



Outdoor Recreation Network

Outdoor Recreation Network Annual Report 2015-16



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A View from the Chair

Jo Burgon, March 2016

A year of adjustment for the Network as a new secretariat takes on the responsibilities of running our affairs and organising meetings. New ideas and questioning of how and why we do things has helped keep us on our toes and make us think what do Network members want from ORN?



In the UK Outdoor Recreation is a devolved responsibility and so, to my mind, Networks like ours become more valued and important. That sharing of knowledge, experience and practice in this increasingly diversified sector ensures good, sound policy and practice come to the surface. While ORN is not a lobbying or campaigning network it can help shine a light on research and innovation. We participated in the work being undertaken by DCMS in creating a new Sports Strategy for England, which includes the needs for outdoor recreation. One of our members, Sport and Recreation Alliance, played a key part in bringing the voluntary sector perspectives to bear. The Outdoor Recreation strategy for Northern Ireland was prepared with cross party support by another network member, Sport NI who informed and influenced this work.

As the public sector continues to experience budget cut backs so new collaborations are sought to make advances for people's access to and enjoyment of the outdoors. Investment by Sport England with the National Trust in off road cycling routes, local partnerships by the Forestry Commission in England and Scotland especially in peri-urban areas have helped improve the green infrastructure in cities. Two of our meetings in recent years included visits to major land reclamation sites in Glasgow next to the Commonwealth Games complex and in East London where we witnessed an active programme by the Commission with the local Community Forest - Thames Chase.

It is very good to see the network membership numbers stay so solid and to welcome the return of Coillte, the Irish forestry service and National Trust for Scotland. We are always interested in hearing from others who want to join us.

Our activities during 2015/16 are described below. We aim to identify topics that have a universal appeal and interest so that participation comes from across the UK and Ireland. As travel budgets get tighter we need to ensure our meetings are relevant to members and the sector at large. Our Autumn meeting had a European flavour as we joined in with the biennial meeting of the European Network for Outdoor Sports (ENOS). This was held in Northern Ireland and hosted by Down Council and Sport NI.

My thanks to all who have hosted our meetings this year, welcomed us to venues and sites and for stimulating some excellent discussion and debate. I always hope we leave our meetings enlightened and inspired and, of course, refreshed.

Finally my thanks to the small management group that guide and steer the network and, of course, to the Secretariat and Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland (ORN) who are managing our finances, which keep the show on the road.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J.P. Burgo".

Introduction

ORN is a network which:

- Covers the UK and the Republic of Ireland
- Gives easy access to information on countryside and related recreation matters
- Reaches organisations and individuals in the public, private and voluntary sectors
- Networks thousands of interested people

ORN is funded through membership by a range of government departments, agencies and other bodies who share an interest in outdoor recreation issues. For the period covered by this report, ORN contracted its administration to AKTA Partnership with finances managed by Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland (ORNI), Belfast.

Aims and Objectives

To work together for people outdoors, to:

- Share knowledge
- Gather evidence
- Develop ideas
- Promote good practice

Management:

Chairmanship	Jo Burgon, Independent
Vice Chair	Mike McClure, Sport Northern Ireland
Budget Officer	Philip Broadbent-Yale, National Trust
Communications Officer	James Ogilvie, Forestry Commission Scotland
Research Officer	Alison Darlow, Natural England

Secretariat: AKTA Partnership

Finance: ORNI

Business Address:

The Old Wheelwrights
London Road
Blewbury
Oxfordshire
OX119PB

www.outdoorrecreation.org.uk

Membership

ORN is funded by the annual fees raised by its executive and support member organisations. It is these very members who shape the Network's activities, and who ensure that it continues to meet their needs and the needs of the sector as a whole. Throughout 2015-16 our members have continued to support the growth of the Network's open seminar programme, thereby increasing information-sharing and networking opportunities for members and the wider outdoor recreation industry within which we function. Our members take voluntary positions within the management group and engage wholeheartedly with each business meeting by means of providing advance organisational updates and through personal attendance.

The following organisations were members of ORN during 2015/16:

Executive members

1. Association of National Park Authorities
2. Canal and River Trust
3. Forestry Commission England
4. Forestry Commission Scotland
5. National Trust
6. Natural England
7. Natural Resources Wales
8. Northern Ireland Environment Agency
9. Scottish Government
10. Scottish Natural Heritage
11. Sport Northern Ireland
12. Sport Scotland
13. Waterways Ireland
14. Coillte

Organisation Representative

- | |
|-----------------------|
| Ally Kohler |
| Brian MacAulay |
| Bridgette Hall |
| James Ogilvie |
| Philip Broadbent-Yale |
| Jane Houghton |
| Jont Bulbeck |
| Nial McAleenan |
| Helen Jones |
| Rob Garner |
| Mike McClure |
| Elaine Fotheringham |
| Caroline McCaroll |
| Bill Murphy |

Support members

1. Heritage Council Ireland
2. Historic Scotland
3. Lee Valley Regional Park
4. Northern Ireland Tourist Board
5. Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland
6. Sport and Recreation Alliance
- 7 Welsh Government

Organisation Representative

- | |
|-------------------|
| Beatrice Kelly |
| Martin Gray |
| Nigel Foxall |
| Sheena Dickson |
| Caro-lynne Ferris |
| Hannah Dobbin |
| Catrin Dellar |

Network Events

ORN shares information and provides a forum for discussion and debate through its annual programme of events, e-newsletters, journals and website. During 2015-16 a total of 3 network meetings and open seminars were delivered, 9 e-newsletters and 2 journals.

During 2015-16, ORN organised a number of events to allow its members to network with each other and with regional and national industry experts. The overarching aim of these events is to share information, knowledge, best practice and ideas.

The following events were delivered during 2015-16:

Network Meetings

1. June 2015, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London England

Theme: Outdoor Recreation - The Unknown Legacy?

Host: Lee Valley Regional Park

Meeting attendance: 15

Seminar attendance: 18

The focus of the ORN Spring Seminar was “How Outdoor Recreation could benefit more major sporting events legacy”? The Olympic Park provided a great venue for delegates to see, firsthand, how the park now provides an excellent venue for a wide range of outdoor recreation activities. The morning seminar featured talks from Shaun Dawson (CEO Lee Valley Regional Park), Emma Boggis (CEO Sports and Recreation Alliance,) and Andrew Honey (DCMS) and was followed by an afternoon workshop in which participants explored the subjects they would like to see included in an Outdoor Recreation Strategy for the UK.



The ORN member meeting spent time exploring the resources in the Olympic Park and looking and visiting Forestry Commission sites in Thames Chase. Both site visits provided excellent opportunity to see how a major sporting event such as the Olympics not only provided new resources but could act as a catalyst to develop activities on nearby sites.

Attached to this event ORN members spent a workshop session looking at how the Outdoor Recreation Network would develop over the next few years. This included considering how to bring new members into the network and the types of activity that the network should be undertaking.

<http://www.outdoorrecreation.org.uk/events/46/outdoor-recreation-the-unknown-legacy/>

2. 29th September 2015, Tollymore outdoor Centre, Northern Ireland

Theme: Autumn Network meeting

Host: Sport Northern Ireland

Meeting attendance: 9

ORN decided to link this meeting to the European Network of Outdoor Sports (ENOS) event in Northern Ireland rather than organize a separate seminar so following the business meeting many of the attendees went on to attend the ENOS conference that was starting the following day in nearby Newcastle

The business meeting was chaired by James Ogilvie and with the weather being so good the meeting was held outside on the large balcony of the Tollymore Centre, hats were provided for those in need. The venue provided great accommodation and views of the Mourne Mountains.

After the meeting members were shown round Castlewellan Forest Park with a commentary on how the site had been managed before an excellent meal in a local pub.

<http://www.outdoorrecreation.org.uk/events/48/orn-autumn-meeting/>

The Nature and Sports Euro'meet

This is a biennial event that is managed by the European Network of Outdoor Sports (ENOS)

The 2 key themes for the event linked strongly to both EU priorities and to the needs for the development of outdoor sports in Northern Ireland as articulated by the NI Outdoor Recreation Action Plan. These were:

1. Increasing participation and optimising the social benefits associated with outdoor sports
2. Capturing and developing the economic importance of outdoor sports for a region or territory.

However, there was an overarching consideration of the importance of working in cross border areas.

Over 140 delegates were at the conference from 15 different countries and represented a great range of sectors. These included tourism agencies, local and national authorities, national and international federations of sport, private sector organisations, other networks and non-government organisations.

The conference was opened by the Ministers for Sport in Northern Ireland - Minister Carál Ní Chuilín MLA and the Republic of Ireland – Minister Michael Ring TD. Both Ministers enthusiastically endorsed the conference and the opportunities for greater European Networking and collaboration as well as the importance of outdoor sports in meeting governmental targets for health enhancing physical activity and “smart and sustainable” economic growth.

The programme encompassed key note addresses, workshops highlighting good practice, technical workshops to provide detailed toolkits and practical advice as well as poster presentations. An important aspect to the conference was the networking time and this was facilitated through coffee breaks beside the main conference room in the outstanding venue of the Slieve Donard hotel. The 2 working site visits showcased the local area, provided breathing and reflection time and a great opportunity for networking for the delegates.

Participation theme presentations were provided from Northern Ireland, France, England, Portugal, Germany and Greece on topics as varied as the importance of community engagement, developing genuine inclusivity for people with disabilities, connecting children and young people with nature and opportunities, creating innovative on-line and app mechanisms, private sector motivation and how the outdoors can facilitate sustainable participation at low cost. Economic theme presentations were provided from Northern Ireland, France, Wales, Switzerland and the Republic of Ireland on topics as varied as quality accreditation, creating innovative on line and app mechanisms to capture reliable data and needs as well as to disseminate information, factors influencing the development of top climbing destinations and the economic value of trails and greenways.



Feedback from the delegates was extremely positive with over 94% rating the event overall as good or excellent. Details of the presentations are available at:

<http://www.nature-sports.eu/page.cfm?docid=documentation&idtheme=29>

3. March 2016, Sheffield England

Theme: Digital Data and Outdoor Recreation: research, tools and applications
Lead by: Natural England and Canals and Rivers Trust in Partnership with
Sheffield Hallam University
Seminar attendance: 58
Meeting attendance: 10



The ORN seminar of digital technology was an incredibly beneficial day that highlighted the many opportunities there are now for data capture for outdoor recreation.

In the past we have tended to rely on counters but they do not provide any real information on the regularity or type of user - just that someone has been there. This has always been a challenge for outdoor providers as often users are independent and not necessarily affiliated to groups or clubs and capturing data or spreading information is notoriously difficult.

The day provided a great wealth of information on methods not only for the capturing of data on usage but how to use digital technology to encourage usage. Speakers included Ken Snyder from Quantified self-community, Nicky Philpot from Big Path Watch and Hannah Bowden from Betterpoints. One of the really interesting aspects was the development and interest in “gamification of outdoor experiences” using tools such as Strava or Endomondo and this idea of gamification and setting personal or even inter community challenges was highlighted throughout the day. Other key themes were on innovation with a plethora of apps and developments with a tremendous range of applications for these as well as on incentives through the use of digital technology.

Participants also had the opportunity to try out different pieces of equipment to build their own field lab all provided by Sheffield Hallam University Centre for Sports Engineering Research.

Some of the speakers included:

Ken Snyder	Quantified Self Community
Hannah Bowden	Betterpoints
Dr Nick Hamilton	Sheffield Hallam University
Nicky Philpott	The Ramblers
Chris Parker	Ordnance Survey
Jonathon Marshall	Canals and Rivers Trust

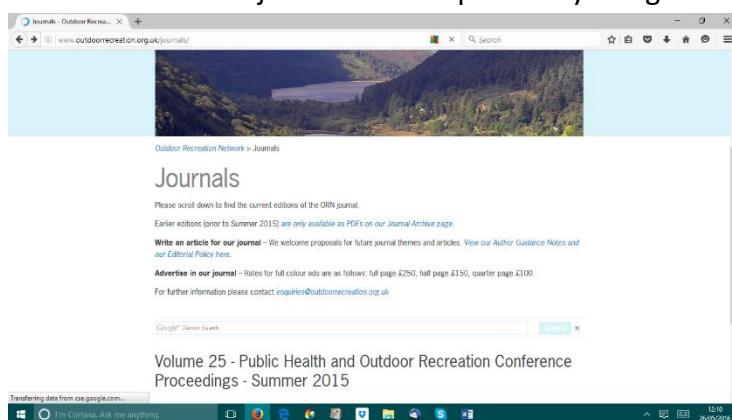
<http://www.outdoorrecreation.org.uk/events/50/orn-research-seminar-digital-data-and-outdoor-recreation-research-tools-and-applications/>

Communications

Journals

This year the journals were redesigned to become an e-journal with a specifically designed set of web pages for ease of article reading and searching for information.

In July 2015, volume 25 of the ORN journal was published. It was guest edited by Hannah Buck of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, Wales. It centred around the March 2015 annual conference proceedings on Public Health and Outdoor recreation and contained articles associated with each of the keynote presentations and workshop sessions.



This included contributions from the following organisations:

- Welsh Government
- Public Health Wales
- National Parks and Wellbeing Forum
- NHS Wales
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Institute for Health Equity
- Small Woods
- British Heart Foundation
- Macmillan Cancer

In October 2015, volume 26 of the ORN journal was published. It was guest edited by Wendy Thompson from Natural England. It centred around Recreational cycling and contained articles associated with how many organisations have supported cycling activities through funding and creating off-road infrastructure and facilities, along with articles by researchers and policy makers to explore the opportunities, challenges and risks. This included contributions from the following organisations:

- Forestry Commission England
- Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority
- James Hutton Institute
- Denbighshire County Council
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- bike4health
- Open MTB,
- TNS
- National Trust
- Natural England

Engagement

This year ORN has started to engage with the wider recreation community to represent ORN and feedback to members some of the activities happening at a policy level and these have included: the Launch of the Getting Active Outdoors: A study of demography, motivation, participation and provision in outdoor sport and recreation in England, the Parliamentary debate on Outdoor Recreation and the Outdoor Industries Association Conference.

1. Getting Active Outdoors launch of research findings

This is a study of Demography, Motivation, Participation and Provision in Outdoor Sport and Recreation in England and was commissioned by Sport England and produced in partnership with the Outdoor Industries Association (OIA).



It examines the demand and supply of outdoor provision and takes an in-depth look at the profile of the outdoor consumer. It provides valuable data and insight for those at the forefront of planning and delivering Outdoor Recreation for people active in the outdoors across England.

Following the launch of the document a series of detailed workshops were organised around England

2. House of commons debate

The debate was initiated by David Huxley MP on The Economic Value of Outdoor Recreation and was very well attended for this type of debate with a real cross section of MPs and interests.

The basic tenant of the discussion were

- The need for joined up thinking across range of government departments and cross departmental working
 - Defra
 - Transport
 - Health
 - DCLG
 - Education
 - Health
 - DCMS
- The need for recognition that outdoor recreation investment gave a good return on investment through:
 - Tourism income, - local, national and international especially out of season
 - Health benefits and savings – very strong emphasis
 - Education and employability
 - Event hosting

and that government needs to find ways to focus investment in these areas.

- Strong emphasis on the need to get people outdoors to experience the health benefits that will save vast amounts of money for NHS.

ORN was then able to share a summary and a text of the full debate with its members immediately after the debate thus giving members an immediate access to information.

3. Outdoor Industry Association Conference 16th and 17th March 2016

The 2-day [Outdoor Industries Association Conference](#) in Harrogate on 16th and 17th March 2016 was a varied programme of inspiring presentations, workshops, opportunities to take part in different outdoor activities (e.g. a Park Run, mountain biking, walk and climbing wall), and networking, attended by nearly 200 sector representatives. The Outdoor Industries Association (OIA) CIC is the trade body for manufacturers, retailers and other organisations that provide products and services for the outdoor leisure pursuits market in the United Kingdom

The OIA's role is 'to provide leadership and promote the outdoors, persuasively representing the industry's interests in all activities and at every level and be a high profile, campaigning organisation.'

Andrew Denton, Chief Executive Officer of the OIA, opened the conference and presented



the OIA's successful work over the last year, including a welcomed contribution to the Department of Culture Media and Sport's development of '[Sporting Future – A New Strategy for an Active Nation](#)' (published Dec 2015). The OIA has been working with Sport England, Department of Health, Defra and Natural England to embed outdoor recreation in relevant strategies.

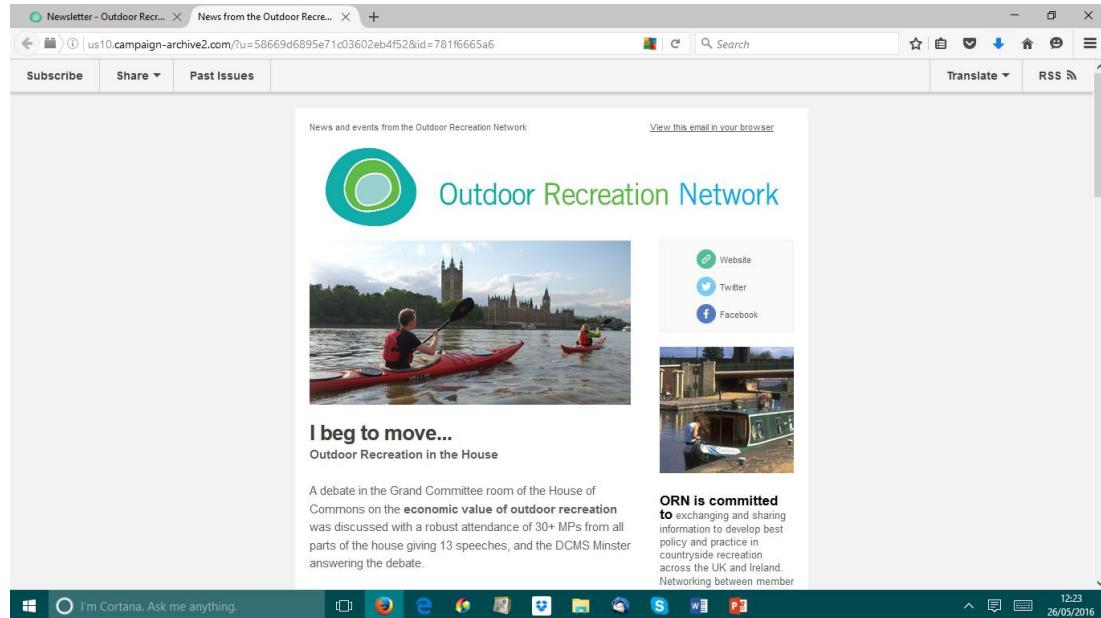
In her key note address on the second day, Jennie Price, Chief Executive of Sport England, described how by working together to deliver the Sports Strategy, the sector could achieve outcomes from outdoor recreation for health and wellbeing, individual development, social and community development and the nation's economy. The key themes of the Sports Strategy are to encourage inactive people to become active; to increase the numbers taking part in sport and physical activity through working with under-represented groups; to support Sport England's extended remit to cover the 5-14 year old age group; and for interventions to be insight led, customer focussed, and to focus on the active person, not the activity. Jennie's presentation included a useful delivery framework along with outcome measures and key performance indicators.

Other presentations included Outdoors for All by Barry Horne the CEO of England Disability Sport and Suresh Paul of Equal Adventure; the Power of Story Telling in the Social Media Age by Simon Freeman and Rick Jenner of Freestak and the best films from the Kendal Film Festival.

The Outdoor Recreation Network was represented at the conference by Jane Houghton of Natural England.

E-newsletters

This year 9 newsletters have been published and distributed to over 1100 recipient emails. The newsletters have featured news and information from ORN and its network members as well as links to various relevant policy documents of interest to the network.



Website

With the new secretariat the website was transferred to a new hosting location and for the Journal a new site was established enabling a professional online publishing of the journal which has resulted in a significant increase in traffic to ORN website

For the main website there were 7678 unique visits (68% increase on last year) of which 6313 were first time visits. The average time spent was 1 minute 13 seconds but the variation was between 10 and 30 minutes

The most popular pages visited were:

1. Home	5,355	39.04%
2. Events	890	6.49%
3. Journals	520	3.79%
4. Research-archive	469	3.42%
5. Research-seminar-digital-data-and-outdoor-recreation-research-tools-and-applications	460	3.35%
6. Reports-and-publications	424	3.09%
7. News	347	2.53%
8. Member-updates	328	2.39%
9. Outdoor-recreation-the-unknown-legacy	268	1.95%

The location of the visits is mainly from the UK but very high from the US and also Brazil

For the Journal there were 3488 individual users with 5823 page views. The average time was 46 secs but varied from 10 seconds to 30 mins. On 1 day there was a peak viewing of

908 active viewings which was of the publication of the cycling journal. 82% were new to the site which is not surprising as this was a new site

The most popular pages were:

1. Managing-off-road-cycling-is-a-risky-business-or-is-it	2,612	44.86%
2. The-rise-of-mountain-biking-in-north-wales-the-achievements-and-the-future	1,028	17.65%
3. Home	667	11.45%
4. Volume 26	393	6.75%
5. Volume 25	223	3.83%
6. Journal-archive	156	2.68%
7. Where-does-mountain-biking-belong-a-tale-of-two-outdoors	117	2.01%
8. Setting-the-scene-what-do-we-know-about-cycling-participation	77	1.32%
9. Cycling-on-public-footpaths-time-for-a-rethink	67	1.15%
10. Trail-blazing-a-cycle-trails-programme-within-the-national-trust	50	0.86%

The reach of people accessing the Journal is worldwide.

Financial Statement 2015/16

EXPENDITURE

Item	Expenditure
Travel and Subsistence for Chair and Secretariat	£2016
Journal	£1230
Secretariat	£20364
Overheads	£1498
Research seminar Sheffield March 16	£1641
Spring Seminar 2015 Lee Valley June 15	£0
Autumn business meeting	£0
Conference Oct 2016 Scotland	£622
Web/IT	£246
Miscellaneous*	£131
ORNI financial management	£650
Total	£28398.00

INCOME

Item	Amount
Membership fees received in 2015/16 financial year	£26650
Research seminar Sheffield March 16	£2607
Spring Seminar 2015 Lee Valley June 15	£45
Publishers Licensing Society	£0
Public Health Seminar March 2015	£159
2016 – 17 membership	£5950
Sub total	£35411
2014 -15 Reserves carry forward	£18403
Total	£53814
RESERVE carry forward for 2016-17	£25416

Financial Narrative

Overall the ORN budgets have performed well. The Sheffield Research seminar achieved more income than was expected, with very good attendance, however costs were also higher due to the higher than expected attendance.

Membership income shows lower than budget as some organisations paid their membership in 2014-15 and this was therefore included in the reserves figure for that year.

Saving against budget has been made on journal, web/IT costs and travel and subsistence. However Secretariat costs have been higher than budgeted as more work was carried out in February and March 2016 on both the seminar and Conference scheduled for the next financial year.

It is important to note that the reserves figure of £25416 to be carried forward to 2016 -17 includes £5950 of membership fees for 2016 -17 which will not show as income in the next financial year.

Photo acknowledgements:-

Front Cover: Forestry Commission Scotland

Jo Burgon

Nature and Sport

Sport England

Andrew Honeyman DCMS

Outdoor Industries Association

ORN