

The Royal Commission on  
the Ancient and Historical  
Monuments of Scotland

Scotland's Rural Past  
Final Evaluation Report  
Detailed Report

Scottish  
Cultural  
Enterprise

September 2011

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# 1. Introduction to the SRP evaluation report

## 1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) is a Non-Departmental Public Body with charitable status.
- 1.1.2 RCAHMS has been collecting information, drawings and photographs of Scotland since 1908, documenting Scotland's places past and present. The mission of RCAHMS is to help people to value and enjoy their surroundings, to provide a world-class record of the historic and built environment to local, national and international audiences, and to advance understanding of the human influence on Scotland's places from earliest times to the present day.
- 1.1.3 Scotland's Rural Past (SRP) was a national five-year project running from 2006-11 that was established to raise awareness of Scotland's rural heritage by encouraging and enabling local people to discover, explore, share and help protect their local rural heritage. It was set up in response to a perceived need to secure the future of medieval and later rural settlements in Scotland and to find out more about this key element of the nation's historic environment, in a way that engaged local people and volunteers.
- 1.1.4 RCAHMS was the lead body on the project on behalf of the Historic Rural Settlement Trust (HRST).

## 1.2 Evaluation framework

- 1.2.1 Scottish Cultural Enterprise (SCE) is an independent cultural sector consultancy practice. In spring 2008, SCE was appointed to impartially evaluate and report on the impacts of SRP. SCE was the second organisation to carry out SRP project evaluation work.
- 1.2.2 SCE's evaluation framework was constructed around four key components, against which SRP's successes were assessed and measured:

### 1. Baseline measures

In the original project plan, RCAHMS established several headline quantitative targets categorised according to:

- Participation in the volunteer programme
- Numbers of community projects
- Young persons' participation
- Designated project 'activities'
- Locally-generated output

The SRP team was responsible for gathering and collating performance data of this kind throughout the duration of the project

### 2. Effectiveness in delivering key project objectives

The overarching aim of SRP was to improve understanding, valuing and care of Scotland's historic rural settlements for the wide benefit of present and

future generations, to be achieved through pursuit of the following key objectives:

- Developing skills
- Increasing confidence
- Collecting information
- Encouraging research
- Fostering value
- Empowering people

Scottish Cultural Enterprise gathered information and data across its full programme of evaluation activities to impartially evaluate and report on the impacts of SRP in delivering these objectives.

### **3. External impacts on the wider public**

The evaluation programme was designed to allow qualitative assessment of SRP's impacts in changing volunteers' perceptions of both historical rural settlements and RCAHMS.

### **4. Internal impacts within RCAHMS**

Longitudinal consultation programmes with staff at RCAHMS and end-of-project interviews with the SRP team provided an evaluative basis for assessment of the internal impacts of the project on the wider organisation.

## **1.3 Structure of the evaluation report**

1.3.1 This report is structured according to each of the key evaluation components above.

- Section 2 details the SRP performance data gathered over the lifetime of the project
- Sections 3 to 8 are dedicated to evaluation of SRP according to each of the project's six key objectives
- Section 9 provides an overview of evaluation of SRP's external impacts on the wider public in terms of increasing awareness and concern in relation to rural settlements, and section 10 details external impacts relating to knowledge of RCAHMS and its work
- Section 11 presents the evaluation of SRP's internal impacts within RCAHMS
- Section 12 details SCE's conclusions and recommendations on the basis of the evaluation programme

## **1.4 Evaluation activities**

1.4.1 Scottish Cultural Enterprise built up its evaluation evidence base through a broad and diverse range of evaluation activities. The four key evidence gathering methods forming the main bases for this report can be summarised as follows:

- Participant surveys and questionnaires, distributed to all participants at training courses and through other targeted evaluation research
- Case study research: participation, observation, informal discussion and focus groups at fieldwork training sessions, and follow-up interviews
- Schools evaluation: participation, observation, informal discussion, questionnaires and surveys with pupils and teachers, and follow-up interviews
- Conference evaluation: participation, observation and longitudinal assessment of the programme of annual SRP conferences

1.4.2 For the final evaluation section of the report – examining internal impacts of SRP on RCAHMS – the findings are based on a longitudinal study of a sample group of RCAHMS staff together with end-of-project interviews with the SRP team.

## 2. Baseline measures

SRP's headline performance data measures and outputs are presented in the following table:

Activity	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	Q1 2011/12	Q1 2011/12	Q2 2011/12	Q2 2011/12	Q1-Q2 Yr 5 total	Q1-Q2 Yr 5 target	% of Yr target	Project target	Project end	% of project target
						estimate	actual	estimate	actual	estimate	actual		actual	actual	
<b>VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME</b>															
Training courses	2	17	13	9	18	1	1	0	0	1	1	100	19	60	316
Volunteers attending	27	282	226	167	266	10	12	0	0	10	12	120	400	982	245
Volunteers participating in projects	57	788	766	1381	9,465	200	895	0	0	200	895	448	1800	13,392	744
No. of trainers trained	5	54	22	12	35	1	1	0	0	1	1	100	80	129	161
<b>PROJECTS</b>															
In progress (new)	3	22	23	15	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	40	65	163
Completed	1	3	6	8	21	6	7	14	16	20	23	35	40	62	155
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>															
Talks to local groups	2	22	9	11	24	4	5	1	0	5	5	100	60	73	122
Exhibition displayed	3	20	8	11	8	4	5	1	2	5	7	100	40	57	143
Local projects in SRP exhibition	0	0	12	3	15	10	32	0	0	10	32	320	20	62	310
Conferences organised	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	100	5	5	100
Conference papers presented by vols	0	7	12	15	19	8	10	0	0	8	10	125	20	64	320
<b>YOUNG PEOPLE</b>															
School projects	0	2	5	8	7	0	0	1	2	1	2	0	10	24	240
YACs projects	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	5	4	80
No. of young people involved in SRP	0	55	93	250	370	0	0	40	30	40	30	0	350	764	218
<b>LOCALLY GENERATED OUTPUT</b>															
Guided walks	2	7	8	13	9	2	2	1	2	3	4	67	25	43	172
Local exhibitions	0	1	4	12	10	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	10	28	280
Heritage trail leaflets	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	2	1	2	0	5	5	100

SRP's headline quantitative targets were categorised according to:

- Participation in the volunteer programme
- Numbers of community projects
- Young persons' participation
- Designated project 'activities'
- Locally-generated output

## **2.1 Participation in the volunteer programme**

2.1.1 All volunteer programme participation targets were exceeded:

- 60 training courses were held (target: 19)
- 982 volunteers attended training courses (target: 400)
- 13,392 volunteers participated in projects (target: 1,800)
- 129 trainers were trained (target: 80)

## **2.2 Number of community projects**

2.2.1 The volume of community projects exceeded the targets: 65 projects were started and 62 completed (completed project target: 40)

## **2.3 Young persons' participation**

2.3.1 SRP exceeded its targets in terms of the number of school projects organised (22 against target of 10) and numbers of young people engaging with the programme (734 against target of 350). However, while the intention was to instigate five young archaeologist club projects, only four came to fruition:

## **2.4 Designated project 'activities'**

2.4.1 Targets for each of the following activity categories were met as follows:

- 73 talks given to local groups (target: 60)
- 57 exhibitions displayed (target: 40)
- 62 local projects in SRP exhibition (target: 20)
- 5 conferences organised (target: 5)
- 64 conference papers presented by volunteers (target: 20)

## **2.5 Locally-generated output**

2.5.1 Locally generated output targets were exceeded in terms of guided walks (43 against target of 25) and exhibitions (28 against target of 10), and met in terms of heritage trail leaflets produced (met target of 5).

## **2.6 Summary**

2.6.1 Target setting served a useful purpose in the early stages of SRP by focusing attention on key measures of success as the project was implemented and developed. However, the team soon found they could deliver much more in the timeframe and budget than was originally anticipated.

### 3. Developing skills

*SRP aimed to deliver this objective by developing skills to sustain continuing involvement and engagement in historic rural settlements*

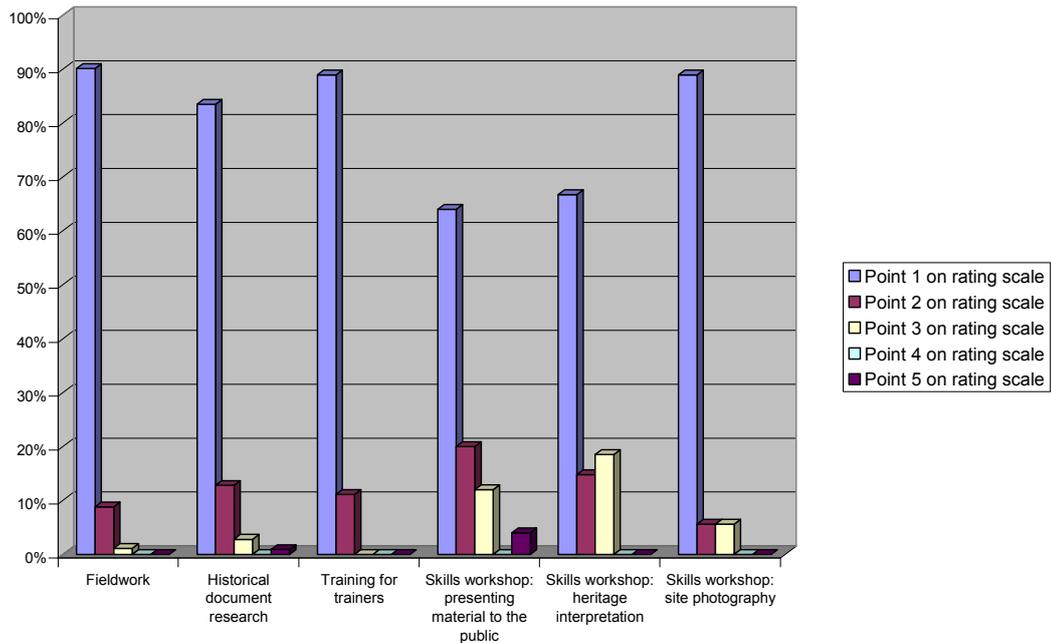
#### 3.1 Participant survey findings

3.1.1 Survey responses from SRP training courses show that all forms of training courses successfully developed participants' skills:

- ✓ **Fieldwork training:**  
90.1% rated skills development impacts at the top of a five-point scale and 8.8% rated these impacts at the second highest point on the scale
- ✓ **Historical document research training:**  
83.5% rated skills development impacts at the top of a five-point scale and 12.8% rated these impacts at the second highest point on the scale
- ✓ **Training for trainers:**  
88.9% rated skills development impacts at the top of a five-point scale and 11.1% rated these impacts at the second highest point on the scale
- ✓ **Skills workshop – presenting material to the public:**  
64.0% rated skills development impacts at the top of a five-point scale and 20.0% rated these impacts at the second highest point on the scale
- ✓ **Skills workshop – heritage interpretation**  
66.7% rated skills development impacts at the top of a five-point scale and 14.8% rated these impacts at the second highest point on the scale
- ✓ **Skills workshop – site photography**  
88.9% rated skills development impacts at the top of a five-point scale and 5.6% rated these impacts at the second highest point on the scale

3.1.2 The chart below illustrates the successes of training in developing skills:

**CHART: Participants' ratings of the extent to which they left training sessions with new skills**



3.1.3 These findings are supported by a survey distributed to all SRP participants in 2009, which found that:

- ✓ 82% of respondents developed new skills as a direct result of their involvement with the project

3.1.4 The skills gained by participants were likely to sustain continuing involvement and engagement with work of this kind. This is evidenced by sample feedback from 12 training sessions:

- ✓ 83.8% rated their level of inspiration to participate in SRP and use their newly developed skills at the top of a five-point scale, and 15.4% rated their level of inspiration at the second highest point on the scale

3.1.5 In the survey distributed to all SRP participants in 2009, there was further verification from respondents that SRP training would sustain continuing engagement with historical rural settlements: :

- ✓ 61% said they had been inspired to carry on surveying as a direct result of their involvement with the project

## 3.2 Case study findings

3.2.1 The evidence gathered through case study evaluation at fieldwork training courses and follow-up studies backs up the positive participant survey findings. In every case, the programme of training delivered skills development impacts, as summarised below:

### 3.2.2 Strachur

- Prior to participation, none of the participants had experience of plane tabling, but observation revealed that the teams quickly grasped what was required and could tackle the task of surveying a building using plane table

techniques. Within a short time they were reaching beyond the basics and asking questions which required a more in depth knowledge and experience of the subject

### 3.2.3 Sleat

- A session examining historical documents, maps and aerial photographs provided a clear introduction to the site itself, offered an insight into the complex relationship that exists between its historical use, its representation in historical and contemporary documents, and its actual modern day use and condition, and encouraged participants to think about these factors when carrying out their own site surveys.
- The 'site identification and analysis', 'measuring and drawing' and 'written description' activities helped develop participants' skills in a highly effective way.
- The following comment paraphrases the response of one volunteer asked if any participants had surprised themselves with the skills they had developed:

*'We've learned to look at things differently and see things we wouldn't have seen before. In the past, we might have just noticed a pile of stones, but now we can see something more than that.'*

### 3.2.4 Glen Muick

- The training course offered an excellent learning opportunity for all participants – neither the novices appeared to be 'in over their heads', nor did the more experienced participants appear to be being 'taught to suck eggs'.
- Follow-up evaluation a year after the initial fieldwork training found that the training activities acted as a springboard, providing the basic knowledge and understanding from which the local SRP group was able to undertake sophisticated field research. The skills were used in clear and direct ways – in the period between the training and follow-up evaluation, the Glen Muick team plane tabled three sites and carried out detailed 'rough surveys' of eight more, clearly drawing on what was learned at the initial training.
- In addition to directly equipping those people that attended field training with survey skills, the follow-up evaluation revealed that knowledge was cascaded because two of the core local team members had been unable to attend the training sessions with the SRP team. Moreover, there was clear evidence that this process can be highly effective since these team members became two of the strongest members of the local survey group.

### 3.2.5 Windy Windshiel

- Because of the compressed timeframe it was not possible to do things such as assemble and critique drawings and photographs, nor was it possible to do things such as plane tabling. However, the one-day course did offer sufficient time to enable key skills to be shared and put into practice.
- Follow-up evaluation with three SRP projects that took part in Windy Windshiel training found it had had significant impacts in developing site

measurement and recording skills which were being applied in practice in each case.

### 3.2.6 Unst

- The training course offered an excellent learning opportunity for all participants, and feedback showed it was successful in developing a wide variety of skills, accurately reflecting the observer's perception of the considerable impacts of each of the broad areas of training covered by the course.
- It should be emphasised that this was against a backdrop of cynicism amongst a minority of the participant group about the purpose or value of many of the training activities. For example, one participant in particular was quite vocal in opposition to learning about plane tabling from the outset, describing it as 'dark age technology'.
- The minority cynicism expressed by one or two participants should not be completely ignored. On one hand, a positive story emerged when the participant that described plane tabling as 'dark age technology' declared that by the end he had completely changed his mind and could see the importance of learning about the principles of measured drawing. On the other, in conversation one isolated group member described this exercise as '*a complete waste of time*', stating that '*we will never use it*'.

### 3.2.7 Arrochar

- SRP played a critical role in developing skills. The training and project work encouraged participants to record sites in ways they could not have otherwise.
- Some project leader participants also gained new skills by attending RCAHMS workshops. The project leaders felt confident enough to pass learning on to others, which they have done, so SRP indirectly cascaded skills within the local community.

### 3.2.8 Ben-a-cheilt

- The project leader had a strong archaeological background with significant experience in excavation and examination of prehistoric sites. However, she had little previous experience in field recording of the kind being pursued by SRP. In particular, she developed good plane tabling skills, which she had never done before, and now has the core skills required to carry out this kind of research independently.

## 3.3 School and young person project findings

3.3.1 At each of the school-based project case studies, evaluation found that pupils' new and existing skills were developed through participation.

### 3.3.2 Arrochar Primary School

- All pupils said they had learned something new - the pupils offered a range of disparate facts and pieces of information that they had picked up and, cumulatively, this suggests the project made a valuable contribution in facilitating a broad range of learning to take place. In particular they took well to the Sketchup software brought along by SRP.

- Teachers rated the impact of SRP in terms of both improving knowledge and understanding, and teaching new or developing existing skills, as 'very successful'
- SRP was at the heart of everything connected to the school project, and it delivered cross-curricular learning entirely conducive to delivering the aims and objectives of the Curriculum for Excellence.

### 3.3.3 **Dunkeld Primary School**

- Teachers rated the impact of SRP in terms of both improving knowledge and understanding, and teaching new or developing existing skills, as 'extremely successful'
- Prior to the SRP team's visit the pupils had little or no appreciation of the significance of ruined buildings or settlements, of the people who lived in them, and what they could tell them about life in the past, but by the time the class project was complete they knew and understood a great deal.
- The emphasis placed by the school on research through this SRP-related project is especially worthy of mention, and research skills development was broad.
- The nature of project activities was highly cross-curricular and facilitated learning across a variety of disciplines. As well as carrying out research into all aspects of nineteenth century life in Perthshire, the participant schoolchildren developed creative skills through building shoebox dioramas, writing stories and creating artworks.

### 3.3.4 **Uyeasound Primary School**

- The hands-on nature of activities was praised by the class teacher who said that the children had never before had the opportunity to become so closely connected to, and to develop such a clear understanding of, the abandoned rural settlements that surround them.
- SRP tuned the children into the history of the area: it encouraged them to think, explore ideas, engage and debate. By the time the pupils went out to survey sites themselves they were extremely skilled, and knew exactly what they were looking for and how to record features; the amount of assistance the teaching staff needed to provide was minimal.

### 3.3.5 **Braemar Academy**

- SRP developed pupils' skills on two key levels: on the practical side, they learned and developed skills such as plane tabling, which reinforced aspects of maths and scale; and on another level they developed the skill of thinking more deeply about communities and life in the part of the world they live in.

## 3.4 **Conference findings**

- ### 3.4.1
- Presentations at the first SRP conference in 2008 were characterised by great enthusiasm mixed with high levels of dependency on the expertise of the SRP team. By contrast, at the 2011 conference:

- All projects making presentations identified themselves as part of SRP
- The project work undertaken was of a high standard and it was clear the groups had absolute ownership and control of the projects they were carrying out
- Although all of the projects were different, they showed significant uniformity in their understanding of the key skills of recording and surveying
- The displays of 30 SRP projects showed good levels of skill in recording and surveying abandoned settlements
- All of the project representatives talked about their plans for undertaking similar work in future

## 4. Increasing confidence

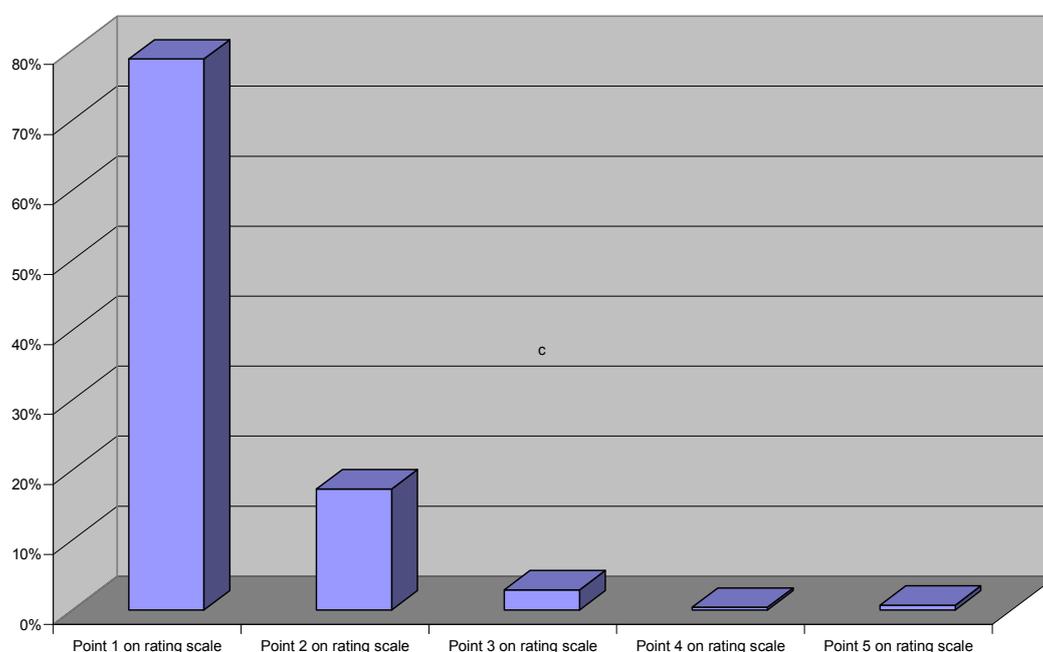
*SRP aimed to deliver this objective by involving people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities, and increasing participants' confidence in doing fieldwork and research*

### 4.1 Participant survey findings

4.3.1 Survey responses from SRP fieldwork training courses show they were successful in increasing participants' confidence in undertaking recording and surveying:

- ✓ 78.7% rated the extent to which fieldwork training had increased their confidence to undertake recording and surveying at the top of a five-point scale and 17.3% rated it at the second point on this scale

**CHART: Fieldwork training participants' ratings of the extent to which they feel more confident to undertake recording and surveying**



4.3.2 Survey responses also demonstrated that training courses achieved their objectives in terms of preparing participants to use the techniques to push forward their own SRP-related work and research:

- ✓ **Fieldwork training:**  
57.9% rated their preparedness for undertaking their own fieldwork and research at the top of a five-point scale, and 31.6% rated their preparedness at the second highest point on this scale
- ✓ **Historical document research training:**  
74.3% rated their preparedness for undertaking their own historical document research at the top of a five-point scale, and 19.5% rated their preparedness at the second highest point on this scale

✓ **Training for trainers:**

44.4% rated their preparedness for using the techniques learned to engage people with archaeological sites, and a further 44.4% rated their preparedness at the second highest point on this scale

4.3.3 Gathering data from all participants about age and background on an ongoing basis would have been intrusive and potentially off-putting. However, several members of the non-schools based SRP community did volunteer information of this kind in a survey that was distributed to all participants in 2009. If this small sample of 65 respondents was in any way reflective of the larger group, SRP reached out to relatively limited sections of society. The sample profile suggests SRP participants were:

- Mostly above 55 years of age (75% of respondents were 55 or over)
- Marginally more likely to be female than male (42% male and 58% female)
- Resident throughout Scotland, but mostly in rural or village settings in the Highlands or Argyll and Bute (where most projects were located)
- Largely long-term resident in their local area for at least five years (76%)
- Likely to have retired from work (59% retired, 41% working, 0% unemployed)
- Likely to have completed formal study in SRP-related subjects such as archaeology, history or architecture (41%)

## 4.2 Case study findings

4.2.1 The evidence gathered through case study evaluation at fieldwork training courses backs up the positive participant survey findings. In every case, the programme of training showed signs of improving participants' confidence, as summarised below:

### 4.2.2 Strachur

- The participants drew attention to the respect for local knowledge shown by the SRP team, asserting that this respect engendered confidence in their own skills. They particularly appreciated how an RCAHMS team member from aerial photography asked them to vote on what they thought a feature pointed out by one of the participants was – he did not say one side was right or wrong, and gave credit to both sides of the argument, which inspired confidence.
- Follow-up evaluation a year later found that participants had a great deal more confidence about looking at and recording historical sites

### 4.2.3 Sleat

- Observation revealed that, as the course progressed, participants grew in confidence and began to have greater faith in their own perspectives and ability to interpret historical sites, and this was very much due to the

trainers' skill in putting participants at ease and encouraging them to make suggestions

- Many volunteers were unafraid to ask questions based on their own observations from relatively early in the training. The team members' respectful and meaningful dialogue with participants engendered confidence and helped them realise they could make a valuable contribution, even in the presence of experts.

#### 4.2.4 **Glen Muick**

- Those who had a degree of knowledge prior to participation were pleased to have their prior knowledge publicly confirmed and endorsed and those with little or no prior experience found that they too could offer useful insights based on the skills they had learned
- The overall sense from the trainers was that they too were embarking on a learning process (albeit a process they were more advanced with) and this created a sense of fellowship, rather than a hierarchical didactic/pedagogic process, in which each participant could shine.
- The vigour with which the Glen Muick SRP group went about surveying and recording its local archaeology over the following year – as follow-up evaluation revealed – supported the initial assertion that SRP training had increased confidence to the extent that participants felt able to go out and undertake independent surveying and recording activities
- SRP provided support and encouragement for the Cairngorms National Park ranger service to try new things in pursuing its objectives, and the project coordinator even went as far as to take on an acting role in collaboration with a local storyteller at a public event that engaged locals and visitors through living history – something he would not have had the confidence to do in the past.

#### 4.2.5 **Windy Windshiel**

- The way that team leaders moved from group to group, engaging with people in a conversational manner rather than conducting a test of their knowledge, created an atmosphere of dialogue rather than being didactic. As a result, each of the participants in the observed groups appeared confident about sharing their responses to the site and the issues, and unafraid to seek the views of the SRP team members and question the basis for their comments if they felt that the response was not clear or full enough.
- Follow-up evaluation with one SRP project leader found participation in SRP had taken Hawick Archaeological Society 'out of its cosy corner' by encouraging it to successfully take on a more hands-on approach to the work it undertakes
- Another project leader said that, as a result of SRP participation, some team members who are not natural public speakers now have the confidence to go out, stand up and speak about what they have been doing

#### 4.2.6 **Unst**

- The questionnaire responses strongly suggest the training course made a significant contribution towards increasing confidence among participants in relation to recording Scotland's rural past. The SRP team deserves credit for producing such positive results relating to confidence levels given the diversity of skills and abilities, and the fact that some participants were quite cynical about what the course could teach them.

#### 4.2.7 Arrochar

- The local project leaders increased their confidence levels significantly through their SRP participation. Before involvement with the project they were self-proclaimed 'enthusiastic amateurs' without the skills to go and carry out site surveying or recording, and without the means to communicate their findings as widely as they would like – SRP opened up a world of possibilities for them in terms of undertaking field research and disseminating results.
- The project leaders are now so proficient at activities such as plane tabling that they have the confidence to go out and show others how to do it for themselves.
- Making a presentation at the first SRP conference in Dunkeld also gave them a great deal of confidence: it was a 'great boost' to discover that others found what they had to say interesting and stimulating. Their presentation made others feel more confident about recording vanishing rural settlements as well: one conference delegate told them their presentation made surveying sound fun and gave them the belief that they could do it too.

#### 4.2.8 Ben-a-cheilt

- The project leader now has more confidence in her ability to survey and interpret the buildings and landscape independently, and is also now prepared to take on more leadership roles. She said, *'In the past I would probably have been happy to hold the pole whilst plane tabling. Now I know how to do it and I have confidence I can do it'*. However, she still feels in need of support and reassurance with project work and hopes this will be maintained post-SRP.

### 4.3 School and young person project findings

4.3.1 Schools' SRP projects offered significant confidence building opportunities, and case study evaluation shows they were successful in this regard.

#### 4.3.2 Arrochar Primary School project

- The variety of activities that comprised the school project increased pupils' confidence in several ways. The creative and performance aspects of writing stories, performing plays and communicating their work to adults developed confidence. The school children were also involved in a hands-on way with other 'adult' SRP activities such as a site excavation and an exhibition at the new village hall, where they presented findings to Prince Charles and other visitors.

#### 4.3.3 Dunkeld Primary School project

- Observation revealed that nearly all pupils were eager to listen, ask questions and communicate with the group about the site and its history
- The children were given significant responsibility for their own learning through the school's enterprise activity at a one-month exhibition at the Birnam Institute, where they gave guided tours of their work to members of the local community

#### 4.3.4 Uyeasound Primary School project

- The fact that the children were able to record sites and features without assistance showed that SRP delivered on this objective, but it did more than equip participants with the confidence to carry out a variety of pre-defined tasks associated with site recording; it also inspired them to find out about and explore the aspects of local history that appeal to them. The class teacher said:

*'The boys knew exactly what they were looking for. They could identify features, they asked questions, and they speculated on what they thought should have been there. They were also keen to explore a water mill that was on boggy ground I couldn't get to, so they just carried on without me. I didn't have to do anything.'*

#### 4.3.5 Braemar Academy project

- Increasing confidence was one of the major successes of the Braemar Academy project. For example, first-year pupils in the young archaeologist club introduced older members to plane tabling, which developed their confidence; the project gave several non-gregarious individuals a sense of empowerment and ownership; the project built on RISK (an English department project) and helped develop confidence in research and note-taking; the opportunity for pupils to make presentations at Braemar Castle and to pitch fundraising ideas to businessmen engendered confidence; and it was a good project for helping with the transition from primary to secondary schools, as pupils from feeder schools initially met up and worked together whilst in Primary 7.

### 4.4 Conference findings

- #### 4.4.1
- The presentations demonstrated clear improvements in the confidence of project groups. In 2008 many of the presenters apologised for their lack of expertise in surveying and recording, but the tone at the final conference was anything but apologetic – a great deal of confidence was shown in what the communities had brought to the project in terms of discovering sites, researching them and creating follow-on activities. Whilst continuing to pay tribute to the help they had received from the SRP staff, all groups showed confidence in their abilities to continue the work.

## 5. Collecting information

*SRP aimed to deliver this objective by collecting and making accessible information, thereby promoting both physical and intellectual access to the rural historic environment*

### 5.1 Participant survey findings

5.1.1 Survey responses from SRP skills workshops on heritage interpretation and site photography show that they succeeded in encouraging participants to collect information and make it accessible in order to promote both physical and intellectual access to the rural historical environment:

- ✓ **Skills workshop – heritage interpretation**  
69.2% rated their inspiration to plan interpretation activities for local sites at the top of a five-point scale and 23.1% rated it at the second highest point on the scale
- ✓ **Skills workshop – site photography**  
100% rated their inspiration to do more site photography at the top of a five-point scale

### 5.2 Case study findings

5.2.1 At every training course case study, there was evidence that participation was having a positive influence in encouraging and enabling participants to collect information, as summarised below:

#### 5.2.2 Strachur

- There was a great deal of evidence of the participants collecting new facts and information from the course, such as learning about object name books, recording information in Canmore, using Ordnance Survey maps from different historical periods to research their site, and exploring the history of place names.
- During informal conversations that took place during the follow-up evaluation a year after the initial fieldwork training, it transpired the group had gone on to research a number of other settlements without SRP assistance and were planning to record these sites independently

#### 5.2.3 Sleat

- The training course allowed and encouraged participants to collect and share information about their local heritage through taking part. The fact that many were already members of local history societies meant that their knowledge base was already considerable, but it also allowed other participants to pick up a significant amount of information and detail from contemporaries.

#### 5.2.4 Glen Muick

- Because some of the participants were already involved in local societies/groups it meant that there was a body of knowledge to share and

build upon (for example, several participants knew of an estate that held private records which could be accessed via appointments)

- Overall, the process demonstrated that the real value of any information held by an individual was in the way in which the group dynamic brought it to the fore and capitalised on it, and that even disparate sorts of knowledge could offer as useful an insight to building up a rounded picture as someone who had quite advanced technical knowledge
- Follow-up evaluation a year after the initial fieldwork training found the group had been extremely active plane tabling and rough surveying around a dozen sites, and had further plans to carry out much more research. The information collected was also being disseminated widely through new Cairngorms National Park interpretation boards, which were entirely the product of SRP project activity.

#### 5.2.5 Windy Windshiel

- This particular site was interesting on account of the human factors behind its selection – it had been selected by an individual whose principal interest was in butterflies, and the relationship between farmland usage methods and the sustainability of habitats. This provided a fresh angle for the value of recording abandoned settlements on an interdisciplinary basis, since the settlements and surrounding areas, themselves untouched by modern conventional agricultural techniques, appeared to be providing reservoirs and refuges for a variety of valuable insect forms.
- Follow-up evaluation carried out a year later with training participants established that the project was having significant impacts in terms of collecting information. SRP enabled one project leader to collect site-specific information to complement, and cross-refer to, the wealth of national and regional information and data he had gathered about Scottish butterfly populations over the past few centuries
- Another project leader said SRP had opened up several new channels for information gathering, and that the only negative consequence was that collecting information for the project was now taking up 'an incredible amount' of his time.
- A third project leader that attended the Windy Windshiel training said his group had collected more information than they ever thought possible as a direct result of SRP and the avenues it encouraged them to explore.

#### 5.2.6 Unst

- Some local participants' experiences and involvement with archaeological study in the area allowed others to pick up a significant amount of information and detail from contemporaries. One particularly interesting occurrence was the finding of a spindle whorl on the site by a member of the group. A discussion followed about the historical significance of many sites on Unst, and the links to Norse and Viking settlements. Although SRP team members were privately unconvinced by the participants' assertion that this artefact necessarily came from such an era, they allowed this find to stimulate natural interest in, and enthusiasm for, the historical importance of the site.

### 5.2.7 **Arrochar**

- The drive to collect information about Morlaggan existed before SRP, but it functioned as the vehicle to take that enthusiasm forward, and which the wider community latched on to. The Morlaggan SRP project led to a site excavation and an application for funding to carry out further excavation work; it led to the establishment of the Morlaggan Rural Settlement Group; and it inspired others to consider starting their own similar projects.

### 5.2.8 **Ben-a-cheilt**

- The project leader has collected a great deal of information which will be used for her university dissertation and in exhibitions for Scottish Archaeology Month and Highland Archaeology Festival, where she will be leading a site visit.

## 5.3 **School and young person project findings**

5.3.1 Involvement with SRP has had a positive effect in enabling schools not only to collect information, but also to share what they have found with others.

### 5.3.2 **Arrochar Primary School project**

- An exhibition at the local village hall was largely based around information collected and shared by local school pupils through their SRP project

### 5.3.3 **Dunkeld Primary School project**

- The children chose to put on an exhibition and to provide tours of it, the creative and educational content of the exhibition was generated entirely by pupils, and the content represented the pupils' responses to their own information collecting activities

### 5.3.4 **Uyeasound Primary School project**

- The pupils prepared a 'Hamefarin' (Shetland homecoming celebrations held every 25 years) exhibition, establishing connections with a school in Australia, and sharing experiences with visitors from the Ardnagaul SRP project in Perthshire

### 5.3.5 **Braemar Academy project**

- The information collected through Braemar Academy's project will be on permanent display at Braemar Castle

## 5.4 **Conference findings**

5.4.1 SRP's annual conferences played a key role in encouraging promotion of both physical and intellectual access to rural historical environments. On the intellectual front, each year around 150 participants learned about the rural archaeology of medieval and later rural settlements across Scotland from other project group presentations. In addition, many groups also displayed exhibitions of their work at conferences, and the conference environment played an effective role in enabling peer-to-peer encouragement for collecting and disseminating information relating to Scotland's rural historical environment. In terms of physical access to the rural historical environment,

each year the SRP team and RCAHMS staff led popular guided walks as part of the conference programme.

- 5.4.2 30 projects with displays at the 2011 conference were rich in information they had collected and uncovered. A number of the projects had display books full of articles and extracts from archival sources as well as photographs of their own primary research in the field. Good use had been made of different media, from original artefacts, through photographs, essays, photocopied historical documents, drawings, illustrations and maps.

## 6. Encouraging research

*SRP aimed to deliver this objective by adding value through encouraging self-supporting projects, including applied research into values, cultural landscapes, archaeological and historical themes and community engagement techniques*

### 6.1 Participant survey responses

6.1.1 Survey responses from participants at historical document research training courses show that SRP encouraged them to carry out further research:

- ✓ 87.6% rated the extent to which they thought they would make future use of archive resources at the top of a five-point scale and 8.0% rated it at the second highest point on that scale

6.1.2 The programme of conference evaluation activities in 2010 included a survey of 110 respondents, which found:

- ✓ 60% aim to continue SRP-related research in future without professional help
- ✓ A further 20% will consider buying in future professional support and/or training

### 6.2 Case study findings

6.2.1 Case study evaluation found that in most cases SRP was delivering on its objective of encouraging research and adding value by encouraging self-supporting projects, as outlined below:

#### 6.2.2 Strachur

- A number of participants said they had projects in mind and that the training would really help get them going.
- Participants from one group had already done a lot of research for their project before the first fieldwork training session, but felt it would help them take that research in a new direction.

#### 6.2.3 Sleat

- There was widespread agreement amongst participants that everyone wanted to carry out research for SRP. Volunteers expressed keen interest in making use of RCAHMS' offer to lend plane table equipment for future surveying. Moreover, volunteers made it clear that the opportunity to channel the information gathered to a centrally coordinated resource point was crucial for encouraging research, and that by giving communities a purpose to carry out this work, they would reciprocally be keen to do it.
- In spite of the apparent interest in pursuing SRP project work, participants at the Sleat fieldwork training did not go on to carry out project work or research.

#### 6.2.4 **Glen Muick**

- At the conclusion of the day, the Balmoral ranger set out his desire for a local group to take forward the process as a standalone community group and the groups self-organised to discuss this and agree upon a way forward.
- The teacher participant said SRP was an excellent tool as it provided a useful range of integrated activities for classes to do on field trips, ranging from drawing, problem-solving, using technical equipment and hands-on exploration. This was unusual as it could enable a whole class of children with a diverse range of aptitudes, inclinations and learning styles to work collaboratively (the use of technology and equipment was likely to appeal to boys and girls who might otherwise be turned off by history/archaeology).
- The follow-up evaluation one year later found the group had achieved its ambitions for taking an SRP project forward, and it is interesting to note that of the 12 in attendance at the field training, around six were still members of the core local SRP group (with an additional two members that could not attend the training days). This represents a high retention rate demonstrating SRP had the ability to attract and engage committed research participants.

#### 6.2.5 **Windy Windshiel**

- Initial fieldwork training evaluation found that the introduction of the wider group of people to the site provided a stimulus for them to join in with researching and recording it.
- Follow-up evaluation found that there was indeed collaboration in researching the training site – participants from two separate SRP projects reciprocally assisted each other with their researches, both at Windy Windshiel and at another project site, Rankle Burn.

#### 6.2.6 **Unst**

- It is clear that the Shetland training activities stimulated interest in 19th century remains in the islands and what they can tell us about life in Shetland in that period.
- However, unlike other case study examples, there was no evidence to suggest these activities would lead to formal recording of such sites by participants or that the skills and resources gained would be utilised with any clear or coherent purpose in mind.

#### 6.2.7 **Arrochar**

- The Arrochar SRP project was one of the most successful in the country at stimulating further research programmes – these programmes have been formally recognised: the project won the Robert Kiln Trust prize for best amateur archaeology project and was highly commended at the British Archaeology Awards.

#### 6.2.8 **Ben-a-cheilt**

- The project leader was encouraged to carry out documentary research as a result of her SRP project work, exploring Census records and

commissioners' reports. In future, she hopes to extend her project to examine the lives of people that lived on the site in more detail.

### **6.3 School and young person project findings**

6.3.1 SRP schools projects delivered significant impacts related to encouraging research:

#### **6.3.2 Arrochar Primary School project**

- As well as carrying out their own 'school project' research for their SRP project, the children were also involved in a hands-on way with 'adult' research activities such as the site excavation

#### **6.3.3 Dunkeld Primary School project**

- Research skills development was broad, incorporating online, literature, pictorial and map-based investigation into a range of themes including food, housing, transport, clothing and games, which in turn impacted significantly upon the pupils' knowledge and understanding of life in the area over the past two hundred years

#### **6.3.4 Uyeasound Primary School project**

- Involvement with SRP encouraged the children to go out and carry out research themselves. In addition to simply carrying out site recording work, the pupils used information they had gathered to update June Owers' original 1970s pictorial record of island settlements, researched the life of SS Great Britain Captain John Gray using museum records, examined census records, and carried out genealogical research into the pupils' own family backgrounds.

#### **6.3.5 Braemar Academy project**

- SRP encouraged a wide and varied research programme, the central focus of which was comparing the pupils' lives with those of people in the same place in the past, which generally enabled them to think more deeply and from a more informed perspective

### **6.4 Conference findings**

6.4.1 Many projects detailed significant high-quality project work they had undertaken after receiving SRP training, and they spoke of plans for the future and a general sense that so much more remained to be discovered.

## 7. Fostering value

*SRP aimed to deliver this objective by enhancing knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the recent past, including those qualities that are intangible*

### 7.1 Participant survey responses

7.1.1 Participant survey feedback from the skills workshop about presenting material to the public suggests SRP has fostered value by inspiring participants to produce publicity material:

- ✓ 60% rated the extent to which they were inspired to produce more publicity material at the top of a five-point scale and 28% rated it at the second highest point on this scale

7.1.2 The 2009 survey distributed to all SRP participants found evidence that SRP was fostering value in a number of ways:

- ✓ 89% improved their knowledge and understanding
- ✓ 59% became more interested in conservation
- ✓ 47% passed on what they had learned to others
- ✓ 43% made new friends
- ✓ 30% gained confidence
- ✓ 28% pursued new heritage learning activities
- ✓ 23% got more involved with their local communities
- ✓ 18% used what they had learned at work or in studies

### 7.2 Case study findings

7.2.1 SRP case studies uncovered a number of ways in which the project has fostered value:

#### 7.2.2 Strachur

- One participant illustrated how training had fostered value and enhanced their knowledge and understanding of the recent past by stating their satisfaction that the training had taken place on two different sites that were similar in some ways but different in others. This had focused his attention on bad land management practices in Strachur in contrast to well managed pasture in Glen Fyne

#### 7.2.3 Sleat

- The training course initially appeared to foster value in a desirable but unexpected way, given that the volunteers became keen to finish surveying the Calligarry site, which was not the original intention. However, given that

no one from the Sleat training ended up pursuing an SRP project, this value was lost.

#### 7.2.4 **Glen Muick**

- The initial Glen Muick training course fostered value in an unanticipated way, as evidenced by one participant who said it was *'the most inspirational CPD course I have been "sent" on!'*
- Follow-up evaluation a year after the initial training established that, aside from its core purpose of encouraging local people to record information about disappearing rural sites, SRP clearly fostered value within the local area via the Ranger Service. Some examples of fostered value include:
  - \* A visitor centre display was put in place about historical life in the Spittal complete with artist's impression of the township in its heyday
  - \* A heritage trail and leaflet enables visitors to examine and understand the local archaeology, and these have been picked up and followed by hundreds of people
  - \* Information gathered was being used to install an 'interpretation boulder', complete with artist's impression, to direct walkers to the trail in the visitor centre (since only around half of visitors to the park currently enter the visitor centre)
  - \* There was an intergenerational focus in presenting SRP-related findings – for example, an interactive talking kettle tells a historically-based story when placed on the 'hot plate'
  - \* There were plans to develop a schools project based on living history
  - \* SRP findings provided an interesting and guaranteed option for estate visitors since the archaeology is there every moment of every day, unlike birds, deer and other wildlife

#### 7.2.5 **Windy Windshiel**

- Although not designed for students, it was clear that the training fostered value for those in attendance by offering a really valuable experience that was not afforded by their coursework. It was also clear that the local group participants were talking about ways in which the experience could be introduced into their 'home' societies/bodies.
- Follow-up evaluation a year later found other examples of SRP fostering value:
  - \* It led to a good friendship between leaders of two separate projects and encouraged them to carry out further research into abandoned rural settlements
  - \* It fostered linkages between historical land use and environmental impact in ways that were not part of 'mainstream' education and thinking (Berwickshire butterflies), and for these linkages to be more widely disseminated (e.g. through interpretation boards at SRP conferences)

- \* It enabled Hawick Archaeology Group to support similar work outside the realm of SRP: they intended to use their newly developed expertise to support a similar project in the Cheviot Hills in Northumberland
- \* It challenged ways of thinking and working at a highly respected and very old archaeological society in Hawick. The process was akin to what SRP meant for RCAHMS; the society is aiming to diversify and carry out more hands-on work in partnership with others, rather than be entirely academic and insular.
- \* It encouraged Haddington History Society to explore carrying out much more project work of the 'SRP kind', and to submit its findings to the national record

#### 7.2.6 **Unst**

- A great deal of well-publicised archaeological activity takes place in Shetland, with the Old Scatness Broch and Viking Unst projects forming the focus of particular attention in recent years. Nevertheless, the objectives of Scotland's Rural Past, with its focus on rural settlement in Scotland in the past 200 years, offered Shetland an opportunity to focus on an era in the islands' history that is comparatively neglected in archaeological study terms.
- On the other hand, the difficulties SRP had in engaging Shetland-based participants in projects, or with the aims and objectives of SRP as a whole, restricted it from fostering as much value in this way as it otherwise might.

#### 7.2.7 **Arrochar**

- The Arrochar project fostered values in a number of ways. For example:
  - \* The excavation helped to determine and confirm the age of remains that exist on the ground, and fostered community involvement with the dig
  - \* A condition of the excavation funding was that survey equipment (plane table, alidade, survey pole, etc) would be left for future community use
  - \* SRP-associated activities have brought the community together, such as children's performances at Auchindrain and an exhibition in the community hall
  - \* The group was asked to give presentations at Cairngorms and Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Parks, cascading knowledge and awareness of the programme of activities
  - \* There were plans, with community involvement, to produce an attractively designed booklet about the history of Morlaggan

#### 7.2.8 **Ben-a-cheilt**

- In taking on this project, the project leader's knowledge and understanding of the area's recent past has been enhanced. SRP has helped her to gain the ordinary part of her degree and she aims to use what she has learned to pursue Honours. In addition, she feels she has learned to appreciate the

complexity of the archaeology of these sites, and realises it is much more intricate than she previously thought.

### **7.3 School and young person project findings**

7.3.1 The schools-based case studies also showed SRP fostered value:

#### **7.3.2 Arrochar Primary School project**

- The large quantity of unearthened pottery stimulated interest and fostered creative activities amongst school children (e.g. making pots and paper plate designs), and other SRP-associated activities have brought the community together, such as the children's performances at Auchindrain and the exhibition in the community hall

#### **7.3.3 Dunkeld Primary School project**

- A knock-on benefit of the project's development of knowledge and understanding is that it is likely to have raised awareness and stimulated concern relating to historical rural settlements. The exhibition was well attended and was covered by local newspapers (Dundee Courier and Perthshire Advertiser). The wider community impacts relating to this issue are difficult to assess, but the class teacher felt that the participating children probably have more respect for old settlements and ruins in the aftermath of the SRP team's visit.

#### **7.3.4 Uyeasound Primary School project**

- The information presented in this report shows that SRP has fostered value in Unst in a number of ways, such as: updating existing historical records; increasing pupils' awareness of Unst's most famous historical figure, Captain John Gray; developing links between pupils' family histories and the island they inhabit today; and establishing connections between the school and other schools and groups from Scotland and the wider world.

#### **7.3.5 Braemar Academy project**

- Key values fostered by SRP were friendships and new working relationships between pupils who otherwise wouldn't have engaged with each other – pupils of mixed abilities were working together on the project, in groups chosen for them, on a long-term basis. This led to new friendships and respect. Moreover, things like fundraising and dealing with financial risk was a new experience for pupils, especially in an educational context

### **7.4 Conference findings**

7.4.1 Evaluation undertaken at SRP conferences showed participants were keen to engage with professionals in order to foster value and enhance their knowledge and understanding of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century rural history in Scotland.

## 8. Empowering people

*SRP aimed to enable people to become more effective participants in decision-making affecting their local community*

### 8.1 Case study findings

8.1.1 Case study evaluation revealed a number of ways in which SRP had empowered volunteers, as illustrated below:

#### 8.1.2 Strachur

- The Strachur participants had indicated at the first evaluation visit that they felt they were previously lacking the practical tools to take forward their role as champions of local history in the area. At the end of the second visit they made a point of saying that they had greatly benefited from the plane tabling day and they had a long list of other sites where they would be using their newfound skills.

#### 8.1.3 Sleat

- There were high hopes that the highly positive response to the training at Calligarry indicated it would not only empower participants to shoulder the responsibility of preserving Sleat's history through surveying and recording it, but that this would also rub off on other members of the community. However, a corresponding SRP project did not get off the ground and the community empowerment impacts of the training could not be measured, although there are obvious limits to the scale of any such impacts in this context.

#### 8.1.4 Glen Muick

- The initial training process enabled new local groupings and community working to take place, with the development of a freestanding Balmoral Estate project. A wide range of people engaged with the process and there was a real sense that each and every one could make a useful contribution and add fresh knowledge to the national record.
- Follow-up evaluation a year later concluded that the fact the local SRP project developed significant independence in terms of the direction it was taking (albeit with significant funding and support from the national park and ranger service) showed the individuals within the group had been empowered to take on this work and to add value to it by promoting it as a valuable resource to people with an interest in the history of the area. All aspects of interpretation were being developed collaboratively in consultation with the Glen Muick SRP group, and this established a clear connection between local people and the way their place was perceived by the outside world.

#### 8.1.5 Windy Windshiel

- It was clear that the initial training experience proved both empowering and affirming for the person who had identified the site. What is also interesting is that this project evolved out of SRP interpretation officer's participation in a project on Mull – there was a chain of empowerment moving from participating in one project to championing the creation of another, thus

demonstrating the potential of such a programme of community engagement seeding activities across the other side of the country. This was a sign of SRP achieving a 'bottom up' organic growth across Scotland capable of generating its own future.

- Follow-up evaluation revealed that SRP had increased one project leader's knowledge and confidence in relation to rural community history in Scotland and empowered him to successfully challenge Historic Scotland's record keeping in one area of the country.
- Another project leader commented on the close relationship that exists between 'empowering people' and 'increasing confidence'. He said that people that used to shun public speaking had been empowered to go out and communicate their findings as a result of SRP, and that the wider history society had also been empowered because their research would contribute to the national record.

#### 8.1.6 **Unst**

- While the term 'empowerment' would probably be too strong in terms of SRP impacts on most participants, there were a few notable examples where this may well have occurred. For example:
  - \* A 16-year-old budding archaeologist appeared to enjoy the experience, and her and her family's feedback suggested the training had strengthened her resolve to pursue a career in this field.
  - \* Another example relates to a UHI archaeological research fellow who was keen to use the training as a template for future student training activities to be undertaken in her teaching role, and her enthusiastic feedback suggested she got everything and more she had hoped for out of the experience.
  - \* One participant that had moved with her young family to Unst from outside Shetland in the past year said the course would allow her to explore the island with her children (who participated in the tangential schools activities) and discuss its environment in newly informed ways that would have been impossible beforehand.

#### 8.1.7 **Arrochar**

- The term 'empowerment' sums up the meaning of this SRP project to its leaders: by providing support, guidance and encouragement, it has enabled the community to discover its history for itself, and to record and communicate findings to the wider world by submitting them to the national record.

#### 8.1.8 **Ben-a-cheilt**

- The project leader feels a great sense of pride in the work she has done and can see real community value in the opportunity to share her knowledge and findings at the local heritage centre. She is also aware that not everyone who attends training courses has the drive to carry project work forward in the way she has, and her success has given her a sense of empowerment.

## **8.2 School and young person project findings**

8.2.1 Schools projects were also successful in empowering participants:

### **8.2.2 Arrochar Primary School project**

- The direct hands-on role the children had in project work with clear, strong linkages with work undertaken by adults was very empowering for them

### **8.2.3 Dunkeld Primary School project**

- The fact that children chose to give exhibition tours outside of school hours shows that the project had an immediate impact on activity and behaviour outside school, and it is quite feasible that it will have longer-term empowerment effects in these ways.

### **8.2.4 Uyeasound Primary School project**

- In the Unst case study context, 'empowerment' is tied in strongly to increasing confidence and independent information gathering and research. The pupils have been empowered and equipped to find out about the history of communities on the island they inhabit, and to gain a fuller and more sophisticated understanding of it. This is something they have fully embraced.

### **8.2.5 Braemar Academy project**

- The project gave individuals who perhaps aren't naturally the most gregarious a sense of empowerment and ownership. A class teacher said that, before SRP, archaeology meant 'Indiana Jones' to most pupils but that now when they think about the subject, they talk about building features such as cruck frames and rounded corners, and what this means about the construction period and the way of life of inhabitants. They now have the ability to understand and interpret the landscape in which they live and have grown up, and that is very empowering – it helps them understand the place they live in.

## **8.4 Conference findings**

8.4.1 The presentations gave a number of good examples of strong community ownership of SRP projects:

- The High Morlaggan project was one where two volunteers become interested in community archaeology through SRP and went on to involve their local school – broadening the scope of the project to embrace arts and other elements – culminating in the excavation of their site to recover artefacts. In their speech they strongly advocated community archaeology is strengthened at the grassroots through partnership working with academics and public bodies.
- Braemar Academy's 'Lost' school project demonstrated how SRP could draw in a range of community partners such as the mountain rescue service, local businesses and visitor attractions to give school pupils a cross curricular project of value to the whole community.

## **9. Increasing awareness and concern in relation to rural settlements**

### **9.1 Case study findings**

9.1.1 Case study evaluation shows participation in the project had direct impacts in increasing awareness and concern in relation to rural settlements on volunteers, and that in those cases where projects were developed these impacts often extended into local communities and beyond.

#### **9.1.2 Strachur**

- Informal conversations demonstrated that the group developed high levels of awareness of rural settlements. One participant said they wanted to be able to share the knowledge and experience gained with groups in other parts of Scotland.

#### **9.1.3 Sleat**

- There was widespread agreement that participation had made people think differently about rural settlements and the importance of preserving and recording them – one participant said the training had taught them a great deal about how they could practically go about doing that too.

#### **9.1.4 Glen Muick**

- Some participants (including a Dutch couple who had recently moved to the area) went along to the initial training session precisely because they had little awareness of rural settlements, and used it as a means of finding out more about the community into which they had entered. The fact that so many participants agreed to take a project forward shows the training course deepened awareness and interest and created a hub for extending further into the local community.
- Follow-up evaluation found the project had significantly raised awareness of the Spittal Township. Previously, only a handful of visitors had any knowledge of the township's existence out of more than 120,000 walking past each year. Now, all that enter the visitor centre are exposed to information about this settlement, and an interpretation boulder provides information for all who walk by.

#### **9.1.5 Windy Windshiel**

- With just one exception, the participants came from an archaeological/local history perspective. The fact that this project received its impetus from an environmental study perspective meant it offered a new angle and scope for interdisciplinary collaboration, which has contemporary resonance.

#### **9.1.6 Unst**

- The training raised awareness of issues relating to 19th century rural settlements in Shetland and Scotland, and how these developments were the product of wider national and peculiar local historical trends and developments. The activities also showed that by carrying out research studies, ordinary local people have the potential to unlock what could otherwise become forever forgotten histories of the areas they inhabit.

### 9.1.7 **Arrochar**

- SRP played an important role in increasing awareness and concern for vanishing rural settlements: 200 people attended the project exhibition in the local hall and many expressed concern about the sites once their histories had been uncovered and explained

### 9.1.8 **Ben-a-cheilt**

- The project leader believes SRP played an important role in helping people to understand how and why buildings were constructed and used in the places they were. She was also keen to share her findings with others to raise awareness of her site.

## 9.2 **School and young person project findings**

9.2.1 School-based case study evaluation also found the projects increased awareness and concern among pupils and the wider communities since project information was shared via exhibitions and other channels.

### 9.2.2 **Arrochar Primary School project**

- One of the project leaders witnessed evidence that project activity had increased local schoolchildren's awareness of historical rural settlements - on one occasion she was out with Scouts on an entirely unrelated programme of activities when they noticed a ruined wall and made connections to the area's history

### 9.2.3 **Dunkeld Primary School project**

- The class teacher felt that the participating children probably had more respect for old settlements and ruins in the aftermath of the SRP team's visit.

### 9.2.4 **Uyeasound Primary School project**

- SRP has played an important role in helping children to understand that the 'ordinary' can nevertheless be significant and important. By linking in to other aspects of the Unst's history, such as the modest abandoned home of Captain John Gray of the SS Great Britain, the school has been able to add weight to this message.

### 9.2.5 **Braemar Academy project**

- By helping the pupils to think deeply about the communities and lives of people in their own area, SRP increased appreciation about the importance and value of recording and preserving historical information and data.

## 9.3 **Conference findings**

9.3.1 The community presentations all demonstrated a high level of awareness and concern in relation to rural settlements. There was also a great deal of interest in the conference presentation by Colin McLean of the Heritage Lottery Fund, suggesting SRP project participants are keen to carry on project work with future heritage benefits.

## **10. Developing knowledge of RCAHMS and its work**

### **10.1 Case study findings**

10.1.1 SRP brought groups and individuals into direct contact with RCAHMS and its resources in ways they had not been previously. In some cases, participants were already aware of the Commission without ever engaging with it, and in others involvement in the project made people aware of RCAHMS for the first time. SRP gave a human face to the Commission, although in most cases participants were aware of a clear distinction between SRP and RCAHMS.

#### **10.1.2 Strachur**

- Evaluation at the initial training session found there was very little awareness of RCAHMS and the work it does. Follow-up evaluation a year later found awareness had been increased through SRP participation, attendance at one of the conferences and by sharing information with the Bute partnership project. However, participant engagement with RCAHMS remained largely indirect, coming almost entirely via direct engagement with SRP.

#### **10.1.3 Sleat**

- Those that had previous knowledge of RCAHMS largely consisted of members of local history societies that had hosted RCAHMS lectures, or those that work in the heritage sector and had used CANMORE. Among attendees that were merely 'interested individuals', previous awareness of RCAHMS was very limited. It was widely felt that RCAHMS resources do not have a high public profile. One participant who was very interested in and knowledgeable about RCAHMS said that those taking part were only really concerned with the SRP connection to RCAHMS, and not with the wider organisation. Given that no one from the session went on to carry out SRP project work, the extent to which SRP developed knowledge of RCAHMS is limited.

#### **10.1.4 Glen Muick**

- The organisation was seen as technocratic and slightly distant and impersonal by participants before the training. However these participants found that, within the SRP team, RCAHMS had people with a real passion and enthusiasm for their subject and a genuine desire to communicate this to the general public.
- In follow-up evaluation a year later, the importance of being able to submit work to the national record after SRP drew to a close was emphasised. The project leader believed this would offer clear legacy benefits in terms of connecting SRP projects and participants with RCAHMS, and not just with SRP.

#### **10.1.5 Windy Windshiel**

- The fieldwork trip provided insights and experiences from ancillary RCAHMS staff that helped participants develop a deeper understanding of the organisation, and this also generated a sense of organisational cohesion. Informal discussion with participants from the local history group suggested they now viewed RCAHMS as something that was accessible

and available to them, and not just as a 'grand organisation' up in Edinburgh.

- Follow-up evaluation with three project leaders from projects with roots in the Windy Windshiel training confirmed there was little previous awareness of RCAHMS, that SRP had helped justify its existence and increase its modern-day relevance to them by delivering meaningful public engagement, and that they will all make more use of RCAHMS resources in future.

#### 10.1.6 Unst

- The SRP team did a good job in raising awareness of the expertise it possesses, and indirectly in inspiring confidence in RCAHMS' potential to provide valuable assistance, guidance and resources for people interested in recording the history of Scotland's rural built environment. The historical document research training held at Shetland Museum and Archives also made a positive contribution in this regard.

#### 10.1.7 Arrochar

- The project leaders declared they were not representative of the wider public because they had strong previous awareness of RCAHMS. By contrast, they found through their project work and wider networking that most people – including many of those with a keen interest in local history and archaeology – were largely unaware of the Commission. They were of the opinion that it is a good idea to hold training sessions at RCAHMS' premises in Edinburgh because it helps people to feel comfortable in the surroundings and opens up its resources to them

#### 10.1.8 Ben-a-cheilt

- The project leader had no previous awareness of RCAHMS, but said it was possible she might now use its resources in future.

### 10.2 School and young person project findings

10.2.1 SRP brought several schools into contact with RCAHMS for the first time, and the team's work in sustaining contact and offering support to schools' project work increased awareness of the Commission in school education circles.

#### 10.2.2 Arrochar Primary School project

- SRP brought Arrochar Commission into contact with the Commission for the first time, and it is likely the champions of the adult project will continue to develop this relationship.

#### 10.2.3 Dunkeld Primary School project

- SRP allowed the school to pursue its own historical project work. The connection was stronger with SRP than RCAHMS, but the partnership raised awareness of the Commission's role and how it can work with schools.

#### 10.2.4 Uyeasound Primary School project

- SRP has brought RCAHMS to the attention of the pupils at Uyeasound Primary School for the first time, and its presence has been reinforced through the school's engagement with an 'adult' SRP project from Ardnagaul in Perthshire.

#### 10.2.5 Braemar Academy project

- The focus of activities within the school was more on SRP than RCAHMS, and the only point at which RCAHMS was really emphasised was in thinking about the data and information being entered into the national record. However, this was an important feature of the project in the minds of the schoolchildren and they were proud to be contributing, helping them to feel that the work they have carried out is important and relevant.

### 10.3 Conference findings

10.3.1 In 2008 some community groups making presentations were pleased with the help they had received from SRP staff but rather uncertain how this related to the wider work of RCAHMS. At the 2011 conference, representatives of RCAHMS made clear statements about the strength and nature of this relationship, and the concluding remarks by RCAHMS chief executive Diana Murray were particularly well received. Most of the presenting community representatives made reference to the importance of the work SRP has started, and expressed their wishes that it should continue. Some key pledges from the chief executive's speech were:

- Work encouraged by SRP will continue in spite of the fact project funding has come to an end
- There will be other smaller projects of a similar nature in future
- RCAHMS will have a designated community link through a community liaison manager, assisted by a trainee
- Applications for resources will continue to be made
- Recording and surveying equipment will continue to be available
- Workshops will still be on offer, although there may be a modest cost
- The website will be maintained and developed
- There will be another conference in 2012

## **11. Internal impacts within RCAHMS**

### **11.1 Background**

- 11.1.1 The origins of SRP lie in an idea brought forward by Robin Turner of the National Trust for Scotland (and now Head of Surveying and Recording at RCAHMS) and formulated through the Medieval or Later Rural Settlement Group (MoLRS) (which would later become the Historic Rural Settlement Group). The group was successful in developing a project plan that secured HLF funding to deliver SRP for five years from 2006-11, with the project being hosted by RCAHMS.
- 11.1.2 One of the key architects of SRP was RCAHMS' Steve Boyle. From the outset, he sought to integrate SRP into the core work of the Commission and ensure it would not simply become a compartmentalised project. With a new and growing focus on community archaeology, SRP had the potential to become the public face of RCAHMS, raising public awareness of the Commission and engagement with it.
- 11.1.3 The preliminary research led to the creation of a flexible project planning framework which provided a good starting point from which to take SRP forward. As soon as the SRP team was in place, work began on preparing and establishing the project, increasing awareness of it, and recruiting the volunteers that would drive it forward. From its formal beginning in 2006, SRP grew and evolved organically in response to the interests and demands of participants.

### **11.2 The SRP team**

- 11.2.1 The initial SRP team consisted of project manager Tertia Barnett, field officers Danny Dutton and Ishbel MacKinnon, and interpretation officer Brian Wilkinson. In the latter stages of the project a new community liaison role was created within the team to help bring the project towards completion, and this position was taken up by Kirsty MacDonald.
- 11.2.2 All members of the team worked well together; each had unique and complementary skill sets, and on a personal working level they developed a strong camaraderie. This was reflected in case study and participant survey feedback which repeatedly referred to the strengths of the team in terms of both professional skills and in developing meaningful relationships with participants.
- 11.2.3 In addition to the project team, several members of RCAHMS' core staff base played significant hands-on roles in delivering SRP, particularly within Surveying & Recording. This was the intention from the outset and it played an important part in helping SRP gain acceptance within RCAHMS, ensuring it did not feel like a completely separate 'add-on'.

### **11.3 SRP's role and operation within RCAHMS, 2006-11**

- 11.3.1 Recent years have seen a new and increasing focus on community archaeology. This has had associated impacts on organisations such as

RCAHMS with national archaeology and heritage remits. In order to realign their priorities with those of national government and funders, organisations within these sectors have sought to embrace community engagement, particularly in the field of archaeology. SRP offered RCAHMS an excellent opportunity to do this, and to showcase its potential for delivering priority outcomes.

#### 11.3.2 Organisational structure

- As a standalone, funded, time-limited project, SRP necessarily always had its own separate identity within RCAHMS. However, it was neither small nor was it self-contained: steps taken across the planning, implementation, development and delivery phases ensured it became as much a 'significant part' of the organisation as any project conceivably could. These steps included involving sections and staff from across the Commission, delivering high standards of community training that produced good quality community outputs, and earning widespread professional recognition and respect.
- Some parts of the organisation were affected more by SRP than others, but the fact that the project was successful in delivering meaningful crossover between separate and distinct sections of RCAHMS should be recognised.
- SRP training programmes drew extensively on expertise within the Commission. There were occasions when RCAHMS staff members were invited to contribute to SRP workshops and others when Commission staff volunteered, adding credence to the assertion that the project was embraced by the organisation rather than being viewed as an entirely separate entity.

#### 11.3.3 Organisational culture

- As an organisation, RCAHMS responded well to SRP on the whole, although there were pockets of resistance to involvement with community archaeology given the Commission's professional history and reputation.
- SRP was widely embraced by RCAHMS' Surveying & Recording section in particular, and other sections also grew to understand and support the project's role over time.

#### 11.3.4 Community engagement and volunteering

- RCAHMS has traditionally been viewed as highly professional and largely inaccessible to the general population, but SRP opened it up to wider public engagement whilst maintaining the Commission's high professional standards
- SRP has increased appreciation within RCAHMS' staff pool of the value of drawing on local knowledge in recording, surveying and research, and in creating meaningful amateur-professional partnerships. That is not to say there is acceptance that volunteers can replace professionals, but rather that external voices can contribute to the ethos of the Commission.
- The Bute partnership project was an example of SRP establishing new connections and methodologies which allowed RCAHMS to push forward its core surveying and recording work. Staff members from across RCAHMS

emphasised their awareness that the organisation must support community engagement and empowerment in enhancing its collections whilst maintaining academic excellence, and there was widespread agreement that SRP struck a good balance in its attempts to achieve this.

- One of the main aspirations of SRP was to equip community groups with the expertise to independently record and survey sites and create site records of sufficiently high quality for submission to the national record. Evaluation showed that the project was successful in developing recording and surveying skills. However, it was necessary for the team to play a substantial supporting role in ensuring all community-derived records were up to standard; the processes of offering remote and in-person support and validating site records submitted by community projects proved time-consuming and resource-intensive.

## **11.4 SRP's legacy: the future of community archaeology at RCAHMS**

11.4.1 Internal and external perceptions of RCAHMS' role have changed markedly over recent years, and this is largely attributable to SRP's impacts as a project combined with a wider shift towards community engagement priorities at governmental funding levels.

### **11.4.2 Organisational structure**

- At the 2011 SRP conference, the RCAHMS chief executive made a number of key pledges which hinted at profound SRP impacts in changing the ongoing role of the Commission. These pledges included establishment of a permanent community liaison post within the Commission, continued encouragement of community recording and surveying, similar smaller community projects in future, ongoing equipment loans to local groups, new applications for resources, future skills workshops, a fully maintained and developed SRP-style website, and another community archaeology conference in 2012.
- In terms of RCAHMS' organisational structure, the establishment of a permanent community liaison post hints at maintaining continuity in the move from the SRP to the post-SRP era, but a marked shift within the Commission by virtue of the apparent mainstreaming of community archaeology in the form of a designated job. However, it should be noted that the community liaison manager is expected to incorporate existing non-community responsibilities into the role as well.
- There are concerns from some quarters that one non-dedicated community liaison post is insufficient to satisfy the demands that five years of SRP has established amongst volunteer groups.

### **11.4.3 Organisational culture**

- SRP has changed RCAHMS' organisational culture and it is neither desirable nor likely that it will ever go back to what it was before. However, the priorities and actions of the Commission over the next few years have a fundamental part to play in dictating the extent to which SRP's legacy within the organisation will continue to shine or to fade away.

- SRP has highlighted significant variation in the definition of ‘volunteers’ within RCAHMS: for example, volunteer cataloguers work within much more strictly defined parameters than SRP volunteers did. There is anticipation that one legacy benefit of SRP could be the implementation of a more coherent RCAHMS volunteering policy.
- SRP has opened RCAHMS up to public engagement. There is a sense that many staff across all sections have responded well to this and will continue to do so if it is asked of them, but there are some members of staff who are unwilling and/or less able to embrace community engagement work programmes.

#### 11.4.4 **Community engagement and volunteering**

- Amongst SRP volunteers and participants, the project markedly altered perceptions of RCAHMS’ community engagement remit, and many more people are now capable of and intending to undertake surveying and recording work to submit to the national record.
- SRP enabled community members to build trust and establish relationships with RCAHMS in a way that has never happened before, although mostly indirectly via the SRP team.
- An important new project for RCAHMS should, in many ways, take over where SRP left off: the partnership project between the Commission and the Cairngorms National Park is expected to have community engagement at its heart, and will seek to examine the urban landscape of Aviemore as well as the surrounding rural environment, making it inclusive in terms of the demographics of potential participants.
- One potential consequence of SRP’s success in engaging members of the public with the project and RCAHMS relates to great expectations built up through five years of intensive community engagement, which could lead to disillusionment in future if the Commission fails to meet these. Members of the SRP team expect and fear that the reality of RCAHMS’ limited future community archaeology resources will quickly become apparent to groups and individuals post-SRP.
- The appointment of a community liaison manager within the core RCAHMS staff team signifies intent to mainstream community archaeology within the organisation. The appointed member of staff is a long-standing and respected member of the surveying and recording section of the Commission, and one of SRP’s architects. His experience both within the Commission and in working with SRP in a hands-on way will prove invaluable, providing continuity between SRP and post-SRP eras at RCAHMS.
- SRP team members were pleased there will be designated community liaison responsibilities in future. However, they harboured doubts that one person with other organisational responsibilities – even with trainee support – can deliver a satisfactory level of ongoing support to volunteers, especially when they have become accustomed to dedicated service from four – and latterly five – project team members.

- A key message from members of the SRP team was that, in spite of the fact SRP has achieved great things in equipping amateurs with skills to survey and record sites, the value of this can only be realised with intensive ongoing professional support, assistance and, particularly, validation. Community archaeology can therefore enhance but not replace the work of professionals. SRP team members were concerned that RCAHMS would not strike the correct balance in future, placing too much emphasis on the role of volunteers given the limitations on resources that will be offered to support them. A 'worst case scenario' was envisaged where, through raising and failing to meet expectations, SRP could even cause net damage to RCAHMS.
- Interviews with staff members from other sections throughout RCAHMS suggest most expect SRP to have a positive legacy for a wide variety of reasons, including those relating to the RCAHMS chief executive's conference pledges. They also pointed to a promising funding outlook for future heritage projects (in contrast to most sections of the economy and society), newly acquired community engagement skills for many members of RCAHMS staff, greater use of new technologies and media, and a tangible cultural shift within the organisation. However, interviewees from RCAHMS also mentioned the issue of SRP building up community expectations and felt it could well prove challenging to overcome this.

## **12. Conclusions and recommendations**

### **12.1 Conclusions**

- 12.1.1 Scotland's Rural Past was a beacon community archaeology project. From its inception, it was meticulously planned and expertly delivered, providing tangible and valuable outcomes for volunteers and communities across the length and breadth of Scotland.
- 12.1.2 A great deal of SRP's success is directly attributable to the highly skilled individuals who combined to form the project team; a team with a value that was even larger than the substantial sum of its individual parts. RCAHMS was successful in bringing together a group of individuals with a combined skill set of significant breadth and depth, but no amount of pre-project planning or recruitment procedures could ensure a unit of four – and latterly five – individuals would have personalities that complemented each other so effectively. The quality of these working relationships permeated beyond the team itself, stretching out into all of the community groups they worked with and producing a wealth of unsolicited positive evaluation feedback specifically referring to the quality of the project staff both in terms of knowledge/skill and personality/approachability.
- 12.1.3 Performance indicator target setting served a useful purpose in the early stages of SRP by focusing attention on key measures of success as the project was implemented and developed. However, the team soon found they could deliver much more in the timeframe and budget than was originally anticipated.
- 12.1.4 The evidence presented in this report leaves no doubt: SRP surpassed even the most optimistic expectations in delivering its key objectives. The project enabled hundreds upon hundreds of participants to develop skills, increase confidence, collect information, carry out research, foster value and be empowered.
- 12.1.5 The scale of the project in terms of sheer numbers of participants and diversity of activities combined with the overwhelmingly positive evaluation evidence gathered through all channels indicate that SRP has made a strong and positive contribution in increasing awareness and concern in relation to rural settlements. If, as expected, community groups continue to carry out surveying and recording work and share their findings more widely, this will be confirmed.
- 12.1.6 SRP has opened RCAHMS up to public engagement. In many ways, for many people, the project became the public face of the Commission. There is still a great deal of work to be done before the Commission – whether it is branded 'RCAHMS' or with a successor title – is well-known in non-specialist circles, but SRP has helped it to take a big stride forward in engaging new audiences and user groups, establishing meaningful and potentially long-lasting relationships in the process.
- 12.1.7 The evaluation process has revealed that SRP has impacted on RCAHMS' future strategic focus as well as its organisational culture. Across the

Commission, there are many who now appreciate that community archaeology can offer real value to the organisation in a way they did not before. SRP grew to become accepted and recognised within the Commission, but its legacy remains fragile. If properly resourced, funded and prioritised, RCAHMS has the opportunity to embrace community archaeology and lead the way in facilitating professional-amateur partnerships; if, however, it is not, there are no guarantees that, in time, all it has delivered will not wither and be forgotten.

## 12.2 Recommendations

- 12.2.1 With its success, SRP has set the bar high: it will be challenging for any community engagement project or core work to supersede or even match it in future, but that is what RCAHMS should aspire to.
- 12.2.2 SRP should be used as a benchmark against which future community engagement project targets are measured and exceeded. It is important to recognise that in spite of SRP's many successes, improvements can still be made in certain areas: for example, SRP aimed to 'involve people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities', but sample demographic data and anecdotal feedback indicates participants were disproportionately of retirement age living in rural or semi-rural environments with prior historical and archaeological education or interests. While school projects acted as a counterbalance in terms of participant ages, there were relatively few volunteers aged in between, and approaches to address this such as developing 'family focused' projects should be considered.

### **Recommendation 1:**

RCAHMS should use the performance data gathered throughout SRP to set more demanding and more specific targets in future. It is particularly important that where broad inclusivity is specified as an objective, accompanying project planning mechanisms and measures of success are established to deliver and monitor this.

- 12.2.3 It is important that SRP's successes are effectively translated into and sustained in the Commission's future work programmes. The new community liaison manager post, plans to continue to deliver elements of SRP, and steps taken to develop a partnership project with Cairngorms National Park are welcome and necessary, showing the Commission is making real efforts to promote and sustain SRP's legacy. However, these measures should be viewed only as a starting point; a temporary platform or stepping stone from which to take meaningful and lasting community engagement work with national significance forward in future. The measures announced to date should not be viewed as the totality of SRP's legacy.
- 12.2.4 SRP was labour-intensive and expensive, but it was also well managed and value for money. Clearly, the current financial climate contrasts markedly with that which accompanied SRP's formal inception in 2006 in the midst of the economic boom, and future work of this kind could not reasonably expect to be so well funded. Nevertheless, opportunities still exist to secure funding from streams such as HLF to deliver outcomes that are closely aligned with RCAHMS' remit and priorities.

**Recommendation 2:**

RCAHMS should, in partnership with others, seek to establish an ambitious follow-up project or series of inter-linked projects as a successor to SRP. This successor should be of national significance and have community engagement at its heart. It should build on SRP's successes, but also broaden it out to embrace new periods or environments for historical and archaeological exploration, and to increase its potential to engage participants from under-represented socio-economic groups.

- 12.2.5 SRP has built up a significant online infrastructural legacy, and RCAHMS' intention to maintain and develop the website is welcome and important. Digital technologies have played a key role throughout SRP, with the website acting as the hub to draw together a range of disparate projects, activities and community outputs. Reliance on and engagement with new technologies is likely to continue to grow, and this will have a role to play in ensuring volunteers and amateurs from across Scotland and beyond connect with and maintain contact with RCAHMS.

**Recommendation 3**

RCAHMS should think innovatively in developing plans for future project work and for increasing community engagement. SRP drew on field technologies such as GPS in its field training programme and developed technologically-driven activities such as geo-caching. RCAHMS should similarly consider ways it can genuinely and meaningfully use digital technologies to further its own objectives and draw users towards using its resources, for example by exploiting growth in the use of smart phone technologies.

- 12.2.6 Although SRP as a standalone project is drawing to a close and RCAHMS should be focusing attention on new successor projects, it is paramount that any future community engagement programmes do not lead to abandonment of existing relationships built up with community groups and individuals over the past five years. Networking and collaboration channels need to be maintained in order to maximise the project's legacy potential.

**Recommendation 4**

RCAHMS' community liaison manager should be provided with adequate resources and support from within the Commission to ensure relationships with SRP groups and representatives are maintained and strengthened, particularly in ensuring that when they submit findings, good-quality validated records continue to enter the national record

- 12.2.7 SRP's school project work matched the success of the wider project, which was attributable to the skills and dedication of the interpretation officer combined with SRP's near-perfect fit with the Curriculum for Excellence. It offered valuable learning opportunities that differed from those that could possibly be offered in a classroom environment and, with schools' and parents' support, these projects succeeded in stimulating learning and increasing awareness of Scotland's rural heritage.

**Recommendation 5**

Experiences, project planning materials and school project outcomes should be collated and used to guide all future RCAHMS work in promoting history and archaeology in schools. The Curriculum for Excellence provides an ideal framework for encouraging local history and archaeology projects, and through SRP, RCAHMS now has the opportunity to demonstrate its proven track record. It should be proactive in seeking to deliver archaeology and history activities in an educational context, inspiring and facilitating cross-curricular learning in schools with wider benefits for local communities.

## Appendix: Evaluation reporting overview

Scottish Cultural Enterprise Ltd (SCE) was appointed as Scotland's Rural Past project evaluator in March 2008 and was the second organisation to carry out SRP project evaluation work. This appendix details SCE's evaluation activities and reporting from March 2008 to the formal closure of SRP in September 2011.

### A.1 Participant surveys and questionnaires

A.1.1 Throughout the lifetime of the project, the SRP team distributed questionnaires to all participants attending training courses to evaluate impacts. These were collated according to the following training categories:

Training course category	Date	No. of responses
Fieldwork training	Project lifetime	279
Historical document research training	Project lifetime	114
Training for trainers	Project lifetime	9
Skills workshop – presenting material to the public	Project lifetime	25
Skills workshop – heritage interpretation	Project lifetime	28
Skills workshop – site photography	Project lifetime	18
<b>Total</b>		<b>473</b>

A.1.2 SCE carried out and reported on other survey-based evaluation activities as follows:

Survey description	Date	No. of responses
SRP adult participant survey (demographic profiling and impact measurement)	Feb-March 2009	65
School case study surveys (parent and pupil perspectives, Dunkeld and Arrochar)	Nov 2008-May 2009	23 pupils; 5 parents
School project survey of teachers (Curriculum for Excellence compatibility and impact measurement)	Nov 2009-end of project	15
Heritage interpretation participant sample survey (impact measurement)	June 2010	14
SRP adult participant survey (legacy/future interest study)	October 2010	110
Training video survey	March 2011	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>234</b>

## A.2 Case studies

A.2.1 SCE undertook case study work with adult groups and projects based on participation, observation, informal discussion and focus groups, as well as via follow-up interviews. Details of case studies and reporting dates are as follows:

Location	Original case study (part 1)	Follow-up (part 2)
Strachur, Argyll	May 2008	May 2009
Sleat, Skye	August 2008	No follow-up due to Sleat group not registering a formal SRP project
Glen Muick, Aberdeenshire	October 2008	December 2009
Windy Windshiel, Scottish Borders	April 2009	June 2010
Arrochar, Argyll	May 2009	July 2010
Unst, Shetland	June 2009	Followed up instead with school project in July 2010 since no Unst community project was formally registered with SRP
Ben-a-cheilt, Caithness	June 2010	July 2011

A.2.2 In addition to the case studies above, SCE carried out observational evaluation studies (together with accompanying survey) for a heritage interpretation workshop at the Highland Folk Museum in June 2010, and of a 'training for trainers' session that took place at Mar Lodge, Aberdeenshire in August 2010.

## A.3 School case studies

A.3.1 Four school projects were subjects of SCE's programme of case study evaluation. As with the adult projects, these case studies were informed by participation, observation and informal discussion, and these methods were complemented by follow-up interviews with teachers and through responses to the wider schools survey.

School	Original case study (part 1)	Follow-up (part 2)
Dunkeld Primary School, Perthshire	October 2008	April 2009
Arrochar Primary School, Argyll	May 2009	July 2010
Uyeasound Primary School, Shetland	Not applicable	July 2010 - followed up with school project since no Unst adult community project was formally registered with SRP
Braemar Academy, Aberdeenshire	September 2010	July 2011

## **A.4 Conferences**

A.4.1 In liaison with the SRP team, SCE used each conference to evaluate pertinent evaluation themes of interest as well as to evaluate the conference itself. Findings from the 2008 and 2011 conferences were also used as the basis for longitudinal assessment of the impacts of SRP on participants.

<b>Conference</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Evaluation themes</b>
1	2008	SRP's contribution in improving knowledge and understanding The value of SRP How to engage young people with the project Ways SRP can live on post-2011
2	2009	Interpreting SRP sites and promoting discoveries How to complete projects Celebrating success – ideas for an event in 2011 Identifying SRP's legacy and how it can be achieved
3	2010	Continuing research post-SRP Types of archaeology and history for future exploration Interest in gaining qualifications through participation in volunteer projects Other archaeological and historical training interests
4	2011	Longitudinal assessment of SRP's delivery of its key objectives

## **A.5 RCAHMS and SRP staff interviews**

A.5.1 A longitudinal study was undertaken with a sample group of RCAHMS staff at three points in the lifetime of the project: autumn 2007; autumn 2008; and spring 2011.

A.5.2 End-of-project interviews were carried out with all five members of the SRP team and Steve Boyle from RCAHMS.

## **A.6 Progress reports**

A.6.1 SCE submitted three progress reports over the project evaluation period: in September 2008, October 2009 and January 2011.