



FRIENDS of JOHN MUIR'S BIRTHPLACE

Newsletter No. 36, Spring 2017

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125 YEARS OF THE SIERRA CLUB

NEW EXHIBITION
by the

 FRIENDS of
JOHN MUIR'S
BIRTHPLACE

**21 APRIL -
30 JUNE**

Discover how
John Muir provided the
inspiration for the Sierra
Club and its fundamental
message to **Explore,
enjoy and protect the
planet**, and how the
Club is rising to the
environmental
challenges that
face us all.

John Muir's
Birthplace
126 High St,
Dunbar EH42 1JJ
10am - 5pm
(Sunday 1pm - 5pm)

For more information:
www.jmbt.org.uk

  



Annual General Meeting of 1st February 2017 Convener's Report

It is customary to begin the Convener's report by stating the aims of Friends of John Muir Birthplace (FoJMB) as given in our constitution. These aims are:

to advance the education of the public concerning John Muir, as the Dunbar-born pioneer of world nature conservation, and his belief in the unique and irreplaceable value of wild places and wild creatures;

to implement John Muir's philosophy practically by conserving, restoring and enhancing landscape and wildlife in East Lothian and Scotland and supporting the work of the staff of John Muir's Birthplace.

Over the past year we have continued to further these objectives by:

- Delivering a programme of talks and other events on John Muir and environmental topics, both within and outwith John Muir's Birthplace.
- Publishing regular newsletters containing items regarding John Muir, environmental issues and the work of JMB; circulated to members, available at the Birthplace and online on the Friends website¹.
- Liaising with people and organisations of influence both locally and nationally. Including: John Muir Birthplace Trust; John Muir Trust; VisitScotland; Historic Scotland.
- Being involved in local environmental initiatives such as the Dunbar Woodland Group and Sustaining Dunbar.
- Providing volunteers on a regular and ad hoc basis to support JMB staff and to promote JMB both locally and further afield.

Full details of the highlights over the past year have been given in the newsletters published during 2016 and the archive of all past issues is available via the FoJMB website².

¹ <http://muirbirthplacefriends.org.uk>

² <http://muirbirthplacefriends.org.uk/newsletters/past/>

The events that FoJMB have helped to organise and deliver include:

- January to March: FoJMB exhibition celebrating 125 years of Yosemite National Park.
- 11th February: Welcoming pupils of Dunbar Grammar School to JMB in advance of their trip to California and donating copies of the FoJMB 'wee books' '*Close to Nature's Beating Heart*' and '*Still Walking the World*' to each pupil.
- 15th May: Hosting/supporting the *Spirit of John Muir* performance by Lee Stetson during the Festival of Museums 2016.
- 28th May: John Muir's '*The Story of My Boyhood and Youth*' talk by Will Collin during the Coastword's Dunbar Literary Festival 2016
- August to November: FoJMB exhibition, '*John Muir and America's Best Idea*' celebrating the 100 years of the US National Parks Service.

The success of the Birthplace is due, of course, to the hard work and dedication of the museum staff and, also, the Friends that help out on a voluntary basis. Their heroic efforts have maintained the museum's Gold 'Green Tourism' award and the Scottish Tourist Board five star visitor attraction status.

I'd like to thank all my fellow Council members - past and present - for their tireless efforts in promoting Friends and the Birthplace.

Best wishes for 2017.

Duncan Smeed

Celebrating 125 Years of the Sierra Club A Friends Exhibition

Following the success of the Friends' exhibitions in 2016 – the first celebrating the 125th anniversary of the creation of Yosemite National Park and the second marking the US National Park Service centenary by telling the story of a number of NPS sites and of Muir's involvement with them – Friends decided to put together two more exhibitions for 2017. The first of these – **125 Years of the Sierra Club** - is an exhibition celebrating the founding of the Sierra Club. This exhibition is to be launched on April 21st and runs until June/July. [The second exhibition – **John Muir & Geology** - will highlight Muir's passion for geology and the role this played in his own adventures and discoveries. It runs from July until early October].

Jamie Hinrichs

[Jamie has contributed the following article as a result of her involvement in the production of the Sierra Club exhibition. Ed.]

The Sierra Club's mission to **explore, enjoy, restore, and protect** wild places is the embodiment of John Muir's passions. Having just celebrated its 125th birthday, the Sierra Club continues to have a global and personal impact. Case in point: 29-year-old American, Jamie Hinrichs.

Over the past decade, Hinrichs has gone on regular backpacking trips and day hikes with friends in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, where the Sierra Club got its start. Just like Sierra Club outings, her own excursions are rooted in both education and a love for the outdoors. She **enjoys** hiking within high-elevation mountain scenery, but is also committed to **exploring** the local flora, fauna, and geography as a naturalist and through vocational training in forestry.

These experiences fostered a desire to pursue work that would **protect and restore** wild places. Hinrichs spent her first field season working in the Sierra Nevada Mountains on a "frog crew" for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. During her own "First Summer in the Sierra", she conducted

population surveys and worked to **restore** habitat for an endangered species of frog, all to **protect** it from extinction.



Hinrichs is now a PhD student in Environmental History at the University of St Andrews, where she hopes her writing will, like that of John Muir, inspire others to engage with and care about the natural world. Just as the Sierra Club was significantly shaped by the passions and efforts of a single individual (Muir), there is no knowing what influence another single individual (like you) could have while **enjoying, exploring, restoring, and protecting** wild spaces.

Membership News

Online Delivery of Newsletters

A significant number of Friends have opted out of receiving paper copies of the Newsletter and now read the online version³ instead. This is a significant saving since the production and delivery cost of the Newsletter is now a substantial proportion of the membership subscription. If you still receive paper copies of the newsletter and would like to opt out of receiving paper copies in the future then please do let us know.

Membership Renewal Reminders

Friends' Council hopes that the initiatives, events and publications that are produced to help promote Muir's life and work and that support John Muir's Birthplace have been of interest to the membership. If our records show that your membership is due for renewal then a subscription form will be included in this newsletter mailing.

An Apology

This (Spring) newsletter was intended to be distributed during March or April but has only recently been produced to coincide with the distribution of the Summer newsletter. As a result some of the news items intended for this newsletter were beyond their 'expiry date' and have been omitted. Some of the missing news items were published/announced on the Friends' website and/or the Friends' Facebook page⁴ and I apologise to members that don't have online access to these resources and have missed out on those pieces of news.

Ed.

FRIENDS CONTACTS

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Friends Email: info@muirbirthplacefriends.org.uk

Friends Website: www.muirbirthplacefriends.org.uk

³ <http://muirbirthplacefriends.org.uk/newsletters/current/>

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/fojmb/>