

## Scottish Environment Week 2013 Report

2013 saw us reverting back to Scottish Environment Week (SEW) with all events taking place in Parliament, including a first with the Pub Quiz, which was held this year in the Members' Restaurant. Feedback from LINK members, Government, Parliament staff and external stakeholders was that SEW on the whole was very successful, informative and useful, allowing for even greater engagement and networking opportunities. LINK's reputation within the Parliament and policy sector is growing in a positive and influential way.

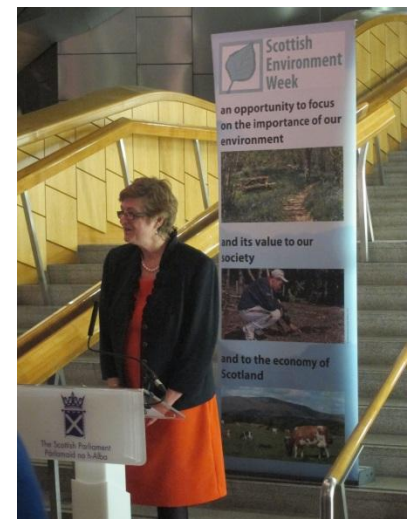
This year's theme was **Scotland's Environment Revealed**, highlighting all types of research, including social, economic and science done by our members to conserve and enhance the environment. Event sponsors this year were Historic Scotland, sponsoring the two seminars (2013 was the last year in Historic Scotland's four year funding), Calor Scotland sponsoring the Pub Quiz, FAME Project contributing to the Marine seminar and finally the Cairngorms National Park and Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park which sponsored the mid-week Evening Reception. Our overall sponsoring MSP for SEW was Sarah Boyack MSP.



The Programme offered five events, all taking place within the Parliament apart from the weekend Constituency visits. SEW started off with Tuesday night seminar, the **Land Revealed** sponsored by Rob Gibson MSP with presentations from National Trust for Scotland on Scotland's Future Landscapes, Butterfly Conservation Scotland on the Chequered Skipper Butterfly and finally the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland on their Scottish Archeological Research Framework (ScARF) project. The seminar explored the concept that Scotland's landscapes are part of our national identity and a source of wellbeing and enjoyment for both Scots and visitors and they have seen substantial changes over the past fifty years. Looking ahead to the next fifty years, the seminar asked what new challenges we might

face. The seminar was attended by Rob Gibson MSP and Jean Urquhart MSP.

The midweek **Evening Reception** was hosted by Claudia Beamish MSP in the Garden lobby at Holyrood and was very well attended with people enjoying a taster selection of local beers from both National Parks. LINK President Ross Finnie opened speeches by thanking the National Parks and noting the important work they do; he went on to celebrate the continued success of SEW and the working relationships it creates and finally reflected on the importance of LINK's widening horizons for discussion, including its greater emphasis on business and economics in the pursuit of genuinely sustainable development. Our sponsoring MSP, Claudia Beamish followed by highlighting the importance of the work LINK does, manifested in the caliber of people in the room, including 16 MSPs attending that evening; she noted too the importance of MSPs being in touch with the diverse range of LINK members from the larger to the smaller specialized ones such as



Bat Conservation Trust. Finally the Minister for the Environment, Paul Wheelhouse MSP said a few words thanking LINK and members for their work, highlighting the importance of working together to preserve biodiversity especially in this year of Natural Scotland 2013.

Thursday was a busy day in the SEW programme, starting off with the lunch-time Marine seminar, **The Sea Revealed**, sponsored by Liam McArthur MSP. The main context of the seminar was to set out the importance of Scotland's seas, economically, socially and environmentally; this had prompted the Marine Act and 2013 was looking to be a historic year for the sea with consultations on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), the National Marine Plan and offshore renewables development. The seminar highlighted the use of dedicated volunteers and citizen-led science from archaeology projects to monitoring and recording. Presentations were by Scottish Coastal Archaeology and the Problem of Erosion (SCAPE) on 'A crowd sourcing approach to the management of coastal heritage at risk', RSPB and the FAME Project, Tracking Scotland's Seabirds and finally Marine Conservation Society and Sea-searches. The seminar was attended by Liam McArthur MSP and Claudia Beamish MSP, along with several Parliamentary and SPICe researchers.



Thursday evening saw the first ever **Pub Quiz** to take place in the Members' Restaurant, sponsored this year by Jamie McGrigor MSP and very well supported, with eleven teams participating from member organizations, parliamentary research teams, and even a cross-party team. But it was the combination of historians and archaeologist from Historic Scotland and the ScARF project, which won, with the witty team name of 'We know where the bodies are buried'. LINK extends a special thanks to the Quizmaster, Alan Cox, who volunteered his time to help us with an excellent Pub Quiz, including even a music round.

The closing event of the programme was **Revealing the Environment in your Constituency**, where MSPs, their families and friends were invited to choose a site visit in or near their constituency offered by LINK members. 11 LINK members participated putting forward visit choices around Scotland with a total of 40 individual visits offered. 7 MSPs participated, including visits organized by John Muir Trust and SCAPE. This number was a drop from last year and LINK is looking into ways of adjusting and improving the Constituency Visits for both member



organizations and MSPs next year.

### **Sponsorship and thanks**

LINK Board and members are pleased to acknowledge the support and active cooperation of SEW's financial sponsors: Historic Scotland, Calor Scotland, FAME Project, Cairngorms National Park and Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park. A big thanks goes to our volunteer Quizmaster, Alan Cox. We would also like to extend our acknowledgment and thanks to our MSP sponsors, Sarah Boyack, Rob Gibson, Claudia Beamish, Liam McArthur and Jamie McGrigor for all their help and support of our work, and to the Events Management Team at the Scottish Parliament.

### **Moving forward**

LINK will continue to develop this programme and planning timeline, improving guidance for those who organize events, briefing for speakers and presenters, running order for events, role of host MSPs and/or event sponsors and circulation of invitations – adapting these further for future Weeks and Festivals.

We will also be looking into improving or changing the format of the Constituency Visits in the future in order to better accommodate MSP needs and schedules either through-out the year or during warmer months, therefore also allowing more member organizations to participate where previously they would have been unable to do so due to weather restrictions or season reasons, such as hibernating species or lack of blooming flowers.

Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment community, with over 30 member bodies representing a broad spectrum of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society.

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