

Trustees on the 31st March 2011

Name

Carol Cooper (Chair)
Louise Lomax (Vice Chair)
John Box
John Dixon
Nick Downes
Jayne Greenaway
Steve Miller
Jean Jones
Clive Mollett
Bob Hill
Gina Rowe
Jacqui Seymour
David Davies
Maureen Bragg
Judy Walker
Carolyn Healy

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 2011

Sean Kelly
Michael Swift
Liz Swift
Neil Wilcox

Telford & Wrekin Council
The Gorge Parish Council
Madeley Parish Council
Shropshire Council

Staff

Russell Rowley
Cadi Price
Kate Chetwood
Julia Dunnett
Nathan Morris

Manager
Telford Access to Nature Partnership Officer
Company Secretary and Finance Officer
Trainee Countryside Officer (to 1 July 2011)
Trainee Countryside Officer (from 1 August 2011)

Where to find us

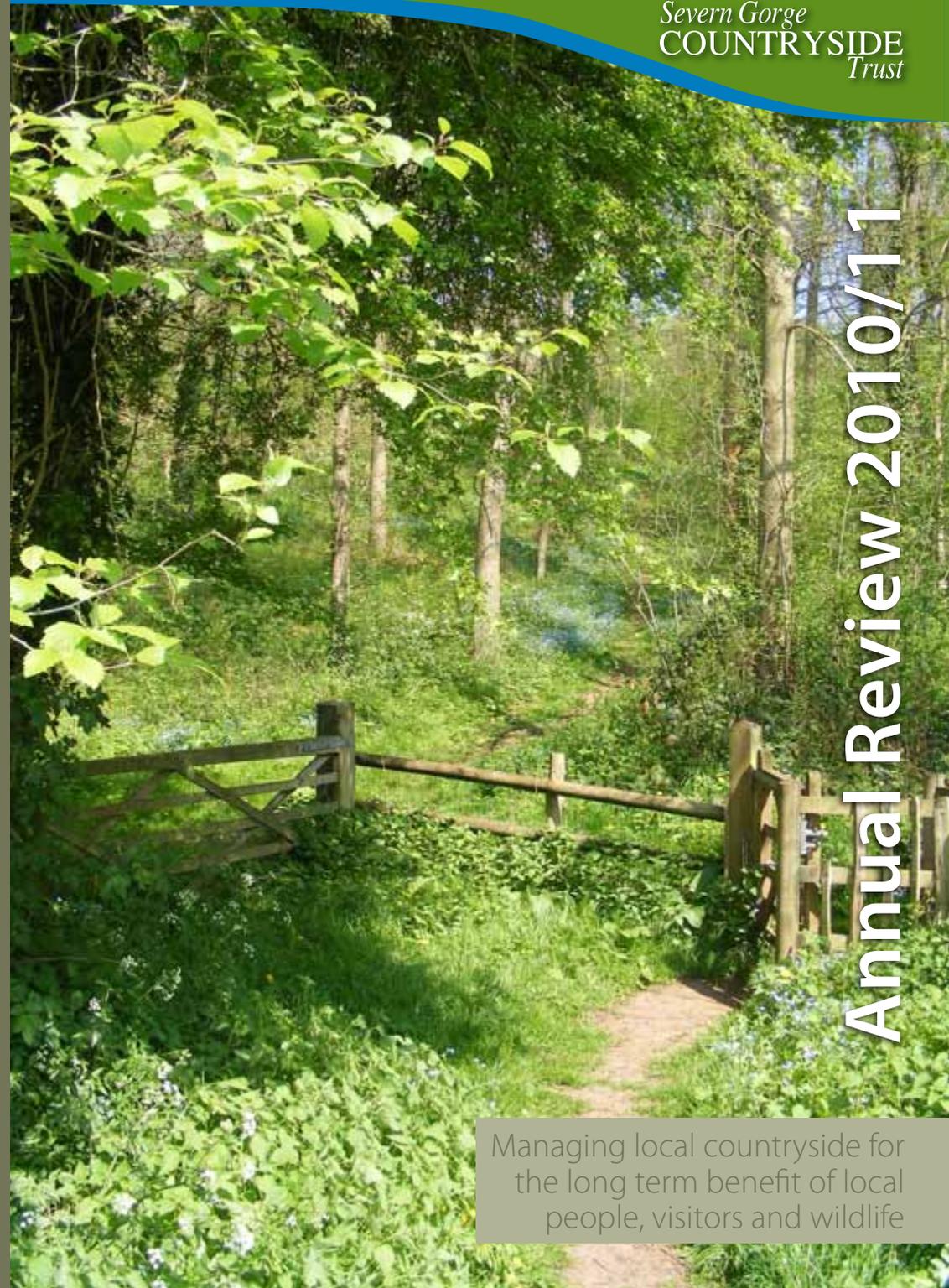
Severn Gorge Countryside Trust
Darby Road
Coalbrookdale
Telford
TF8 7EP (registered office)

Telephone: 01952 433880

Email: info@severngorge.org.uk

Website: www.severngorge.org.uk

Registered Charity No: 1004508



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 at risk 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 288 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

2010/11 was another busy and successful year for the Severn Gorge Countryside Trust.

The year saw the completion of our fabulous new timber framed highly sustainable new office and volunteer base in July, which went on to win 3 awards, including overall winner at the Shropshire LABC Building Excellence Awards. The move has meant that the Trust's staff are able to carry out their professional roles even more efficiently. Trustees finally have a dedicated meeting space which has already been put to excellent use in training our wonderful volunteers, as well as being used by the Shropshire Community Health Service and other groups.

As with everyone else, SGCT is not immune from the severe financial downturn in the economy and our core income from rental properties has been severely affected this year. With sound financial management and reserves which have been carefully built up over many years, SGCT has been able to produce a balanced budget. My thanks are due to Kate Chetwood, our Finance Officer, who works so hard behind the scenes with the rest of the team to professionally manage the Trust finances. The Trust has also managed to trim its annual costs through more efficient working, though this has meant Trust staff taking on more workload, which we will keep under review.

The Telford Access to Nature Partnership continues to flourish, thanks to an excellent Partnership which we Chair and to Cadi's very hard work, together with Bryony Carter, Matt Beech, Cliff Hallam and Helen Howes. The targets have been exceeded in the second year of the three year programme and 18 sites and their local people throughout Telford have benefitted.

Within the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site we have been taking this Community Development Work to the next level, with SGCT volunteers taking an increasing role in biological surveying, managing the sheep flocks working with local graziers Harry and Gill Pettit and Rob and Allison Littlehales. They are also taking an increasing role in managing Maws and Shakespeare meadows cutting the hay by scythe the traditional way.

This will be my last introduction as I am stepping down as a Trustee after sixteen years service, the last five as Chair. I have greatly enjoyed working with the Trust and would like to wish its Trustees and Staff every success for the future.

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

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust
Development Strategy 2006-2011



Bower Yard Lime Kiln

Bower Yard Limekiln was built during the mid-1800's and was used to produce 'quicklime' a vital product used in agriculture and building. The limekiln had started to fall into a bad state of disrepair and the Trust was keen to conserve it. Via a successful funding bid, the Trust was able to work with Telford & Wrekin Council to undertake repairs on the limekiln. The work carried out included drilling and grouting anchors to support the arch, stitching the arch brickwork, completely repointing the structure and rebuilding the stone buttresses and installing new galvanised steel supports. Work on an interpretation panel to tell the history of the site has also been commissioned.



Interpretation at Dale Coppice / Lincoln Hill

The Quaker ironmaster, Richard Reynolds was responsible for the creation of the 'Sabbath Walks' – these remarkable walks were open to everyone, and provided the opportunity to witness the extraordinary industrial events occurring in the valleys. Along the routes, Reynolds built several fascinating and unusual edifices so that the views could be enjoyed all the more. Through the Access to Nature project the Trust has been able to commission several interpretation panels to depict some of these structures. These include Hannah's Cottage and Garden, the Doric Temple and the Rotunda. These panels were carefully researched and beautifully painted by local illustrator, Lynne Morgan.



Coalport Wall

Coalport roadside wall plays a major role in holding back land from the Lloyds. The stone wall would have been built during the early 1900s and over time the lime mortar holding the stones together has deteriorated. During March 2011 SGCT began restoration works to bind the rest of the wall together using fresh lime mortar. To reach the top of the 6m high wall SGCT had to commission a road closure and hire in Mobile Elevated Work Platforms. Over half of the wall has now been restored with plans to complete the project during spring 2012.



Woodside Orchard Culvert

The Trust in conjunction with Telford & Wrekin Council, (Project Management) has completed the work that was started in 2009 on Woodside Orchard Culvert. This was a complicated project as to enable the works to be carried out; the water from New Pool had to be diverted via pipes to flume the water past the area of culvert bed in need of repair. Two stone tracks also had to be laid to enable machinery to bring in large blocks of granite and sand and mortar to undertake the repairs to the stream bed and repoint the structure.

Rope Walk Wall

This wall is situated alongside the Rope Walk and forms part of the boundary of an historic deer park, this was an area of formal parkland laid out and planted by the Darby family in the late 18th Century. It was close to their family residence; 'Sunniside', which is where the housing estate that was, built on the former site takes its name from.

The Rope Walk is now a well-used pathway, but in years gone by it was possibly the route of a former plate way (an early type of tramway/

wagon way) for the removal of limestone and sandstone from the quarry. Historically, however, as its name suggests the track had its origins in a rope walk, which was in existence from the late 18th Century onwards. A rope walk was an area of open ground on which yarns would have been stretched out between revolving hooks and twisted together to make a length of rope.

The Rope Walk wall is one of the historic structures that are monitored annually to check on its condition. During the winter of 2009, the severe frosts caused a large amount of

damage to the wall, with loosening of the mortar causing bricks to become unstable. Urgent work was required to repair the wall and prevent a collapse. Following a successful bid for £100k of funds to carry out structure repairs in partnership with Telford & Wrekin Council the Trust commissioned contractors with specialist knowledge of building with lime mortar to begin repairs on the wall.

A 60 metre stretch of wall, which was close to collapse was taken down and largely rebuilt. Over 3,500 reclaimed bricks were needed together with

over 100 bags of lime mortar. Lime mortar would have been used when the wall was originally built. One of the advantages of lime mortar is that in the event of cracking, mortar deeper in the join is exposed and reacts with the air to crystallise and bond across the crack, reducing the loss of strength.

Vegetation was also cleared off most of the wall and a large ash tree situated behind the wall was felled to prevent further root ingress. There is still about 30 metres of the wall which needs to be re-pointed, and this will be planned for a future year.

Landscape

‘a landscape that retains its locally distinctive characteristics’

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust
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Jiggers Bank

Jiggers' rock face is an excellent example of an inverted rock face where the soft, weaker rock sits at the bottom of the formation whereas the harder rock lies on top. This particular formation sits on Jiggers Bank roadside and consequently received major stabilisation works in 2009, including installing a concrete bank to support the upper part of the formation. Annual surveys show the work has been successful but did recommend some tree works to further stabilise the upper bank. In February 2011, SGCT contractors coppiced the small areas of scrub immediately above the rock face to remove the overhanging weight created by the trees and as the trees will regrow from the stumps the roots will remain viable and will act as further stabilisation points.

Higher Level Stewardship

The Trust was successful in its Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) Application. This scheme will provide funding over the next 10 years to ensure that the Trust continues to conserve and enhance the meadows and pastures under its management. The Trust is using a flock of native breed sheep to graze the meadows. Grazing is a vital part of grassland management in that it controls coarser grasses and scrub that potentially threaten wildflower meadows. It also aids seed germination and structural diversity of the grassland. However, grazing needs to be carefully managed – with the appropriate breed, the appropriate number of animals, for the appropriate time – in order to achieve the desired result.

BAP/HAP

The Gorge has a rich and diverse range of wildlife, and includes several important wildlife sites, habitats and species. Nationally, many of these have suffered significant decline in recent years, and much of our wildlife is still under threat. SGCT is one of many conservation organisations in Shropshire working to conserve and enhance wildlife by contributing to Biodiversity/Habitat Action Plans. Each plan provides information on the condition of key species or habitats in the wild, the threats that they are facing and sets out a strategy to ensure that their decline is stopped and the situation improved within a number of years.

Japanese Knotweed Control

Japanese Knotweed is one of the most invasive species of plant in Britain and it spreads extremely quickly, preventing native vegetation from growing. Landowners are not legally obliged to remove Japanese Knotweed, unless it is causing a nuisance to neighbouring property. However it is an offence to plant, or cause Japanese Knotweed to grow, in the wild. The Trust works hard to try to eradicate the spread of Japanese Knotweed on its land, a partnership with Telford & Wrekin Council and Eon who manage the Ironbridge power station has been set up. By working together it is hoped that the best method for tackling the Japanese Knotweed which grows along the River Severn will be found.



Oilhouse Coppice WIG

Oilhouse Coppice was the centre of our woodland management works during the winter 2010/11. A Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG) issued by the Forestry Commission has allowed us to carry out works that will enhance the woodland for wildlife and biodiversity.

A major part of the WIG was to control the invasive rhododendron, a species brought to the UK during Victorian times which has since

escaped and established itself in our woodlands. The plant has no natural predators in the UK due to toxins in the leaves and its dense growth shades out our native species. SGCT have now taken measures to eradicate this species from Oilhouse Coppice. Contractors swept the woodland clearing of rhododendron, stacking the cutting into habitat piles and the stumps were then treated to prevent regrowth.

The WIG has also allowed us to reduce the amount of Sycamore and Beech in the woodland. Both of these species are not native to this part

of the UK and can have a dramatic effect on native species regeneration and wildflowers. Although we have not removed all of these species from the woodland, the programme of selective thinning will ensure that future seeds sources for both species is drastically reduced and the increased amount of light reaching the woodland floor will favour our native flora.

The final area the Trust concentrated on was controlling the mature population of very large White Poplars. These trees were planted during the 1960s as a fast growing

woodland establisher; however this fast growth is offset by a shorter life, meaning they are very susceptible to dropping limbs and sudden collapse. To prevent this problem becoming an issue SGCT have felled all the mature poplars within falling distance of the paths through the woodland.

‘ensure key habitats and species are sustainable and thriving’

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust
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Monitoring

The Trust employs consultants to undertake biological monitoring. Meadows are surveyed every 3 years and woodlands every 5 years to ensure that the management of these sites is meeting the objectives set out in our management plans. Volunteers have also undergone training to carry out survey work which increases their understanding of why the land is managed in certain ways. Volunteers carried out surveys at Ropewalk Meadow, Loamhole Dingle, Pattens Rock Quarry, Church Road Fields, Oilhouse Pastures and Paradise. The information gathered is vital to the Trust's future management of sites.

Bird Boxes

During 2010/11 the Trust installed 35 new bird boxes across various sites. These are designed to provide a safe nesting area for a number of our woodland species in areas where natural nest sites are not as abundant. The new residents of the boxes will hopefully include great tits, blue tits, nuthatch, spotted and pied flycatchers and robins. In Oilhouse Coppice we have also installed the innovative Schwegler boxes which are made of a wood/concrete mix giving them excellent thermal properties and prevent condensation build up.

Pond Survey

SGCT manage seven woodland ponds, supporting a wide range of amphibians and invertebrates. On a regular basis the Trust commissions a survey of these ponds to monitor any populations of Great Crested Newt (GCN) and the pond vegetation. During 2010 the report showed that one of our ponds which previously supported GCN no longer supports a population. A more detailed analysis of the situation shows that the issue could be the result of silt build up combined with over shading from the neighbouring trees. Over the coming year SGCT hope to carry out management works to improve these habitats and hopefully encourage new populations of GCN to establish.

Great Crested Newts

This year a Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) survey was carried out by Churton Ecology. Great Crested Newts (GCN's) are the UK's largest and most threatened species of newt. Because of the massive decline in its numbers over recent years the Great Crested Newt is strictly protected by British Law, which means it is an offence to kill, injure or harm them or damage or destroy their habitat.

Great crested newts breed in ponds but spend much of their lives on land, sometimes venturing several hundred metres from the pond. Their populations are often dependent on there being several ponds close together, linked by suitable land habitat.

‘Lookers’

In May 2010, the Trust set up a ‘lookers’ scheme. On a regular basis volunteers go out to check the welfare of our 2 flocks of native breed sheep. They also get involved in special training days run throughout the year, which includes hands on experience with foot trimming, inoculations, ear tagging and health checks.

At all levels, this scheme is proving hugely successful. The volunteers have developed an excellent system for booking ‘appointments’

with the sheep, meaning the sheep are checked several times a week. During these visits the volunteers have become very experienced at looking out for signs of a potential problem occurring, they have reported several situations where a sheep has become lame and even notified the graziers of the initial stages of a fly strike infection. Fly strike occurs when a sheep's fleece becomes soiled and flies begin to lay their eggs on this dirty area, these hatch and then burrow into the skin. If this condition is not caught early on then it often

results in death. Thanks to the keen attention of our volunteer ‘lookers’ an outbreak of this condition was noted early and the sheep were treated and saved.

The Trust is now entering into its second year of the scheme and is starting to organise a calendar for rotating the flocks of sheep. This ensures the grasslands are well managed and any build up in parasites is reduced.

Unlike a mower, which will cut indiscriminately through wildflowers and lizards alike,

sheep graze selectively, with the uneven results that support grassy microhabitats.

The 100-strong flock of sheep will be grazing at five fenced-off sites this year.

If you are interested in finding out more about becoming a ‘looker’ please contact the Trust on 01952 433880.

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

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Circular Ropewalk Walk

Following an access audit along the Ropewalk, by the Telford Access to Nature User Group, additional fingerposts have been installed to way mark a circular route past the historic wall and up through the woodland onto a gravel path which passes the new SGCT office. Here, you will soon be able to stop and read information panels detailing the building of the office. The route continues down Darby Road to the Ropewalk entrance making an informative walk. Next year, this route will be added to two further way-marked circular routes on an interpretation panel sited at the entrance to the Ropewalk indicating walks past the meadows towards Lydebrook Dingle and through Loamhole Dingle.



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.



Lincoln Hill Steps

With the auditing of the new way-marked circular route along the Sabbath Walks to Lincoln Hill and down to Upper Paradise, it was realised that a set of steps at the end of this route were in need of replacing. The footfall on this route is very great throughout the year and the old steps are quite awkward to negotiate.

The new steps would complement the 140 steps built in 2009 by volunteers down from The Rotunda. They will be built by the Trust's volunteers during the summer 2011 and will include handrails for easier access.



Access to Bower Limekiln

Conservation works to this historic structure has enabled us to create access right up to the entrance of the kiln. Visitors can park at the car park in Station Road and then walk down the Severn Valley Way towards the power station. The Trust has commissioned an interpretation panel that tells the story of the lime kiln.

Visitors will soon be able to stop and take a rest on a bench installed by Trust volunteers, accessing the site via a kissing gate, which has replaced an existing 'v' stile. Further access improvements will include a handrail up the path to the lime kiln.

Access to Nature Partnership Year 2

Following a successful grant application to the Big Lottery in 2009, the Access to Nature partnership has been delivering a range of initiatives throughout woodlands and green places in Telford and Ironbridge. In autumn 2009, twenty local people, from across Telford formed a User Group in order to access audit their local paths. They were trained

by the Fieldfare Trust under the Countryside for All guidelines of best practice. Following their training, sixteen sites were audited and recommendations were made for new or upgraded paths or for countryside furniture such as extra benches and way markers to improve routes or kissing gates instead of stiles.

In July 2010, the funding enabled these improvements to be carried out within the woodlands and green places to improve physical and sensory access. The zigzag path at Coalport was re-surfaced;

a kissing gate replaced a stile at Dale Coppice; a way-marked route tracing the Sabbath Walks through Dale Coppice and Lincoln Hill woodlands commencing from Dale End car park was created, with additional interpretation planned next year. Benches were installed by volunteers at the end of the Ropewalk and on a path in Lloyd's Coppice overlooking the river Severn. New fingerposts on the Ropewalk indicate a new circular route past the new office.

Guided themed walks have proved a popular addition to help local people enjoy local woodlands around Ironbridge. Several walks were led by experts in their particular field: Glenn Bishton (*Birds in Haywood*); Chris Rayner (*Geology in Lydebrook Dingle*); Pete Boardman (*Invertebrates of the Ropewalk*); Dr. Kate Thorne (*Ecology in the Meadows*); Sue Shanks (*Fungi Foray in Benthall Woods*).

New Office, Darby Road

The Trust had been located in cramped rented offices for nearly twenty years before moving into its own purpose built, highly sustainable timber framed building in July 2010.

Trustees and staff had spent nearly five years looking for a suitable site after no suitable local larger rented accommodation could be found. The Trust's objectives were to:

1. Use as much local materials as possible
2. Design and build an attractive building that fitted in with its natural landscape and minimised energy in its construction and occupancy
3. Site the building as close to the centre of our landholding as possible to minimise transport costs and allow staff to walk to some sites

A woodland edge near Sunnside on Darby Road, Coalbrookdale was selected as the preferred site.

Initial pre planning application discussions with engineers within Telford & Wrekin Council meant that SGCT carried out ground monitoring for over a year which concluded that the site was stable enough for a new building. Ecological, arboricultural and archaeological studies as well as traffic surveys confirmed that there would be minimal impact on the site from a carefully designed building. The Trust also began a consultation with the local community in upper Coalbrookdale and Sunnside which lasted a year and a half. Most residents welcomed the build and were interested in its green credentials. Some were concerned about traffic impact on Darby Road and the siting of the proposed small car park and new entrance gate. The Trust therefore moved the car park further away from the road and kept the existing entrance.



The Trust went out to competitive tender to twelve companies to build the new office from which Steve McNally was chosen, working with carpenter John Hilton. The project used an innovative Partnering Contract and rather than designed by an architect alone, a Design Team was established. This included Architect (Arrol and Snell, Quantity Surveyor (John Pidgeon), Health and Safety coordinator, Builders, Structural engineer (Bob Johnson) and Client. The team worked to a detailed design brief researched and prepared by the Trust's Manager over several months.

Building work began in October 2009 with a small number of trees felled which would be re-used within the building either as structural timber or firewood for heating.

A flat platform was created by moving clay to create a natural mound within the site and a concrete raft foundation constructed, designed to protect its stability. The timber frame which had been built off site in Coalport was put up in only a few days, with the subsequent cladding and build taking eight months.

The building is insulated using sheep's wool, a very breathable and energy efficient material. During the winter it absorbs moisture to keep the building warm whilst releasing moisture in the summer to cool the building. A mechanical heat and ventilation recovery system uses the warm air generated within the building to heat the cool air coming in from outside, recycling over 90% of the heat energy.

The building was overall winner of the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin LABC Building Excellence Awards 2011 as well as winning best sustainable and commercial building categories.



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

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust
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Open Evening

This year's Open Evening was held at Coalport Village Hall. The guest speakers were the Trust volunteers who gave a talk on their experience of being a volunteer with the Trust and reasons why they chose to become a volunteer in the first place. 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 may have about any aspect of the Trust's work. The venue changes annually to provide equal opportunity for all local residents to have easy access to meetings.



Trees of Knowledge

During the autumn of 2010, SGCT held a Trees of Knowledge consultation to inform the local residents about the work the Trust would be carrying out in Oilhouse Coppice during the winter. This consisted of a guided walk with stops at each of the key work sites. At these points we were able to convey the current habitat issues and explained how the proposed works would improve the habitat and the associated wildlife communities. A short leaflet about the work was also given out to each of the participants. Any questions raised were answered on the day and the feedback was greatly appreciated.



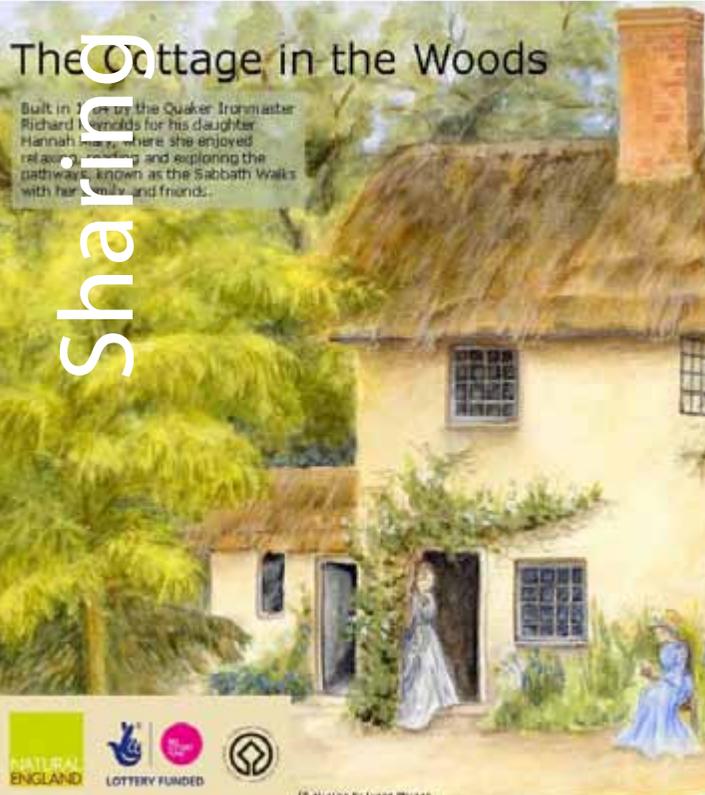
Media

The Shropshire Star newspaper and BBC Radio Shropshire have played a very important role over the last 12 months in promoting and informing the public about the work that the Trust does. Many of the events and activities that Telford Access to Nature Partnership has been involved with have been promoted in the Shropshire Star, and the Trust Manager was interviewed along with one of the graziers regarding the success of the 'Lookers' scheme. The media provides a great way of reaching out to and informing people who may not know about the work the Trust does, several people have expressed an interest in volunteering with the Trust from seeing or hearing the media coverage.



Local Access Forum

The Trust regularly attends the Local Access Forum set up by Telford & Wrekin Council. The main function of the forum is to advise on how to make the countryside more accessible for open air recreation. The forum consists of 18 members drawn from a wide variety of backgrounds and interests including walking, cycling, horse riding, farming and disability access. The key functions of the Local Access Forum include providing advice on the development of access strategies, including the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and the implementation, management and review of the statutory right of access to open countryside ('Right to Roam'). The Trust is able to provide valuable input and gain an understanding of specific needs from other members of the group.



Interpretation

One of the Trust's aims is to develop ways of conveying and sharing the fascinating history and stories of the land in the Gorge to visitors and local people alike. Through the Access to Nature Project a working group was set up to look at ways to enhance the visitor's experience of the 'Sabbath Walks'. The Quaker ironmaster, Richard Reynolds was responsible for the creation of the 'Sabbath Walks' - these remarkable walks were open to everyone, (which was unusual for the time) and provided the opportunity to witness the extraordinary industrial

events occurring in the valleys. Along the routes, Reynolds built several fascinating and unusual edifices so that the views could be enjoyed all the more. Unfortunately very little remains of these and so walkers today are unable to appreciate their charms.

For this reason the working group felt that it would be beneficial to commission several interpretation panels to capture the essence of the walks when they were first created. It was felt that this would enable visitors to appreciate the walks fully and give them a glimpse into the past.

Local illustrator Lynne Morgan has created 4 beautiful panels to tell the historic story of the Sabbath Walks, so named because Richard Reynolds wanted to encourage his workers to spend Sundays walking with their families instead of in the local alehouse!

The first of these panels is of the Doric Temple built in 1784. This was a brick structure supported by four Doric pillars with an inside seat enabling walkers to sit and take in the views of the upper forge pool and its cascades, a huge reservoir used for powering the new iron industry in Coalbrookdale.

At the promontory of Lincoln Hill, a second panel has been installed to show the Rotunda. This was a cast iron structure similar in design to a bandstand with an ingenious revolving seat which afforded panoramic views of the surrounding area.

The final two panels show the cottage and garden in the woods at Dale Coppice. Reynolds built the cottage for his daughter Hannah Mary, so that she could spend time in the woods and entertain family and friends.

'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 organised a 'Dawn Chorus' walk and led a walk to explore the woodlands and meadows of the Gorge. Other themes throughout the year have included a geology walk with Shropshire Geology Society along Lydebrook Dingle and a bird walk across the open land above Benthall Edge. Further conservation walks have covered glow worms, bats, butterflies and birds.

8 guided walks were organised by the Trust and attended by 191 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 and Apple Day.

At the Apple Day, children had the opportunity to make apple book marks and adults completed surveys regarding access on to the Trust's land which provided valuable information for the access audits that were undertaken.

Corporate Volunteering

Volunteer projects provide employees with a welcome break from their desks, while having fun collaborating with colleagues in a unique setting and making a meaningful contribution to the local community. This year the Trust has been fortunate to have two groups of volunteers participating in team building days on Trust land. One group from Telford & Wrekin Council spent a full day holly coppicing in Workhouse Coppice learning new skills and enjoying a day in the woodlands.

The second group from Stratford-upon-Avon were studying in the area and offered their skills for a day in The Crostan clearing the edges of regularly used steps and paths of bramble and general weeds.

Partnership Working

The Trust recognises the importance of Partnership working and the benefits that it can bring to the local community. This year new links have been made with the Youth Hostelling Association in Ironbridge with the intention of working together to offer guided walks to families staying at Coalport YHA and to school groups staying at Coalbrookdale. This will enable the Trust to reach out to a wider audience and encourage more people to visit its sites.

Additionally, links with Friends of Coalbrookdale Arboretum have brought closer ties to other events within the area which engenders a greater sense of community spirit.



Volunteering in the Ironbridge Gorge

The Trust is privileged to have over 35 regular volunteers who give freely of their time and knowledge. For practical conservation, the volunteers meet every Thursday throughout the year to undertake many tasks in order to maintain the woodlands for public access and the wildlife. On most days, about 16 volunteers will turn out come rain or shine (it

rarely rains!) to help us. A three-monthly programme indicates the task each week and there is a wide variety of skills which are learnt over the year. This year we trained 12 volunteers in Austrian scything in order to manage meadows which are inaccessible to mow with a tractor. The hay will be used to winter feed the flock of sheep.

Much of the summer months were spent butterfly monitoring and undertaking meadow surveys around the Gorge. The autumn months took on the scrub maintenance of heathland

and grassland. Construction tasks included building a boardwalk in Dale Coppice and bench installation in Lloyd's Coppice. The cold winter didn't deter the volunteers and we succeeded in continuing to maintain the woodland footpaths for public access and clearing blackthorn from Church Road to improve the grazing area for the sheep. Volunteers were trained in fruit tree pruning in the orchards and cleft pale fencing in readiness for the kissing gates installation.

Additionally we have volunteers who annually monitor our birds, flora, wild animals, invertebrates including butterflies and moths.

A group of volunteers audited Benthall Edge woods for three differentiated way-marked routes for TA2N funding. This meant several days finding accessible and interesting routes to lead the public through a maze of woodland paths.

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 2010 to 31 March 2011.

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 2011	Total Funds 2010
£	£	£	£	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES					
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Rents Received	207,009	—	—	207,009	241,407
Grants	43,405	—	116,606	160,011	116,882
ACTIVITIES TO GENERATE FUNDS					
Investment Income	1,616	8,966	—	10,582	8,041
Other Income	1,105	—	—	1,105	10,995
Total Incoming Resources	253,135	8,966	116,606	378,707	377,325
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
COSTS OF GENERATING FUNDS					
Costs of generating voluntary income	3,823	—	—	3,823	4,767
CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES					
Woodland/Countryside Management	167,943	6,868	929	175,740	193,568
Access	43,504	7,115	130,417	181,036	75,938
Community Projects	7,994	275	4,241	12,510	46,200
GOVERNANCE COSTS	10,886	35	—	10,921	18,050
Total Resources Expended	234,150	14,293	135,587	384,030	338,523
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES BEFORE TRANSFERS	18,985	(5,327)	(18,981)	(5,323)	38,802
Transfers between Funds	(4,569)	(8,378)	12,947	—	—
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR	14,416	(13,705)	(6,034)	(5,323)	38,802
OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS & LOSSES					
Gains/(Losses) on investments - realised	99	—	—	99	431
Gains/(Losses) on investments - unrealised	—	3,723	—	3,723	23,420
Pension Scheme Actuarial gains/(losses)	32,000	—	—	32,000	(76,000)
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	46,515	(9,982)	(6,034)	30,499	(13,347)
BALANCES BROUGHT FORWARD AT 31ST MARCH 2010	71,727	594,523	124,781	791,031	804,378
BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD AT 31ST MARCH 2011	118,242	584,541	118,747	821,530	791,031

BALANCE SHEET as at 31st March 2011	2011	2010
	£	£
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible Assets	469,179	286,784
Investments	248,145	244,315
	717,324	531,099
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	72,668	69,643
Investments	101,352	350,165
Cash at Bank and in Hand	80,114	40,236
	254,134	460,044
CREDITORS – amounts falling due within one year	(38,552)	(39,952)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	215,582	420,092
Pension Scheme Funding deficit	(111,376)	(160,160)
NET ASSETS	821,530	791,031
FUNDS:		
General Fund	118,242	71,727
Designated Funds	556,890	570,595
Restricted Funds	118,747	124,781
Revaluation Reserve	27,651	23,928
MEMBERS' FUNDS	821,530	791,031

TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	Generating Voluntary Income £	Woodland/countryside management £	Access £	Community Projects £	Governance Costs £	Total 2011 £	Total 2010 £
Direct Costs	—	120,217	96,801	4,811	—	221,829	151,860
Employee Costs	3,823	35,069	63,047	2,678	4,287	108,904	148,590
Insurance	—	2,656	2,751	106	—	5,513	5,513
Transport	—	1,880	1,947	75	—	3,902	2,502
Office Costs & Other Costs	—	6,076	6,295	4,446	1,402	18,219	14,371
Trust Support	—	—	—	—	1,407	1,407	3,131
Professional Costs	—	—	—	—	3,825	3,825	8,021
Depreciation	—	9,842	10,195	394	—	20,431	4,535
	3,823	175,740	181,036	12,510	10,921	384,030	338,523

Grants to help us with our work

Thank you to the The Big Lottery in conjunction with Natural England (Access to Nature) Defra (Higher Level Stewardship Scheme), Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust 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.

