

Above all a big thank you to our volunteers, visitors, staff and Trustees.

TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	Generating Voluntary Income £	Woodland/countryside management £	Access £	Community Projects £	Governance Costs £	Total 2010 £	Total 2009 £
Direct Costs	—	100,091	37,331	14,438	—	151,860	410,204
Employee Costs	4,767	76,681	32,343	29,338	5,461	148,590	156,069
Insurance	—	3,634	1,355	524	—	5,513	5,140
Transport	—	1,649	615	238	—	2,502	2,762
Office Costs & other costs	—	8,525	3,179	1,230	1,437	14,371	18,295
Trust Support	—	-	-	-	3,131	3,131	1,898
Professional Costs	—	-	-	-	8,021	8,021	8,531
Depreciation	—	2,988	1,115	432	—	4,535	7,971
Exceptional Item: Office Project write off	—	—	—	—	—	—	86,293
	4,767	193,568	75,938	46,200	18,050	338,523	697,163

