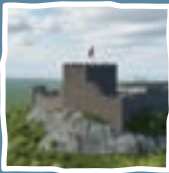
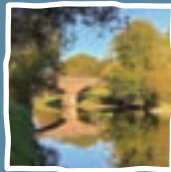


PEOPLE & PLACE

CASE STUDIES OF THE PLACE
IN THE BIOSPHERE PROJECT



GALLOWAY AND
SOUTHERN AYRSHIRE
BIOSPHERE



IT'S ALL ABOUT
TELLING A STORY...

The PLACE in the Biosphere project aimed to encourage people to take a closer look at their surroundings. By telling their story of place to a wider audience people have increased their appreciation of the natural and cultural heritage assets that surround them. This project was part of the National Lottery Heritage Fund GREAT PLACES scheme, involving nine communities across three different landscapes within the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere: the Borge Peninsula; the Wigtownshire Moors; and the Stinchar Valley.

The concept of place has many interpretations but can be summarised as 'a space that has meaning'. Place is more than a particular location or a venue for an event; it combines the physical setting with the emotions that are attached to an area based on individual or collective experiences.

The PLACE in the Biosphere Project invited communities be curious about their cherished places and share their knowledge of how the physical and human aspects of a location interact. It aimed to combine the experiences of people past and present to capture the essence of their place. In doing so, PLACE in the Biosphere strengthened a shared identity and enabled communities to take part in group activities where positive action demonstrated the high value they put on their place. Different themes identified by participants provided a means for communities to communicate their identity to others and to make connections with neighbours who have similar experiences.

The themes that PLACE in the Biosphere communities explored have been summarised to provide inspiration for other communities who want to take a closer look at their place.



PRACTICAL ACTION

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS:

- > VOLUNTEER GROUPS WORKING IN COLLABORATION
- > HISTORIC MONUMENT & ANCIENT WOODLAND MAINTAINED
- > HERITAGE ASSETS MORE ACCESSIBLE

WHERE WE BEGAN

The significance of a cherished place can quickly erode if maintenance is not carried out. From historic monuments to ancient woodlands practical action by volunteers helps in the conservation of heritage assets and improving access. Working with a common purpose raises awareness and strengthens community pride in a place as well as offering opportunities for a wide range of people to get involved, make friends and learn new skills.

WHAT WE DID

Practical action required organisation and leadership and in several locations there were local volunteer groups that were able to provide advice and assistance. Advice from experts ensured that the works were undertaken in a safe and appropriate way. Practical works required approval from owners and managers. When a site was protected by designations, proposed works required advice and consent from public agencies such as Historic Environment Scotland and NatureScot.

CASE STUDY: BORGUE PENINSULA



Castle Haven is a remarkable monument, the remains of a fortified homestead where occupation began about 2,000 years ago. Known locally as 'The Borg', its place name derives from an Old Norse word for fort. The D-shaped fort (or 'dun') has very thick walls with passages or galleries. This galleried dun is unique in Galloway, although similar galleried duns are found in Argyll and the Western Isles. The structure you see today was excavated and partly reconstructed in 1905 by James Brown, local antiquarian and owner of Knockbrex Estate. Brown's excavations revealed the footprint of the structure and his restoration faithfully followed the plan, incorporating the unearthed walls which originally stood up to 1.4 metres high. What you see today is the product of an enthusiastic antiquarian combined with the skills of local drystone dykers.

With consent from the land owner, Historic Environment Scotland and NatureScot, the community collaborated with volunteers from the neighbouring village of Gatehouse of Fleet to remove undergrowth from the central area, install an interpretation panel and improve access.

The background of the page features a photograph of a stone building with ivy growing on its walls. In the foreground, there is a stone wall with several gravestones. The text is overlaid on the top half of the image.

PHOTOS PAST & PRESENT

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS:

- › STORIES COLLECTED INSPIRED BY PHOTOGRAPHS
- › STREET EXHIBITION OF PHOTOGRAPHS TO TELL THE STORY OF A VILLAGE
- › SHORT VIDEO CLIPS OF PAST FADING TO PRESENT

WHERE WE BEGAN

Old photographs are snapshots in time, providing clues to a forgotten past or igniting faded memories. Making photographs accessible to a wider audience helps to strengthen the shared identity of a place. Comparing old images with present views helps us to see how places have evolved and to consider what changes we want to see in the future.

WHAT WE DID

Social media enables volunteers to source photographs from family collections close to home and from those who now live far away but retain a connection with a place. Volunteers submitted photographs and supporting information and archivists helped to date the photographs, revealing much about people, how they lived and what was important to them. A photographer was commissioned to capture some of the views and recreate old images which were then manipulated to contrast past and present scenes. Exhibiting the images in a public outdoor space and online provided opportunities to reach audiences who might not normally enter an exhibition venue.

CASE STUDY: WIGTOWNSHIRE MOORS



Kirkcowan is a small village with a big history and the project's call-out for old photographs of Kirkcowan resulted in many submissions of places which were important to people in the past.

A waulk mill converts the power of running water to drive large wooden hammers to pound wet woollen cloth to tighten the weave and thicken the fabric, a process known as 'waulking' or 'fulling'. The strong flow of the Tarff Water made the site near Kirkcowan a good choice for Robert Milroy to start a waulk mill around 1779 in partnership with his father, John Milroy. The early waulk mill became the centre of mechanised woollen manufacturing in Wigtownshire with the Milroy family rebuilding and extending the factory again and again. A successful rural industry, it employed many people from the village and ran for 175 years before closing in 1954.

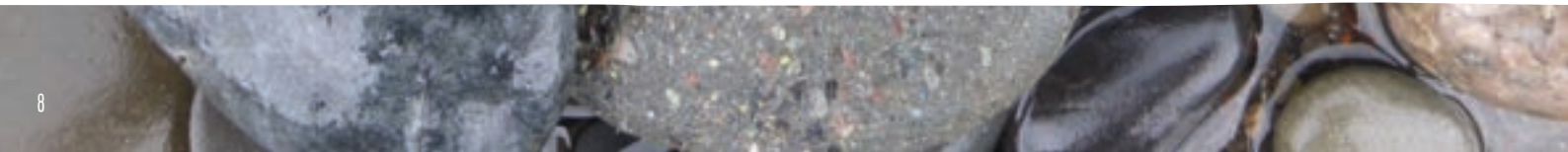
This image shows ghostly workers standing in front of the Waulk Mill woollen manufactory. It is a manipulated image, combining a photograph of the present building with an old photograph that was probably taken in the 1890s or early 1900s judging by the subjects' clothing and variety of hats.



STONE STORIES

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS:

- › A FILM INTRODUCING ROCK AND THE LANDSCAPE
- › PEBBLE IDENTIFICATION EVENT
- › ROCKS REVEALED BLOG



WHERE WE BEGAN

The stones we find at our feet tell the story of the land we live in and the formation of Scotland. Geology is sometimes thought of as too complex for a novice to appreciate but a desire to understand what shaped the landscape led the community to seek expert advice.

WHAT WE DID

With the help of geologists the rocks in the landscape were revealed in a narrated film that identified rock types, how they were formed and cultural history of the hills including standing stones, ancient forts and the well-preserved earthworks. A series of blogs looked at some of the stones more closely and a pebble event helped participants identify the stones they found on the beach.

CASE STUDY: STINCHAR VALLEY



From basalt to limestone the numerous apparently unrelated rock types found in the Stinchar Valley are known as the Ballantrae Complex and have often puzzled geologists who seek to understand the ground beneath our feet.

The rocks are evidence of a time about 500 million years ago when an ancient ocean was being destroyed. While most of the sea floor was forced under a continental plate in the Stinchar Valley a fragment of the sea floor, including volcanic islands, was pushed up to the surface. Due to this process material from deep below the earth's surface now appears above ground and offers a globally rare opportunity to view rocks that were once part of an oceanic crust.

Ballantrae shingle beach creates a bar that is the final hurdle for the River Stinchar on its journey to the sea. It is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its shingle habitat but is also an outstanding example of the physical processes of a dynamic beach, demonstrating active marine erosion, transportation and deposition. The shingle initially appears to be made up of grey stone but a pebble identification event revealed an extraordinarily diverse mix of rock types from the mottled greens of serpentinite to red and yellow cherts, grey basalt and speckled porphyry.



RIVER STORIES

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS:

- > STORIES COLLECTED INSPIRED BY THE RIVER
- > POETRY PAMPHLET PUBLISHED



WHERE WE BEGAN

Rivers are important to the development and identity of a settlement. They have many roles and purposes: often a crossing point to be defended, a meeting place for trade or worship and a source of power for industry. A river means something different to everyone – an angler experiences it differently to the children who paddle or swim there, or to the wildlife photographer, or to the farmer. In different seasons the river's character may change dramatically, from a gentle beauty to a destructive danger.

WHAT WE DID

A writer acting as a facilitator asked for written submissions about the river based on a series of questions. A range of emotions were captured from deeply personal accounts of a life lived with the river to first impressions of people who were new to it. The responses were then crafted (without changing any words) into a single coherent piece that became a poetic story of the river in the words of those who know it.

CASE STUDY: STINCHAR VALLEY



An internship with the PLACE in the Biosphere Project supported a writer and artist who specialised in writing about place, and particularly in exploring the ways in which every place is unique but also ever-changing and experienced differently by all who come into contact with it.

In the short time the intern had with the project they focused on the River Stinchar at the village of Colmonell, finding ways to gather the unique perspectives on the river from as many people and groups as possible. The responses collected were used to create a single celebratory work which portrayed the river in this multi-faceted way.

A written call for 'Words about the Stinchar at Colmonell', asked 3 questions:

Tell me the most exciting thing that you've seen, heard or experienced at the river?

Tell me about the first (or an early) memory you have of the river?

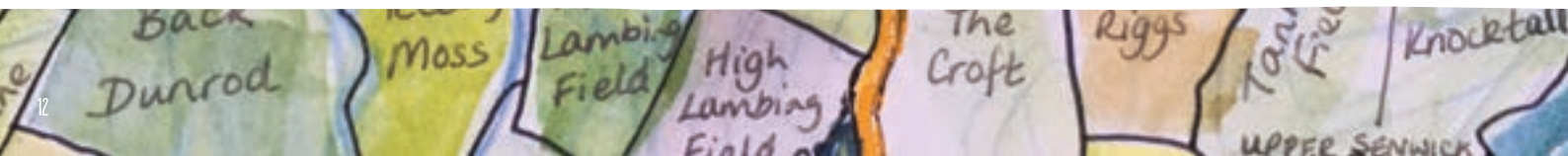
What would you miss most about the river if you were never able to go to it again?



FIELD-NAMES

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS:

- > FIELD-NAMES, LOCATIONS AND LIKELY MEANINGS PRESENTED ON AN INTERACTIVE WEBSITE
- > PAINTED MAP AND PANORAMIC VIEWS TO ILLUSTRATE FIELD-NAMES IN THE LANDSCAPE
- > RESULTS DISPLAYED IN A PUBLIC EXHIBITION AT A LOCAL VENUE



WHERE WE BEGAN

In the past field-names were spoken and rarely written down. The naming process allowed some field-names to slowly change or be replaced by new, more relevant names whilst others seem to persist in the oral tradition. Analysing the meaning and possible origin of every name, old or new, helps us to link past and present and understand how our countryside and its use has evolved.

WHAT WE DID

Gathering field-names required enthusiastic volunteers to question land managers, owners and farmhands. Mapping locations, analysing meanings and presenting the findings in an accessible way needed the involvement of people with a range of skills including linguistic and artistic expertise and website creation.

CASE STUDY: BORGUE PENINSULA



The motivation for the project was provided by the realisation that the countryside around Borgue was still evolving with farms merging and numbers (rather than names) now commonly used to identify fields. The seeds of the Borgue Field-Name Project were sown at a talk about Borgue given by a historian and place-name enthusiast. A plan was hatched by people living locally to gather field-names, map and analyse their meanings, and share this information to a wider audience. As well as being available online the data collected will be stored in the regional archive.

Much of the field-name evidence was collected from discussions with more than 70 landowners, farmers and farm workers who were keen to find out more about the field-names where they – and often their ancestors – lived and worked.

The field-names project inspired a painted map that captures the meaning of the Borgue countryside. Ann Butler, who paints under the name of Annie, lives locally and paints the landscape and coast of Galloway using watercolour, ink and pastel. The field-name painting brings to life the descriptive and sometimes poetic names that are part of our agricultural tradition.

RECONSTRUCTING HISTORY

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS:

- > VIRTUAL REALITY RECONSTRUCTION OF CASTLE
- > 3D IMAGING OF EXISTING STRUCTURE
- > INTERPRETATION PANELS WITH QR CODE LINK TO VR



WHERE WE BEGAN

The remains of ancient monuments are reminders of important events in local history but sometimes fail to capture the imagination. It can be hard to picture how ruins once looked, and they are often difficult to access or dangerous to approach. Using technology to create Virtual Reality modelling can bring ancient monuments to life and help visitors visualise their structure, increasing accessibility as people are able to engage with the location remotely.

WHAT WE DID

A digital reconstruction of the castle was produced with the assistance of historians and specialist film makers. Aerial footage was filmed to create 3D images that were then rendered to produce a Virtual Reality reconstruction. The reconstruction provided 360° views that were made available online and accessed using a QR code on information panels adjacent to the remains.

CASE STUDY: STINCHAR VALLEY



The remains of Ardstinchar Castle stand on a rocky outcrop overlooking the mouth of the River Stinchar, Ballantrae. The ruins are too unstable to visit today so the Ballantrae community suggested that a Virtual Reality reconstruction of the castle would help people experience the history of the castle, particularly its association with a fascinating historical character. Hugh Kennedy built Ardstinchar Castle on his return to Scotland after abandoning the priesthood to fight in the Hundred Years War, during which time he became a captain in the army of Joan of Arc.

Aerial filming was used to create a 3D image of the remains of the castle as they are seen today, and to create a virtual impression of the castle as it would have looked over 400 years ago, seen from view-points at the war memorial and at the bridge that stand below the ruins. Virtual Reality illustrations have been used to create sliding images of past and present as well as views from the sky showing the likely layout for the castle.

A film maker used drone footage to recreate the virtual castle with the associated research undertaken by local historians.



PLACE-NAMES

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS:

- > PLACE-NAME MEANINGS REVISED BASED ON CURRENT RESEARCH
- > AERIAL FILMS REVEALED PLACE-NAMES AND LIKELY DERIVATIONS
- > INTERPRETATION AND ORIENTATION PANELS TO EXPLAIN PLACE-NAMES

WHERE WE BEGAN

The name of a place is a form of cultural memory that helps to preserve elements from the past. Public enthusiasm for finding a meaning behind every place-name has led to many improbable origins that, when repeated enough, became accepted as fact. Place-name study based on current research can help to either reaffirm or offer alternative translations, casting new light on settlements and landmarks as well as the people who named them.

WHAT WE DID

With the help of place-name enthusiasts and linguistic experts the meanings of place-names were unravelled to help us understand the land and its people. Creative people including film makers and graphic designers helped bring place-names and their meanings to life so they could be shared in an engaging way.

CASE STUDY: STINCHAR VALLEY



A place-name can be described as a 'document in miniature', illustrating how the countryside was used, who lived on or owned the land, identifying notable wildlife, or marking territories and places of religious importance.

In an era where 'fake news' is common on social media it is easy for us to imagine a past when information was taken as fact. As the PLACE in the Biosphere Project looked into the heritage of Pinmore and Pinwherry in the Stinchar Valley it became clear that the '*Carrick Gallovidian*', published in 1947 and written by John Kevan McDowall, misled many readers. Despite being nominated as the worst book ever written on Scottish place names by the Scottish Place Name Society, the information it contains continues to be repeated on websites and interpretation panels.

The PLACE in the Biosphere project offered an opportunity to reappraise some place-name meanings. Linguistic experts helped reveal the likely meaning of place-names and this information was used to inform a film about the river valley and to correct errors on interpretation panels.



GUIDED WALKS

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS:

- > WALK LEAFLETS DESIGNED AND PRINTED
- > ONLINE WALK SHEETS PRODUCED
- > GUIDED WALKS GIVEN TO LOCAL PEOPLE BY EXPERTS

WHERE WE BEGAN

Improved information about access into the countryside will help more people enjoy their heritage. Self-guided walks made available as leaflets and online information sheets are a good way of providing directions, minimising the stress of route-finding and navigation while providing insight to the fascinating history of a place.

WHAT WE DID

Experienced local walkers are the best people to provide information about routes; as well as having a wide knowledge of the area they often know about access issues that need to be resolved. Guided walks led by experts including ecologists, historians and archaeologists provided a source of additional information that has been included in leaflets and online guides.

CASE STUDY: WIGTOWNSHIRE MOORS



New Luce lies in the Wigtownshire Moors and although commercial conifer plantations and windfarms have changed the landscape there are a remarkable number of ancient monuments here that have survived for thousands of years. A circular footpath from the village (incorporating part of the Southern Upland Way long distance route) provides access to the Caves of Kilhern. These caves are not true caves at all but the remains of a long-chambered cairn from which most of the stone has been removed. Contained within are four tombs which likely once held the remains of people who lived a settled life as farmers thousands of years ago. The communal burial cairn was probably used for centuries and would have been a feature that marked their group identity and their connection with the land, and demonstrated their right to farm it. Today the cairn lies a short distance from the footpath and is not obvious to the passing walker.

Following a guided walk led by a place-name enthusiast it was decided that an online guide providing clear directions to the Caves of Kilhern and sharing other historic information about this fascinating place would be a valuable asset for the village.



BIOSPHERE AND SENSE OF PLACE

Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere has been recognised internationally as a world class environment for people and nature.

The UNESCO Biosphere designation recognises the fantastic array of landscapes, wildlife, cultural heritage and learning opportunities that south-west Scotland offers for communities, businesses and visitors to experience and celebrate in a sustainable way.

The Biosphere designation brings with it the opportunity to promote the cultural life and heritage of our communities, and to market the local arts, crafts and enterprise of south-west Scotland under the international banner of UNESCO. This is an opportunity that can help make our Biosphere towns and villages stand out from the crowd.

A key objective of Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere is to support communities to use their UNESCO association to help promote themselves as destinations for sustainable tourism, attracting visitors from home and abroad.

If people celebrate the fact that they live, work, produce or sell in our UNESCO Biosphere, the more that word will spread and people will start to actively seek out this amazing part of Scotland as a place they want to spend time and explore. Attracting visitors who want to learn and connect will benefit the communities in which they stay, not only through visitors' direct support of the local economy but also by attracting investment in Galloway and Southern Ayrshire.

To help our communities promote their association with UNESCO and to market themselves as destinations for sustainable tourism, we have produced a selection of free resources that can be used on websites, social media, and in hardcopy promotional materials.

We encourage communities to begin with the Sense of Place toolkit - this gives invaluable tips and guidance on how to tell a story that links local heritage and enterprise with the special features of our UNESCO Biosphere.

A Sense of Place comes from the emotions associated with a place – special qualities, characteristics and identity that makes it different from its surroundings – **'local distinctiveness'**. Landscapes, wildlife, heritage, people, sights, sounds, smells, tastes, memories and many **'things'** can contribute to your experience of a place.

Where will your story begin?

FIND OUT MORE AT
[GSABIOSPHERE.ORG.UK](https://gsabiosphere.org.uk)



WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The PLACE in the Biosphere Project was realised thanks to funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, South Ayrshire Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Southern Uplands Partnership, and Galloway & Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund aims to inspire, lead and resource the UK's heritage to create positive and lasting change for people and communities, now and in the future. It supports activities which explore, save and celebrate the traditions, skills and knowledge of different communities, and which enable people to share the history of their place. In recognition of our climate crisis The National Lottery Heritage Fund is also prioritising projects that reconnect people to landscapes and nature. PLACE in the Biosphere was part of The National Lottery Heritage Fund's Great Places Scheme.

Southern Uplands Partnership is a rural development charity started by local people who wanted to keep the communities and countryside of the south of Scotland alive and healthy. SUP's work includes the support and development of sustainable community projects like PLACE in the Biosphere which build community engagement and help foster a harmonious relationship between people and nature.

Dumfries & Galloway Council, East Ayrshire Council, and South Ayrshire Council cover the three local authority areas that are located within the Biosphere region. All three councils join Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere in their commitment to empowering communities, adapting to the impacts of climate change, conserving local biodiversity, and strengthening the economy of south-west Scotland through sustainable development, green enterprise, and policies that promote responsible tourism. The Biosphere works in partnership with local authorities to deliver learning, heritage and outdoor activity projects which, like the PLACE in the Biosphere Project, inspire community pride.

Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere is privileged to have the support of local and national bodies who recognise the potential in long term, collaborative partnership working, and whose strategic goals align with those of the Biosphere in the realisation of the Sense of Place approach.

Scottish Forestry is the Scottish Government agency responsible for forestry policy, support and regulations. The 5,268 square kilometres that comprise the Biosphere region include hundreds of thousands of acres of forest, from commercial forestry to precious ancient woodlands. Scottish Forestry regulates and promotes all of Scotland's forests and leads on delivery of woodland creation targets, following The Forestry Strategy 2019-2029. Its goals are for Scotland's forests and woodlands to support a strong economy, a thriving environment, and healthy and flourishing communities. The delivery of the PLACE in the Biosphere Project included woodland improvements supporting accessibility and biodiversity.

NatureScot is Scotland's nature agency, working to improve Scotland's natural environment and inspire everyone to care more about it. The organisation shares many goals in common with the Biosphere, particularly in aiming to find ways that people and nature can integrate so that life becomes better for both. NatureScot promotes sensitive management of our natural world as a collective responsibility, and the fact that everyone must commit to the maintenance, protection and enhancement of green spaces and biodiversity for locals and visitors alike. NatureScot facilitates and promotes exploration and activity outdoors, which was a key aim of the PLACE in the Biosphere Project.

South of Scotland Enterprise is the Economic and Community Development Agency for Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders, with a vision to drive inclusive growth, increase competitiveness, and tackle inequality within the region. Firmly future-focused and strong in support of innovative ideas, South of Scotland Enterprise recognises the rich and vibrant cultural heritage of this region which was celebrated by the PLACE in the Biosphere Project. The expertise and support it has provided allows the Biosphere to advance plans and projects based on shared values of inclusivity and responsibility.

