

Local voices tell tales from the woods

Andrew Carnegie, the Canadian Forestry Corps and woodland worship during the Disruption brought to life by volunteers

Audio visual presentations featuring people's memories of Ledmore & Migdale Woods in East Sutherland have been published online.

The sound slides can be seen on the Woodland Trust's website and also at the Historylinks Museum in Dornoch, which provided many of the historical images that were used in their making.

Volunteers including Gaelic speaker Neil Smith from Inverness, Catriona Ross from Redcastle, Charlotta Hellman from Muir of Ord, Gavin Ward from Tain, Kenneth Blyth from Dornoch, Fiona Chalmers from Forres and Kelly Morrison from Aberdeen took part in the ground-breaking digital storytelling project.

The volunteers created three beautiful sound slides - short audio visual presentations about Ledmore & Migdale Woods in East Sutherland, which can be seen on the Woodland Trust's website at (web address to follow)

Woodland Trust Scotland Area Manager Eleanor Garty said:

"The three topics selected by our talented interns highlight the rich history and culture of the woods at Ledmore and Migdale. The events leading up to the Disruption of 1843 affected many congregations in the Highlands. In the parish of Creich the local people chose to worship out of doors, sheltered by Scots pines around the preaching stone at Loch Migdale.

"Men from the Canadian Forestry Corps worked here at Ledmore & Migdale, and in many woodlands across the Highlands during the Second World War - some even married and settled here afterwards, or took home local brides. The men's cheerfulness and generosity are well remembered, and especially the dances they held at the camps!"

"Andrew Carnegie's philanthropy is well known throughout the world, but this particular sound slide gives touching insight into the great man's very down-to-earth family life. We were even able to rediscover the site of his picnic cabin in the Fairy Glen at Spinningdale."

The volunteers who created the sound slides were participants in an Internship Programme offered by the Woodland Trust Scotland, with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Eon Rosehall Community Fund via Foundation Scotland, which attracted interest from all over Scotland.

They were selected for their diverse backgrounds and skills, from young people looking to improve their employability to people with more experience, who were interested in diversifying their skills.

The interns were tutored by audio editor and producer Anne Marie Goldie, whose voice is familiar to many from her role as a BBC Highland newsreader, and photographer John Macpherson of Balloch, Inverness. The project was managed by Verity Walker via her Black Isle based consultancy, Interpretation.

Interviewees for the three topics who can be heard in the sound slides include Margaret Thomson, great-grand-daughter of Andrew Carnegie; the Reverend Alexander Murray of Migdale; Blossom Gow, the former Housekeeper of Skibo Castle, and Hamish Matheson of Humpton, Spinningdale, a local crofter with a wealth of memories.

Contact:

Please contact Rory Syme, etc

Images:

Images including the interns at work on site, the interviewees, and local people attending the launch event in December are available.

Notes to editors:

The Woodland Trust Scotland

The Woodland Trust Scotland is part of the UK's leading charity championing native woods and trees. It has over 400,000 supporters. The Trust has three key aims: i) to plant native trees and woods with the aim of creating resilient landscapes for people and wildlife ii) to protect ancient woodland which is rare, unique and irreplaceable iii) restoration of damaged ancient woodland, allowing native flora and fauna to return.

Established in 1972, the Woodland Trust now has over 1,000 sites in its care covering approximately 20,000 hectares (50,000 acres). In 1984, the Trust acquired its first wood in Scotland. Today the Trust owns 80 sites across Scotland covering 8,750 hectares (20,000 acres). The Woodland Trust has more than 400,000 supporters.

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Heritage Lottery Fund

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. To date it has invested over £500 million in Scotland's heritage. Website: www.hlf.org.uk

Foundation Scotland

Foundation Scotland is trusted by over 250 individuals, families, charitable trusts, companies and public bodies. Our in-depth knowledge of the charitable and community sectors ensures that funding has the greatest value.

Foundation Scotland works with communities and developers, administering over £1.1M in community benefit payments annually mainly linked to commercially owned and operated onshore wind farms. It works with over 60 community councils and a wide range of developers, supporting the set-up and on-going activities of over 30 community funds.

The Foundation favours a long term view, promotes and harnesses community strengths and supports decision making processes that are inclusive, accountable and community-led.

About Rosehall Wind Farm

Rosehall Wind Farm is located about 2.5km north east of Rosehall. The 19 turbines have an installed capacity of 24.7MW which is enough to power around 13,000 homes a year and save about 27,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year.

These figures are based on DECC figures for average household electricity consumption, the Government's long term marginal plant figure of 430g CO₂/kWh and estimates drawn from modelling data on wind speeds measured in the area.

About E.ON

- E.ON is one of the UK's leading power and gas companies - generating electricity, retailing power and gas, developing gas storage and undertaking gas and oil exploration and production. It is part of the E.ON group, one of the world's largest investor-owned power and gas companies. E.ON employs around 11,000 people in the UK and more than 62,000 worldwide;
- In the UK, E.ON supplies power and gas to around five million domestic, small and medium-sized enterprise and industrial customers. E.ON also offers innovative energy services and technologies tailored to meet its customers' needs, and is helping customers become energy efficient by encouraging them to insulate their homes, moderate their energy usage and even generate their own power;
- E.ON's generation portfolio includes world-class gas-, coal- and biomass-fired power stations. E.ON is a market leader in combined heat and power (CHP), and is one of the UK's leading green generators;