



# Improving the woods at Kippenrait Glen 2013 - 18

Winter 2014

## **Local schoolchildren go exploring in the woods**

Following from teacher training sessions led by environmental educator Kate Walters, children from Bridge of Allan Primary School set off recently to explore Kippenrait Glen on a bright autumn day. Some children had visited before with their parents, but for others this was their first time, so it was an exciting experience.

They visited the riverside cave where the teacher read to them from 'Treasure Island'. They were amazed to discover that the cave they were sitting in was the likely inspiration for the cave in which Ben Gunn hid the treasure in that story! Robert Louis Stevenson's frequent visits to the Glen as a child helped him to create this famous adventure story. The children



also learned to identify some of the trees that help to make this woodland so special. Teachers from other local schools have also been taking part in training sessions and their classes are visiting Kippenrait Glen as part of their John Muir Awards as well as using their visits to study various aspects of the natural heritage.

## **What is so special about Kippenrait Glen?**

This wooded glen contains ancient "wildwood" and is very rich in biodiversity. It has been designated as a national Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and also as a European Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

## **Tackling the Rhododendron at Kippenrait Glen**

After many months of planning, work started recently to tackle the dense rhododendron and snowberry which has spread across the northern side of the woods threatening the woodland biodiversity. Experienced habitat restoration contractors, AMW, have been working in the glen, mainly using the "stem injection" technique which was demonstrated on site in March and which has proved very effective. Once this work has been completed and these invasive species have been eradicated, native woodland plants and animals will be able to recolonize the affected areas, improving the biodiversity of the woods.



Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) is the government body responsible for working with Scotland's people to care for the natural heritage. SNH seeks to promote the care and management of the natural heritage, including designated sites, as well as its responsible enjoyment, greater understanding and appreciation and sustainable use. Please visit the SNH website for more information about the organisation.

[www.snh.gov.uk](http://www.snh.gov.uk)



**Scottish Natural Heritage**  
**Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba**

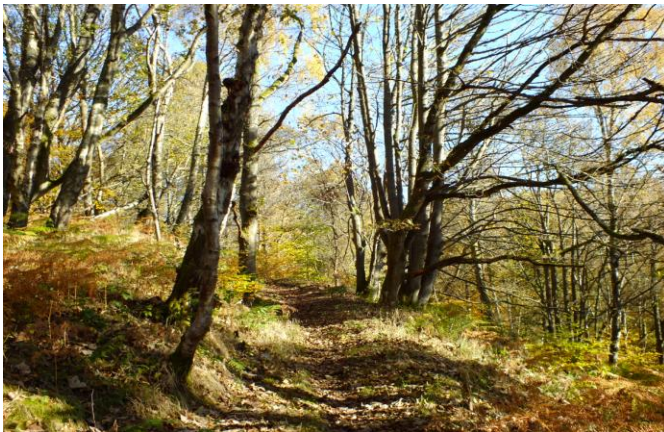
All of nature for all of Scotland  
Nàdar air fad airson Alba air fad



### **Why is there a need to manage the Glen?**

SNH is working in collaboration with the local landowners and users of Kippenrait Glen to manage the woods. Our vision is for a woodland in which biodiversity can flourish and which is highly valued by the local community. In order to attain that, we plan to:

- control invasive non-native species (INNS), including rhododendron, giant hogweed, japanese knotweed, snowberry, beech and skunk cabbage;
- retain fallen and standing deadwood (good for beetles and other insects);
- maintain water quality and damp undisturbed woodland (good for biodiversity);
- maintain access for users of the glen;
- provide information to users;
- provide volunteering opportunities;
- support a woodland outdoor learning project for local school children.



### **Controlling giant hogweed and knotweed**

Following on from successful control works carried out during 2013, further treatment of giant hogweed and japanese knotweed was undertaken in 2014 in the woods beside the Allan Water. The cleared areas are already beginning to colonise with native woodland plants. The works we are undertaking at Kippenrait Glen complement the extensive strategic control programme being organised across the Forth catchment area by the River Forth Fisheries Trust with the help of many specially trained volunteers. This should result in effective long term eradication of these invasive plants.

### **Did you know?**

- The evergreen Holly is traditionally linked with Christmas, but was also important in pre-Christian traditions. The Holly King of Celtic mythology was said to rule from summer to the winter solstice whilst the Oak King ruled the other half of the year.
- Ivy, which also remains green all year, has deep roots in pagan mythology as well as being celebrated in Christmas carols such as "The Holly and the Ivy". As ivy flowers in November and December it benefits many insects which welcome the nectar source.
- The Yew tree was another evergreen native tree which the Druids considered sacred. It symbolised death and resurrection. The tree's needles are poisonous and Shakespeare's Macbeth concocted a poisonous brew using "slips of yew, silvered in the moon's eclipse".
- Tinder fungus, pictured below, is one of the common names for this large bracket fungus which grows on trees. The flesh was used for lighting fires, and was a possession of Otzi the Iceman whose 5,000 year old body was found preserved in an alpine glacier in 1991.



### **Got any queries?**

For general queries about the site and the works please get in touch with the SNH Stirling Office on 01786 450 362 or via [forth@snh.gov.uk](mailto:forth@snh.gov.uk)