

SUP Newsletter June 2021

Welcome to Darren Flint and Katy Ewing who recently joined SUP as Project Officers, based at Kirkgunzeon. Darren and Katy will job-share (Darren 3 days/wk, Katy 2 days/wk). Darren has been working in this part of the world for some time. He has a background in conservation and community development. Katy did an internship in summer 2019 with the PLACE in the Biosphere project, hosted by SUP, and has experience of community work with Dumfries and Galloway Council. It is great to have the core team back to full strength.

Thanks to funding from NatureScot, we have recently produced a series of reports which we hope will be of value as the “build-back-better” process gains strength.

Nature Based Tourism

One of these looks at the potential of “nature based” tourism, for which we use a very broad definition. In our view, nature based tourism includes cultural, experiential, agricultural and recreational along with nature-watching. It looks at the lessons learnt from our previous project, Wild Seasons, and points out where the opportunities are as we move forward. The report is available to download from our website sup.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Developing-Nature-Based-Tourism-in-South-Scotland-April-2021-Final-Draft.pdf

Equestrian Tourism

We have also done a lot more work exploring the potential of equestrian tourism, building on the work previously done by the Ride Scottish Borders project. The new report looks at how the approach can be extended across into Dumfries and Galloway and includes proposals for a refreshed Festival of the Horse and a “Big Houses” riding trail. The report will be available on SUP’s website shortly.

Biosphere for the Borders?

The third report explores the possibility of there being a UNESCO Biosphere in the Borders. The Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere has attracted significant funding and political support so there may be good reasons for considering a Borders model. The report can be read or downloaded here [Publications - The Southern Uplands Partnership \(sup.org.uk\)](#)

Aires

Finally, we looked at the potential for a more welcoming attitude to campervans in South Scotland. In Europe, “aires” are provided by a range of stakeholders to encourage campervanners to stay. Aires are noticeable by their absence in this region, with most car parks strictly prohibiting overnight stays. In the Highlands there has been a recent change in policy – with a more welcoming approach. Could we be doing more to attract this growing market in the South? The report is available here [Aires-Report-final.pdf \(sup.org.uk\)](#)

A Message from South of Scotland Destination Alliance (SSDA)

Tourism businesses across our regions have been hugely affected by the impact of COVID-19. This new survey, conducted on behalf of the South of Scotland Destination Alliance (SSDA), is to better understand our region's businesses, what support would see you join us and how we can support businesses to extend the traditional tourism season.

It's important we monitor industry feedback particularly as we look towards the easing of lockdown and business recovery in the year ahead. We are keen to support businesses by investigating in a variety of ways, encouraging visitors to stay longer and spend in the local economy as well as how we can support you as a business.

We appreciate you taking the time to fill this in, it should only take you 10 minutes and it will help us to understand how we can support you further.

This survey will close on Friday 18th June 2021

[SSDA Survey on Extending Season and Business Support](#)

News from Destination Tweed: Connecting Threads

RIVER PORTRAIT NO. 1

Sunday 27th June, 10am - 2pm

There are still spaces available for environmental professionals, volunteers and activists for our free workshop, River Portrait No.1, supported by [Creative Carbon Scotland](#). The professional development event aims to create a space for unpicking and re-framing the multiple faces of the river through the act of creating a portrait. We will be joined by the brilliant visual artist [Mooie Scott](#), Emily Iles, the Invasive Species first responder from the [Tweed Forum](#), and the river ecology and education lead at the [Tweed Foundation](#) Patrick Barbour. A delicious picnic lunch will be provided by [Cafe Recharge CIC](#). Booking is available through the [Eventbrite page](#).

ANNOUNCING OUR ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Connecting Threads is delighted to announce our first Artist in Residence, [Jules Bradbury](#). Jules will be working over the summer months in and around the new biodiverse upland hay meadow at Merlindale, which was established with the support of [NatureScot](#). Taking an 'artist as pollinator' approach, Jules will use all the senses to engage the communities of Upper Tweeddale with the meadow, biodiversity and the cultural heritage of this almost forgotten practice. Newly settled in the Scottish Borders, Jules brings with her experience working with communities in Orkney, Edinburgh and Berlin. Welcome Jules!

Thank you to everyone who applied for the residency. We were excited to see such a diversity of proposals and the enthusiasm and energy that was put into the applications. This, we hope (funding permitting), will be the first of many more residencies. We look forward to learning from Jules' experience and developing further opportunities for artists, writers, filmmakers, musicians and performers to engage deeply with the Tweed.

A WORKSHOP AT ST RONAN'S WELLS

In July we will be working alongside [Buglife](#), the invertebrate conservation charity, to host a day of creative activity for the [St. Ronan's Wells Community Garden](#) Volunteers. Linking pollinators, plants and people, the day will provide an opportunity to learn about how caring for pollinating insects in our gardens and green spaces can also help us look after for ourselves. Buglife is developing the River Tweed B-Line as part of the Destination Tweed initiative, a joined-up corridor of pollinator habitat running from the river's source to the sea. You can find out more information about B-Lines [here](#). Thank you to Jan Cameron for inviting us into the garden!

SUMMER WEAVING

We are looking forward to working with art therapy centre [At Birkhill House](#) and youth group [Beyond Earlston](#) on their summer holiday weaving project, supported by Creative Scotland. Kicking off with a talk at the Great Tapestry of Scotland, Connecting Threads will be dipping in throughout the 12 weeks to make connections between the river and weaving in the past and present. Using natural and recycled materials, the young people will have the opportunity to learn a whole range of different techniques and make personal and collaborative pieces. Thank you to Lara Armitage for inviting us to contribute to this fantastic project.

BERWICKSHIRE TRIP

With spring in full swing and the winter lockdown easing, Rachel took the opportunity to visit some of the many communities and organisations downstream. Meeting with [Paxton House](#), [Marchmont House](#), [Ford & Etal Estates](#) and [Coldstream](#) and [Birgham](#) Community Trusts, Rachel returned with ideas for festival venues, research and residency themes and personal stories to honour and share. The Connecting Threads team will be returning to the area in August with a visit to the cultural and creative hub of Berwick upon Tweed. If you have a suggestion for a place we should visit or a person we should meet, please get in touch: rachel@sup.org.uk

Job Opportunity with The Langholm Initiative

The Langholm Initiative is recruiting a Project Officer, two-year full-time post, to deliver the Inspiring Engagement in Nature project. Closing date Friday 25th June 2021. Details on [Vacancies | Langholm | The Langholm Initiative](#)