



## Winter 2005/06

### A Happy New Year to you all.

The tongue-in-cheek proposal in the Autumn Newsletter to form SOBA (Stroppy Old Buggers Association) to combat those who insist on reinventing the wheel etc., seems to have struck a sympathetic chord with a number of you. I had e-mails from a wide range of people, some offering a cheque to sign up right away, others claiming to have been founder members of their regional SOBA for many years and some, sensing the frustration, encouraging us to stick at our cause because it is so worthwhile.

It also demonstrated that our website is being visited from far wider than Scotland and it was nice to hear from people that I haven't seen for many years. Thanks – it's good to know you are out there.

Turning now to a pressing issue – financial resources. Just before Christmas we completed a new appeal to be submitted to Charitable Trusts who support environmental bodies. The first submission has gone in to the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation and we await a decision which is not expected before May. If we are successful with our Appeal we would wish to appoint a member of staff so that we can provide a more professional service to our members, affiliates and bodies with whom we work or liaise on National Park issues. An early task would be a membership recruitment drive. To carry clout with those in high places, the quality of our case is not sufficient. We have to show that we command wide support by having a large and committed membership. Most new members in recent years have come from individual personal contacts. Back on my hobby horse – you could help in a similar way. Any friend, relative or acquaintance who talks to you about Scotland's environment or landscape, ask them if they are members and if they are not, sign them up!

**Robert Maund**  
Chairman

### Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park

Having gone through a public consultation exercise, the National Park Authority has published and submitted its bylaw review to Scottish Ministers. In SCNP's view, the submitted byelaws failed to address the key problems of speed, noise and tranquility on the loch. The top speed permitted remains unchanged at 90 kph even though hardly anyone has expressed a desire to travel at such speeds. The by-laws do nothing to address the noise problems generated by jet-skis which affect not only those on the water and the shore but also people walking in the surrounding hills.

Immediately before Christmas, SCNP came together with the Friends of Loch Lomond and the Loch Lomond Association to meet Jackie Baillie MSP for West Dumfries, to explain our concerns and seek guidance on how best to bring our concerns before Scottish Ministers in advance of a decision on the byelaws. We now hope to join with other concerned parties such as the anglers and sailors and meet Rhona Brankin, the Deputy Minister, who has a major role to play.

At the same time, we are preparing a submission to the Petitions Committee of the Scottish Parliament just in case we are unable to meet with Ministers within the necessary timescale.

The sensitive issue of the growing use of seaplanes on Loch Lomond remains unresolved by the work that has been done on the bylaw review. It remains to be seen whether the fundamental reasons for creating a National Park where conservation is supposed to take priority over other activities in the event of an irreconcilable conflict, will carry the day or whether the Park Authority and indeed Scottish Ministers will be swayed by clever lobbying on the road to reaching a judgement.

### Cairngorms National Park.

The Cairngorms National Park Authority has now published its Draft Local Plan and is in the

middle of a public consultation exercise which is due to be completed by the end of February. In drawing up the draft plan, the Park Authority undertook what we feel was a very thorough effort to meet with local communities and interest groups to gain an understanding of their concerns and what they would like to see in the park local plan. The draft plan is not complete in itself, because much work is still being done on housing issues and the whole question of affordable housing, the impact of 2nd homes etc. When this work has been completed and comments received on the initial draft, a further draft will be produced before the plan is finalised and submitted.

On the 10th January representatives of SCNP, together with Drennan Watson of the Cairngorms Campaign, met with Jane Hope, Chief Executive of the Park Authority and her colleagues working on the plan. We discussed a wide range of issues including housing, the pylon proposals, the disposal of HIE land, deer management, snaring, the park boundary and various other issues relating to implementation of policies.

We shall shortly be preparing our overall response to the plan in the light of our discussions and we are grateful to the Park staff for the very open way in which they presented their work and responded to questions.

It will be recalled that when the Park designation order was being prepared there was debate about who should be the Planning Authority. In the event, Cairngorms NP did not achieve full Planning Authority status like LL & T NP. The disadvantages are now becoming apparent. For example, the NPA is not a statutory consultee for the proposed super grid with 600 major pylons, the NPA would have to ask one of the constituent Planning Authorities if it wished to create further conservation areas or obtain Article 4 directions to control design quality in conservation areas.

### **Scotland's Third National Park**

SCNP has involved itself in SNH's consultation process on a possible Coastal and Marine National Park or Parks. We have attended day long seminars in Inverness and Glasgow in November and December last and made a submission to SNH just before Christmas. We then held a meeting

with SNH on 17 January to discuss our ideas and be updated on the latest developments. Everything is on schedule to go to SNH's Board in March with the final submission being made to Scottish Ministers by the end of March. SCNP's input will appear on our website shortly.

### **Annual General Meeting**

This year's AGM moves back to a Friday - 21 April 2006 and will be held in the Smith Art Gallery in Stirling. Having tried a Saturday last year without notable success in increasing attendance and having consulted the membership again, we decided Friday was still the best option.

We have been fortunate to get Adrian Phillips to come and address us after the formal business. Adrian was the Director of the former Countryside Commission for England and Wales for several years and went on to hold senior positions with IUCN. As such, he has a wealth of experience of National Parks both in Britain and internationally. Do try to reserve the date in your diary. It promises to be a very worthwhile occasion.

### **Our New Technology.**

Following our success in getting an Awards for All grant for computers, projectors and a slide scanner, work has commenced on the first two talks/presentations to use on the 'Talks Circuit' we hope to generate to spread the National Park message. We have also made a start on digitising SCNP's slide collection built up over the last 15 years.

### **SCNP Executive.**

Since the Autumn Newsletter, your Executive has met on 24 November 2005 and 17 January 2006 and further meetings are scheduled for 14 February and 14 March.

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