

Mountain Bothies Association

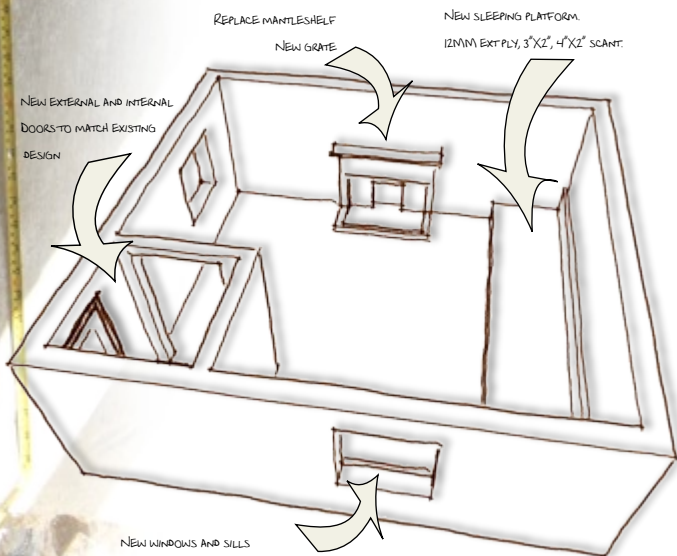
Annual Report 2010

Year ending 31 March 2010



Kearvaig

Last summer a team of MBA volunteers descended on Kearvaig, a former farm cottage just a few miles from Cape Wrath, the most north-westerly tip of the British mainland. A week of work was invested in the building, which was suffering from damp and neglect. All external doors and windows were replaced, as far as possible in the same style as the original.





The old...



and the new

The internal plasterboard was repaired in places, but large sections were replaced with wooden panelling behind which moisture barriers were installed. The 'side school', the



SLEEPING PLATFORM
FABRICATED OFF SITE

single room at the east end of the building, was refurbished as a 'snug' for winter visitors. As with any project, a great deal of planning was done in advance, and doors, windows and the new sleeping platform were all prefabricated, the latter being dismantled for transport to the site.

Bothy maintenance isn't primarily about conservation. It is about keeping available a shelter that is safe to use and as easy as possible for us to look after, but the character of the building and the retention of important features are matters close to our hearts. Making the windows and doors look authentic and retaining other features where possible was an important part of this project.



Work never ends...

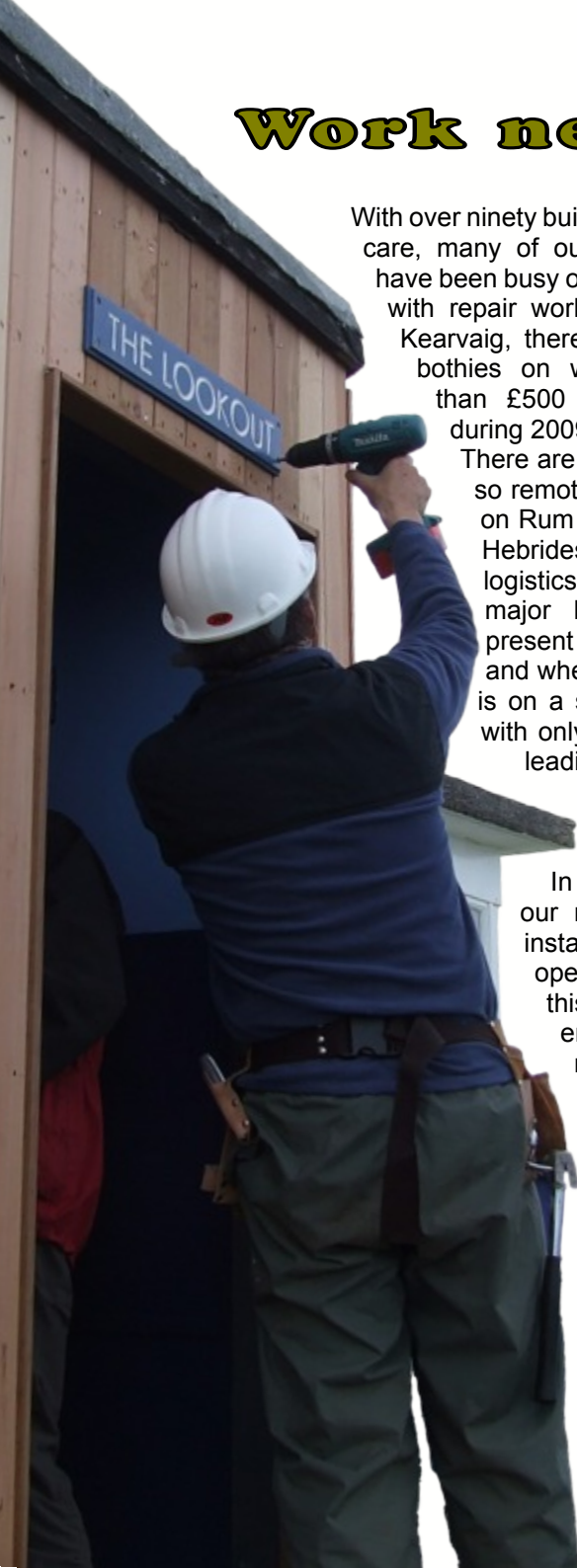
With over ninety buildings in our care, many of our members have been busy over the year with repair work. Besides Kearvaig, there were nine bothies on which more than £500 was spent during 2009-2010.

There are few bothies so remote as Dibidil, on Rum in the Inner Hebrides. The logistics of any major bothy work present a problem, and when the bothy is on a small island with only a footpath leading to the door the difficulties can mount.

In June 2009

our members replaced a wooden floor, installed a stove and liner in place of an open fire and carried on other works. On this occasion a helicopter was employed, as the most practical method of moving the heavy materials. In the past wood has been brought to Dibidil by boat, but the landing is always difficult and relies on ideal sea conditions. Some more delicate items, such as the flue liner, came on people's backs the 6 miles from the pierhead at Kinloch.

Perched on the northernmost cliff top on Skye, the former coastguard station The Lookout is the most exposed bothy in our care, which distinction brings particular problems. Our first attempt to



replace the wooden cladding on the outside of the bothy had to be abandoned because of dangerously high winds. On the second attempt the work was successfully completed. The new cladding, like the old, is western red cedar, a durable wood that requires no preservatives and is ideal for a position where even standing safely can sometimes prove a challenge and the rain on its own can strip paint off wood in a matter of months.

Different locations, different challenges.

At Mosedale Cottage in the Lake District, the major logistical obstacle is the surrounding bog. Stuart Lewis and his team had the use of a snowcat to transport a replacement stove to this popular bothy. A quadbike was used to bring a new stove several miles from the nearest road to Craig in the North West Highlands, while a boat was used to transport scaffolding to and from Peanmeanach on the west coast, for work on the chimney head. Perhaps surprisingly there is no record of a sleigh and reindeer having been employed by us over the past winter, but most other forms of mechanised transport have been used in the year covered by this report.

We still on occasions rely exclusively on volunteers to portage materials to a bothy, as was the case at Strathan in North-West Sutherland. Work to be done included new wooden flooring & masonry, which meant a lot of carrying for the stalwarts who turned out at this workparty: four miles along the ruins of a footpath.

Remoteness does not necessarily equate with inaccessibility and we are fortunate that in many cases we can get conventional road vehicles close to the bothy when work is required. Although the logistics may be easier, the work is no less valuable and no less valued by those who make good use of the shelter provided.

This year saw important work carried on at Ryvoan, where the porch was rebuilt, Penrhos Isaf, which also got a new stove, White Laggan, Blackburn of Corrieyairack and at a further 45 bothies, which means work was done at a total of 56 locations this year. The total maintenance spend was just under £35,000 and 1130 volunteer days were recorded.





Mark Cottage



This year saw a new bothy added to the MBA list. Mark Cottage stands on the western shore of Loch Long in Argyll. At the beginning of an old track heading west into Argyll, the little cottage was once well known as the home of the oldest man in Scotland.

The renovation included work on the roof and remodeling of the inside. Old stud wall partitions were removed along with the stairway and a new partition now divides this little building, forming two rooms. The loft is no longer accessible,

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Benefactors to the MBA

Every year we benefit from the generosity of individuals, their friends and various funds, who provide substantial donations for specific projects or for our general expenditure. Several have asked for no public acknowledgement, but we are delighted to record our sincere appreciation toward them and the other benefactors listed below who have helped us over recent years.

Culloden Academy

J.A. Fox

J.C. Lang

Elizabeth M. Anderson

Dr. A. Anderson

Richard and Susan Merelie

Geoff Jenkinson

Andrew Naylor

H.M. Queen

Andrew Jensen Memorial (Gameshope)

Langside Mountaineering Club John Innes (Camban)

St Andrews Society of East Lothian (Camban)

Mr & Mrs William G. Randall, in mem. Nicholas Randall

In mem. Anne Sutherland (Coiremor, Strathan)

Stephen Higgs

George Lamb

Lilias Wehrle Legacy (Bothies in North-West Scotland)

David Brown (The Lookout, 2006-7)

Fargher-Noble Trust

Donations in memory, Dr David J. Miller

The Family of the late John Dargie (Strabeg)

Rochsoles Trust

Friends of Bob Scott's

Kielder District, Forest Enterprise

Chris Brasher Trust

Michael Whalley

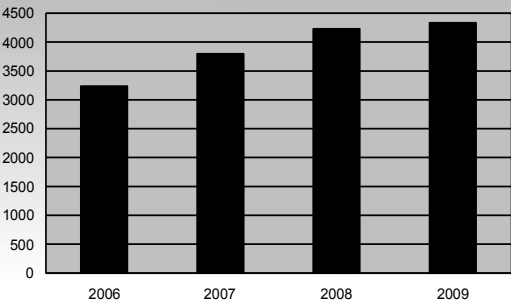
Rt Hon Lord Smith of Finsbury (Craig)

Membership Analysis

At the end of the financial year, 31 March 2009, we had a total of 4335 members in the categories shown in the table opposite.

This is a slight increase on the figure of 4229 in 2008 continuing the upward trend seen over the past decade.

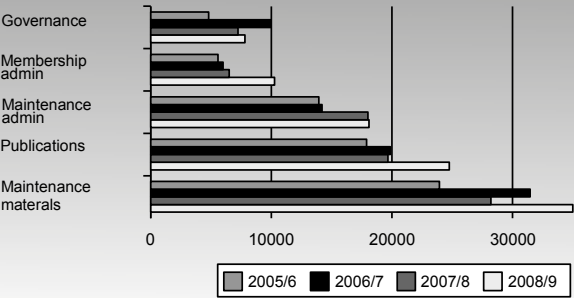
Year	2006	2007	2008	2009
Members	3237	3797	4229	4335
Individual		2825	3171	3187
Overseas		57	71	76
Concessions		828	981	1008
Juniors		7	4	6
Affiliated		35	29	16
Life		38	36	35
Honorary life		7	7	7
Total		3797	4299	4335



Expenditure Analysis

Total expenditure this year increased by over 25% compared to 2007/8. To give a clear picture of how our funds were spent we list them in five categories: materials for bothy maintenance, publications, maintenance admin, governance, and membership admin:

Expenditure	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9
Governance	4799	9967	7242	7804
Membership admin	5583	5989	6502	10263
Maintenance admin	13939	14195	17997	18090
Publications	17888	19858	19677	24751
Maintenance materials	23928	31452	28197	45283
Total	66137	81461	79615	106191



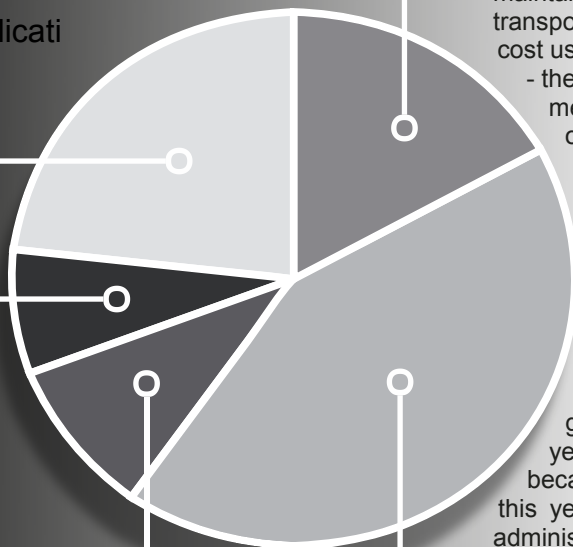
Maintenance admin

Publicati

Governance

Membership admin

Maintenance materials



The highest amount, £45,283 this year, was spent on materials to maintain bothies - wood, nails, transport, tools, etc. Publications cost us £24751 - newsletters, etc - the equivalent of £5.71 per member. £18,090 was spent on organising the maintenance - meeting expenses, AOs expenses, postage, telephone, insurance, financial administration by Henderson Black, depreciation costs on equipment, etc. Expenditure on governance was up this year to £7,804 - in part because there was an election this year. Membership administration cost us £10,263 - this is work by Henderson Black, direct debit charges, etc - equivalent to £2.37 per member.

Your comments on these figures, how we have spent the money, and how we have reported on this, are very welcome - please contact the treasurer or any of the trustees.

Expenditure per member

No of members	Year 2006/7	Members 3797	Year 2007/8	Members 4229	Year 2008/9	Members 4335
	Amount spent	Per member	Amount spent	Per member	Amount spent	Per member
Publications	19858	£5.23	19677	£4.65	24751	£5.71
Governance	9967	£2.62	7242	£1.71	7804	£1.80
Membership admin	5989	£1.58	6502	£1.54	10263	£2.37
		£9.43		£7.90		£9.88
Maintenance materials	31452	£8.28	28197	£6.67	45283	£10.45
Maintenance admin	14195	£3.74	17997	£4.26	18090	£4.17
		£12.02		£10.92		£14.62
Expenditure per member		£21.45		£18.83		£24.50

A major investment is being made in providing volunteers with the skills necessary to work safely and efficiently. We have now had three training weekends covering work party organisation and working with scaffolding.

MBA in training...

The first ever training organised by the MBA was probably a week at Ben Alder Cottage in 1988, when the aim was to share practical skills that could be useful in looking after a bothy.



More recently, the Association has organised regular first aid courses, using the services of HSE accredited trainers to allow many of our members to reach 'first responder' status. We have also organized in-house training in financial administration, to help senior maintenance officers handle their sometimes sizable budgets.

This year, the investment of time and effort by members in acquiring important skills useful in organising and leading maintenance work has reached new levels. Supported by the MBA, a number of members have recently been on

PASMA (Prefabricated Access Suppliers' and Manufacturers' Association) training courses, to learn the safe use of scaffold towers and training courses for using abrasive wheels (angle-grinders) are also being subsidised.

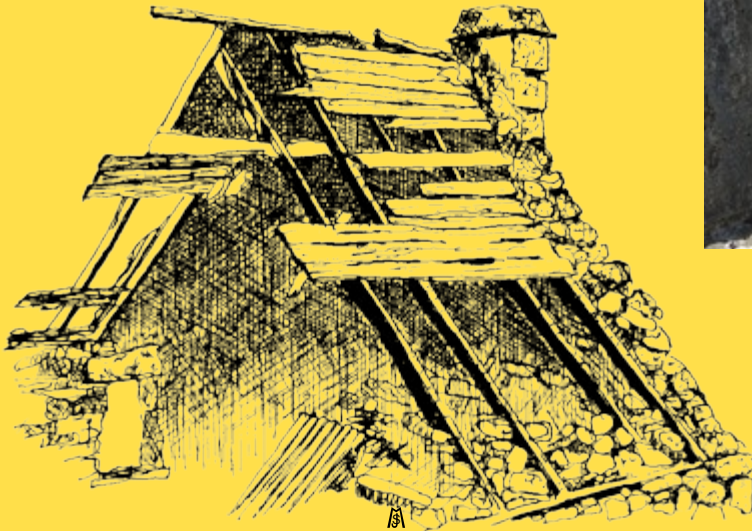
The Association itself held three training weekends in early 2010, with a twofold aim. The first was to familiarise more volunteers with the paperwork required to record the practical aspects of planning a work party. We have an excellent safety record, the result of sound planning and the application of common sense over the years, and the aim is to support this with a framework of documentation to record risk assessments, the method of work and other important information.

The other aim of the training was to make volunteers aware of Cuplok scaffolding, one of several scaffolding systems widely used in industry. Cuplok has been chosen over other systems because it is thought to be the most user-friendly currently available. The training equipped volunteers to safely erect, inspect and dismantle Cuplok for a lift of up to 2m. A follow-on course is being considered to cover planning with scaffolding and the basic course may be repeated if enough members show interest.



Some 45 members have been through these training weekends which were organized by MBA members Liz Bibby, Jim Ross, John Arnott and Roger Muhl.

The past and the present...



TO MAINTAIN SIMPLE SHELTERS IN REMOTE COUNTRY FOR THE





Depopulation of the British countryside progressed steadily through most of the 20th century, leaving large numbers of abandoned cottages and other buildings to the mercy of the elements. In time, many of these came to be valued as shelters by hillgoers and the Mountain Bothies Association came into existence to preserve as many as possible in a fit state to be used. At present there are 95 buildings in our care.

USE AND BENEFIT OF ALL WHO LOVE WILD AND LONELY PLACES





Greg's Hut



Craig, Allt Scheicheachan

Bothies come in all shapes and sizes...

Keeping these remote buildings weathertight and safe to use is the at times daunting task undertaken by our volunteer workforce. The MBA has a membership of 4,000, of whom about 500 help with the practical work. New volunteers are always welcome.

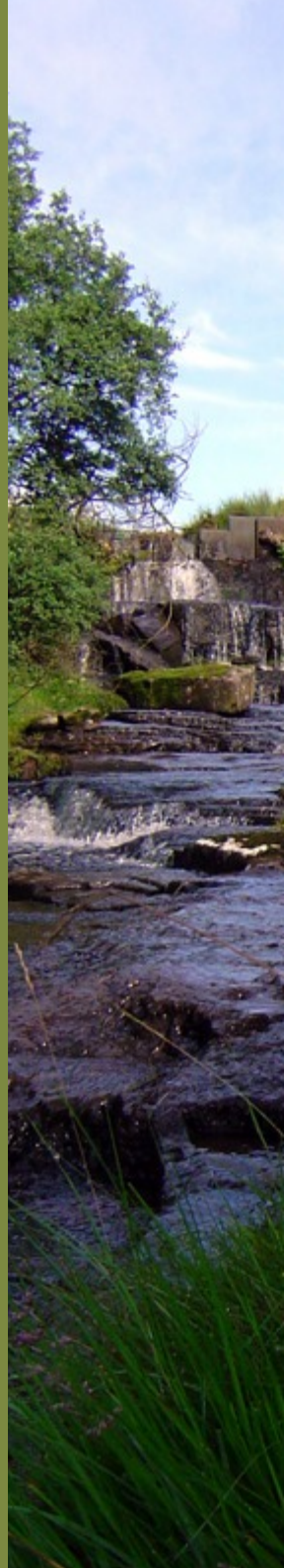
Bothies come in all shapes and most sizes, but in the main they are small with only one or two rooms. Most were once home to shepherding families, cottages built about a century ago; but our portfolio also includes a deer watcher's bothy, a hunting lodge, a coastguard watch station, a school, two water valve houses, mine workers' shops, a former youth hostel and several stables and byres. These represent a broad cross-section of the rural built heritage in remote areas of Great Britain.

We have in several places rebuilt cottages in isolated and abandoned settlements, where formerly dozens of families might have lived, thus preserving at least an occasional human presence. One of these is the home of James of the Glen in Glen Duror, he being the James Stewart who was a leading character in Stevenson's 'Kidnapped'. Two cottages on the Isle of Rum, the cottage at Peanmeanach and Taigh Thormoid Dubh, the House of Black Norman,

on Raasay are a small selection of other buildings that have risen from ruins courtesy of the MBA.

Renovations vary in scope and whilst this basically depends on the state of the structure we may also consider how a building could be altered to improve its sustainability. We always hope to maintain bothies over many years, and this work can be eased by, for instance, replacing an iron sheet roof with modern, more durable materials, or by adding new facilities, such as the successful toilet at Corrour in the Cairngorm National Park. However, as far as we can changes to the character of a building are kept to a minimum and in many places we have worked hard to replace like with like. We have reslated many a roof, and at Greg's Hut and Warnscale Head, both in the north of England, we renewed traditional roofs of stone slabs held in place with oak pegs.

The achievement of the MBA remains the existence of nearly a hundred buildings, some in the most remote and inaccessible corners of the country. As much as the grand renovations, it has been more modest efforts of our volunteers on a regular basis that have over the past 45 years preserved a sizable chunk of the rural built heritage of upland Britain.





Grwyne Fawr, in the Black Mountains of Wales, is a redundant water pumping house. One of the smallest bothies we maintain, it is a good example of how a use can be found for unusual buildings in isolated places.

Doors and windows lend character to a building and the recent work at Kearvaig has by no means been the only occasion when we have made authentic looking doors and window frames. Traditional fittings have been reused in many projects, or served as a



The Schoolhouse, Duag Bridge

pattern for new accessories, such as the wooden coat hooks at Kearvaig. At Kershopehead in the Kielder Forest our volunteers sourced wooden trusses to support the roof and in Wainhope the floor planks were also reclaimed from an old mill. At Strathan in Sutherland the traditional 'middle room' has been rebuilt. The list could run for another page, or more.

The main achievement of the MBA remains the existence of nearly a hundred buildings, some in the most remote and inaccessible corners of the country. The often modest efforts of our volunteers as much as the grand renovations have over the past forty five years preserved a sizable chunk of the rural built heritage of upland Britain.



Knockdampf

Photo credits: *Alan Bellis, John Bowness, Colin Brash, Kevin Campbell, John Cameron, John Innes, Peter King, John Mitchell, Margaret Pryde, David Robertson, Steve Smyth, Paul Webster, Anne Young*

Edited by Peter King
Designed by John Mitchell

maintaining simple shelters



Mountain Bothies Association is a charity registered in Scotland, no. SC008685 and a company limited by guarantee and registered in Scotland, no. SC191425

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www.mountainbothies.org.uk

