

# COMMISSIONED REPORT

**Commissioned Report No.255** 

## Identifying the Special Qualities of Scotland's National Scenic Areas

(ROAME No. F05NC701)

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# COMMISSIONED REPORT Summary

## Identifying the Special Qualities of Scotland's

### **National Scenic Areas**

Commissioned Report No. 255 (ROAME No. F05NC701) Contractor: David Tyldesley and Associates Year of publication: 2007

#### Background

This study relates to the 40 National Scenic Areas (NSAs) designated in Scotland in 1978, by the Countryside Commission for Scotland (now SNH) and subsequently endorsed by the Scottish Government. The aim of this study is:

- a) to develop an approach for the assessment of an initial list of the special qualities of NSAs, which can be used in later procedures relating to management strategies and public consultation;
- b) to pilot this approach in five NSAs in order to test its appropriateness; and
- c) to produce written guidance that will enable application of the approach to other NSAs.

It is envisaged that the approach developed in this study and its written guidance will be applied to the remaining NSAs and will inform draft guidance on NSA Management Strategies.

#### Main findings

The research examined early work carried out in Scotland with a view to identifying scenic value and special areas. This developed into an analysis of how the NSAs in Scotland were identified and designated and a very broad analysis of the 40 NSAs. The study also examined a small number of previous projects that had identified the special qualities of NSAs, for different reasons.

The research then looked more widely at how the special qualities of areas, designated or otherwise recognised for their landscape or scenic value, had been identified in Britain, global conventions, Europe and America. Research showed that special qualities may be grouped into categories such as landform, land use, land cover, settlement, authenticity and integrity, emotional response, visual experience, wildlife, history and culture. Experience elsewhere also showed that special places are not necessarily places where the rare or unusual occur. Those identifying special qualities elsewhere recognise that it is the way that the sometimes quite commonplace characteristics interact, or the way that they combine, that makes a particular area special. Those responsible for designating, or otherwise identifying, the special-ness of places simply assume that these qualities will be

recognisable when they occur; by definition they are special and therefore ought not to be difficult to identify. Detailed or esoteric attempts to pre-define special qualities or tell people how to recognise them, or how to distinguish them from the ordinary are universally deemed to be unnecessary. There is a danger of presenting a methodology that gives the impression that the process is more sophisticated than it actually is.

The method was developed through an iterative process of discussion, experimentation, trial and adaptation before and during the five pilot applications in the selected NSAs. The method proved satisfactory and capable of adaptation where necessary, whilst maintaining consistency. A team of two to four professionals work on every stage through a process of desk study, fieldwork and analysis to identify the special qualities by consensus. Landscape character assessment plays a valuable role in the process. Fieldwork is assisted by the use of pre-prepared maps and notes and by structured field sheets.

The results of the desk study and fieldwork will produce a series of descriptions of the key characteristics of the NSA, or spatially variable units within it. From these the team selects those characteristics which alone or in combinations are 'special', those qualities that individually or when combined together make the area special in terms of its landscape or scenery. This is a challenging task but trials have demonstrated that outputs are realistic, repeatable, resonant, relevant to people, respected, robust and related to the scenery and landscape.

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#### **Project Team**

The project team from David Tyldesley and Associates comprised:

David Tyldesley, Landscape Architect, Environmental Manager and Planner – project manager, research, method development and fieldwork leader for 2 NSAs.

Anthony Brown, Landscape Architect and Planner – fieldwork leader for 3 NSAs.

Graham Bradford, Environmental Planner – research, method development and fieldwork for 3 NSAs.

Ros Deeming, Environmental Planner – research and fieldwork for 2 NSAs.

Rachel Hoskin, Ecologist – research and fieldwork for 2 NSAs.

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PART A: RESEARCH REPORT

#### 1. OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH AND EVOLUTION OF THE METHOD

#### The Brief

- 1.1 This study is commissioned by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). It relates to the 40 National Scenic Areas designated in Scotland in 1978, by the Countryside Commission for Scotland (now SNH) and subsequently endorsed by the Scottish Government.
- 1.2 The aim of this study is:
  - a) to develop an approach for the assessment of the special qualities of National Scenic Areas (NSAs), why these areas are considered of particular value;
  - b) to pilot this approach in five NSAs in order to test its appropriateness; and
  - c) to produce written guidance that will enable application of the approach to other NSAs.
- 1.3 This study is the first phase of a two-phase study, the second phase being the application of the approach to assess the special qualities for the remainder of the NSA suite. It is envisaged that the approach developed in this study and its written guidance will also inform draft guidance on NSA Management Strategies that SNH is currently preparing.

#### Outline of the research approach and this report

- 1.4 The research commenced with an examination of the early work carried out in Scotland with a view to identifying scenic value and special areas (section 2 below). This developed into an analysis of how the NSAs in Scotland were identified and designated (section 3), and a very broad analysis of the 40 NSAs (section 4). A small number of previous projects had set out to identify the special qualities of NSAs, for differing reasons and these are summarised in section 5.
- 1.5 The research then progressed to look more widely at how the special qualities of areas, designated or otherwise recognised for their landscape or scenic value, had been identified by others. Whilst the focus of this research was in Britain, examples were also drawn from global conventions, Europe and America (section 6).
- 1.6 Considerable discussion and experimentation led to the first suggested methodology, which was discussed with the Steering Group. This method was further developed and refined, with some significant changes, and then discussed again with the steering group and also in structured telephone interviews with a number of informed professionals working in the field of special landscapes. Further evolution of the method preceded fieldwork, which started with a trial undertaken by four of the project team, working both individually and together, in the Trossachs NSA. The method proved satisfactory and was used in the remaining four pilot NSAs, although in each case adaptation was necessary. Section 7 describes the evolution of the methodology
- 1.7 The final version of the guidance on identifying special qualities was written after all five pilots had been completed, to incorporate the experience gained (Part B, section 8). The special qualities of the five pilot NSAs are described in Part C (sections 9 13) and the fieldwork outputs are reproduced in appendices 1 5.

#### **Special Qualities**

1.8 It is helpful to define the meaning of key terms at the outset of this report. In the context of this study special qualities are simply defined in accordance with plain English: '**special**' means "*better, greater or otherwise different from what is usual*", and can also mean "*belonging to a particular .... place*". The word '**qualities**' means (in the singular) "*a distinctive attribute or characteristic possessed by ... something*" (Pearsall, J. et al, 2001). Special qualities are here defined more widely than 'scenic qualities' would be, which may be defined as the distinctive attributes or characteristics related to scenery, the visual qualities that people see in the countryside. This study sets out to identify a wider range of qualities, which make the NSAs special, than just their visually scenic value. This is discussed more fully in sections 6 to 8 below.

#### 2. EARLY WORK TO ASSESS SCENIC VALUE IN SCOTLAND

- 2.1 Recognising that the visual amenity of the countryside was important, attempts were made in the late 1960s (Fines, 1967 and Linton, 1968) to develop methods for the evaluation and measurement of scenery. Professor D L Linton concluded that the scenic resources of an area depended on landform and land use, using the landform categories of the geomorphologist and applying the mantle of natural vegetation and human artefacts. This method was subsequently adapted for use in some area studies of countryside recreation.
- 2.2 Section 3 of the *Countryside (Scotland) Act* 1967, required the Countryside Commission for Scotland (CCS) to keep under review all matters relating to the conservation and enhancement of the countryside's natural beauty and amenity. In 1969, in order to further this duty, and encouraged by Government, CCS invited Land Use Consultants (LUC) to submit a proposal to show how the landscape of Scotland could be graded so as to promote its better protection and management.
- 2.3 LUC started the work in 1970, working on the underlying concepts of landscape analysis and ways of classifying it. The consultants were to generate a method to be applied by CCS staff.
- 2.4 The report A Planning Classification of Scottish Landscape Resources (Land Use Consultants, 1971) presented a rather complex methodology, based on the principle of 'Landscape Tracts'. These were identified and recorded through a three stage Firstly, map based studies at 1/63,360 scale identified visually selfprocess. contained tracts with high relief ranges as a starting point. Primary landform characteristics were recorded from the maps, i.e. river, coast, valley, plateau etc. A general desk analysis of vegetation types and ground cover followed, i.e. moorland, woodland, enclosed farmland etc. Secondly, fieldwork surveys sought to clarify boundaries, ground cover detail and a determination of *guality* via a scoring method of primary and secondary elements and their influence on overall landscape. The third stage was an office based rationalisation of findings thus far, with landscape sub-types identified and quality classes emerging. Each tract was then allocated a final score and categorised as to its landscape importance accordingly.
- 2.5 The report *A Planning Classification of Scottish Landscape Resources* was published for consultation in September 1971, but work on a pilot study by CCS's own landscape architect had started in May 1971, assisted by the CCS Planning Officer. Serious difficulties became apparent, including the difficulty of achieving comparable results when the two officers independently applied the system in the same area. During that year, several university departments and planning schools also experimented with the LUC system, their observations reinforcing the views being expressed by Commission staff that the method was probably unworkable.
- 2.6 Nevertheless, CCS persisted with the trials and a further programme of pilot studies was initiated in late 1971 to include testing of modifications suggested by the Planning Officers.
- 2.7 During 1972 meetings with the Nature Conservancy Council and Manchester University were influential in the evolution of the method, the university being able to bring their experience of landscape classification work in England for the Countryside Commission. Aerial photograph analysis was also considered.
- 2.8 In December 1972, the Commission considered a progress report (CCS(72)83) which included a summary of the LUC method; discussion of the visual tract concept;

criteria used for assessing landscape character; an analysis of the objectivity and precision of the survey; manpower and technical aids; further work required to complete the pilot study and organisation of the next stage of work.

- 2.9 During 1973 progress slowed but various alternative approaches were investigated to overcome the growing difficulties experienced in using the LUC method.
- 2.10 In a three-part report completed in February 1974 the assistant Landscape Officer of CCS concluded that the method for classifying landscape as recommended by LUC was unworkable and that as an alternative course, the Commission should carry out an inventory of landscape characteristics.
- 2.11 CCS(74)78, presented to the Commission in May 1974, recommended that further investigation of the LUC method should cease but recognised the contribution that the LUC proposals had made to improving understanding of landscape issues.
- 2.12 At this time, the Commission's work on the concept of a Parks System for Scotland, described below, was also being developed with cross-fertilisation of ideas between the two approaches. The influence of the 'Park System' was considerable and eventually led to the evolution of NSAs.
- 2.13 During the evolution and testing of the LUC method (1970-74) the CCS was aware of other work. Firstly, by Professor Linton of the Department of Geography, University of Edinburgh (1969-72) based on a gradation of 2km by 2km grid squares to assess the recreational value of landscape around Edinburgh. Secondly, the work of the Centre for Urban and Regional Research of University of Manchester (Robinson, 1970-75) for the Countryside Commission recommending two methodologies for landscape evaluation, one a predictive method constrained by the use of multiple regression analysis, the other a simpler system similar to that developed by LUC for CCS.
- 2.14 Upon the abandonment of the LUC approach described above, in 1974, CCS officers considered an alternative approach to assess scenic quality and the visual character of landscape derived from an understanding of landscape character, referred to as an *"inventory approach"*. However, this too was considered to be impractical largely because of high cost. The parallel work on a *Park System for Scotland* was considered to be the best way forward and formed the basis of NSA designation as described below.

#### 3. THE SELECTION OF SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL SCENIC AREAS

- 3.1 In May 1971 a Parliamentary Select Committee on Scottish Affairs (1972) was set up by Government to consider land resource use in Scotland. The Select Committee invited the Commission to submit a paper setting out its views on the establishment of a national park system for Scotland and the management of scenic areas under recreational pressure.
- 3.2 A paper on this subject was prepared and considered by the Commission in March 1972, (CCS(72)4) and approved for submission to the Select Committee. At a special meeting in June 1972, the Commission agreed in principle that there was a case to be made for a spectrum of park provision in Scotland, although the detail had still to be worked out (CCS(72)15).
- 3.3 In view of the impending reorganisation of local government, the Commission pressed ahead with the development of its earlier thinking and at its meeting in April 1973, considered a paper which suggested the development of a park system with four main elements (CCS(73)36):

#### Category 1: Areas of national significance

These would generally be of outstanding landscape character and overall policy in them would be geared to the protection of that character, with conservation as the primary objective. Some of these areas would be relatively remote and, in whole or in part, might have a wilderness character.

#### Category 2: Areas of regional significance

These would generally be of high landscape character in a regional rather than a national context and they would take a greater intensity of resource-based recreational use and local development for the indigenous population.

#### Category 3: Areas of local significance

These would have some landscape character, but generally would be comparatively small in size and would be developed fairly intensively for informal recreation. Country parks would be within this category.

#### Category 4: A linear network

This would comprise the network of roads, tracks and footpaths linking the main areas of the park system to one another and to the towns from which the users would come. It would also include roadside recreation areas.

The Commission's thinking envisaged control of areas of national significance lying with some national agency, including the possibility that this agency might be the Commission itself.

- 3.4 The paper was sent to the Under Secretary of State and the Scottish Development Department (SDD). The Department encouraged the Commission to continue the development of their thinking, whilst expressing certain reservations. The Department wanted to see an emphasis on the recreational opportunities available in the various levels of park proposed. The Commission was also discouraged from promoting proposals which would reduce the control of planning authorities.
- 3.5 Following a consultation programme in 1973, CCS adapted the proposals to provide for a system based upon a recreational strategy and for a separate proposal to be made to provide for greater national involvement in the protection of natural beauty

and amenity in areas thought to be of national significance. This was a watershed which shaped Commission policy, with equal priority given to landscape assessment work, leading to the eventual definition of National Scenic Areas. It also marked the coming together of the two parallel areas of research on a planning classification of landscape resources (section 1 above) and the park system concept (Countryside Commission for Scotland, 1974).

- 3.6 It was decided that further discussions on possible areas of national significance would be helped by up to date information on a selection of places that might be suitable for designation. Fiona Leney was appointed to write a series of essays for ten selected study areas. These were selected on the basis of recommendations from earlier work –The Ramsay Committee (1945), The Hobhouse Committee (1947); W H Murray's review of Highland Landscapes for the National Trust for Scotland (1962); and the Scottish Countryside Activities Council survey of wilderness for CCS in 1970.
- 3.7 The seven study areas derived from the earlier work were in the Highlands so three other areas were selected in the Inner and Outer Hebrides and Galloway to provide a more representative sample of outstanding Scottish landscape. In time the 'Park System' approach as well as the 'Resource Classification' approach was abandoned.
- 3.8 Thus after several years persevering with more objective approaches, the CCS embarked on a more intuitive, in-house, self justified, subjective analysis of scenic value, based on the experience of its own staff, supported by its own Board and drawing to a more limited extent on earlier works and descriptions of what was valued in the Scottish landscape. Thus, the essays helped to inform a developing programme of work that would lead to the intuitive selection of NSAs by the Commission and its staff, themselves.
- 3.9 In selecting the NSAs the Commission sought to identify scenery which best combined those features which are most frequently regarded as beautiful. On the whole this meant that richly diverse landscapes which combine prominent landforms, coastline, sea and freshwater lochs, rivers, woodlands and moorlands with some admixture of cultivated land are generally the most prized. Not all of these features occur, however, in all the areas identified. Diversity of ground cover may be absent in some, but compensated for by especially spectacular landform or seascape. In Scotland, outstanding examples of such scenery are most frequently found north of or on the Highland Boundary Fault. Many of the more managed landscapes to the south and east, in areas of intensive agricultural activity were considered beautiful, but the CCS found it difficult to recognise many of these as being outstanding in a national or international sense. It examined the Southern Uplands carefully, aware that the subtler landforms and more managed landscapes found there made comparison with Highland scenery difficult. This kind of scenery was not replicated elsewhere and was considered to be pleasing to the eye attuned to it. CCS therefore sought to identify those parts of it which, while not exhibiting the same diversity of form as Highland Scotland, nevertheless combine pleasing physiography with varied land-use to provide "scenery of great charm and soft beauty".
- 3.10 In many of the areas identified, the pattern of settlement was a contributing feature. Crofting townships, ancient ecclesiastical settlements and the planned villages of the nineteenth century improvers were considered to add to the scene. Some small industrial towns or villages, dependent upon a major industry, were included because they were set in the midst of fine scenery and no useful purpose would be served by contriving to exclude them. This approach, carried out with care and consistency,

was considered by the CCS to be a reasonable course to follow in a subject "not amenable to measurement in scientific terms".

- 3.11 The method adopted for carrying out the survey was as follows. First, desk appraisals of maps of the Scottish countryside at 1/50.000 scale were carried out to determine the likely extent and character of fine scenery. This work commenced with the five National Park Direction Areas, then moved on to the other areas that had been the subject of Fiona Leney's essays and subsequently to further areas that commended themselves in the course of the survey, or which in the opinion of the surveyors from their extensive knowledge of the Scottish countryside were worthy of study. Although the method suggested by LUC was not applied in full, its approach to the analysis of map information was used as the basis for examining topographical maps. Literary sources were examined for opinions that had been expressed by others about the character of areas being considered. Planning documents produced by local authorities and by national agencies, such as the Nature Conservancy Council and the Forestry Commission, and by private bodies, such as the National Trust for Scotland, were also scrutinised for information on other designations such as Areas of Great Landscape Value, National Nature Reserves, Forest Parks and certain National Trust properties. With this basic appraisal of the likely extent of areas of fine scenery, the surveyors then made field inspections to form opinions as to the extent of landscape tracts which, for reasons of "diversity of landform, vegetation and/or ground cover, or other outstanding visual characteristics", appeared to merit recognition as national assets.
- 3.12 An important aspect of this work was the ability of the Commission to use the same surveyors throughout, thus providing consistency of view to the whole exercise. Not only had the same team carried out all the field survey work, with never less than two officers undertaking field examination of any particular area, but they had reported their findings to a senior staff steering group which had remained unchanged throughout the exercise. The proposals produced in this way had, in turn, been subjected to scrutiny by the Commission which included members with acknowledged expertise in the fields of assessment of scenic quality and rural land use.
- 3.13 The CCS deliberately did not analyse scenery in terms of its geology, geomorphology, pedology, climate, natural history or cultural history. This is not because it thought these things unimportant in their influence on the scene, but because it believed that enjoyment of fine scenery is based on a perception of the whole which does not depend on more formal kinds of analysis. In particular, a conscious effort was made not to let individual specialisations influence choice: nor did it attempt to select scenery on a representative basis of all the different types of landscape which occur in Scotland. It was recognised that many attractive areas had to be omitted in the process of identifying and selecting only that which the CCS considered to be the very best.
- 3.14 The acceptance of this more subjective, consensus, well-informed judgement as to what constituted the nationally important resource of scenery is implied by the adoption of the principle of NSAs in statute. Section 262C of the Town and Country Planning Act 1972 was inserted in 1986 to give statutory provision for NSAs, so that they could be referred to in other statutory provisions, such as exclusion from Simplified Planning Zones. Legislation refers to the requirements for the designation of a NSA to be an "area of outstanding scenic value and beauty in a national context".

#### 4. THE FORTY NATIONAL SCENIC AREAS

- 4.1 Thirty nine of the 40 NSAs can readily be grouped into six broad types. Knapdale does not readily fall into any of the main groups although it could be regarded as either Group 2 or Group 3.
- 4.2 The classification of the NSAs in this way is not intended to be a formal categorisation, based on a detailed landscape assessment, but merely a convenient way of looking at their basic types, so providing a modest signpost, via the underlying selection process, to the special qualities the selectors may have discerned.
- 4.3 The seven groups are as follows

<i>Group 1: Islands (4)</i> Shetland (Foula & Fair Isle) St Kilda	Small Isles (Canna, Eigg, Muck, Rhum) Scarba, Lunga and the Garvellachs
<i>Group 2: Mountains with Coast (12)</i> Assynt - Coigach Hoy and Mainland (Orkney) Knoydart North Arran Shetland (part) Trotternish	Cuillin Hills Jura Kyle of Tongue North West Sutherland South Lewis, Harris and North Uist Wester Ross
<i>Group 3: Coastal (9)</i> Dornoch Firth Fleet Valley Loch na Keal Morar, Moidart, Ardnamurchan South Uist Machair	East Stewartry Coast Kyles of Bute Lynn of Lorn Nith Estuary
<i>Group 4: Mountain Massif (2)</i> Ben Nevis and Glen Coe	Cairngorm
Group 5: Highland Glens and Lochs (11) Deeside and Lochnaggar Glen Strathfarrar Loch Lomond Loch Shiel River Earn (Comrie-St. Fillans) The Trossachs	Glen Affric Kintail Loch Rannoch and Glen Lyon Loch Tummel River Tay (Dunkeld)
<i>Group 6: Southern Upland Dales (2)</i> Eildon and Leaderfoot	Upper Tweeddale

Group 7: Knapdale (1)

4.4 An examination of the 40 descriptions reveals the weight given in the selection process to landform and broad land cover. It reveals the selectors' eye for dramatic topography, sharp contrast, complexity of landscape features and the juxtaposition of land and sea or land and freshwater. The descriptions are short, rather sketchy, but nevertheless frequently evocative. There is little reference to settlements and settlement pattern and few references to history or culture.

- 4.5 The 40 descriptions tend to reinforce the true basis of selection being, as the selectors honestly described, a process of subjective judgements based on informed consensus.
- 4.6 The selected NSAs concentrate on Highland, upland and coastal landscapes. Thirtythree are located north and west of the Highland boundary fault. Fourteen are islands or part of islands.



Figure 1 – National Scenic Areas in Scotland

#### 5. PREVIOUS PROJECTS DEFINING SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE NSAs

5.1 Three previously published projects have included a description of what was considered to be the special qualities of an NSA. The aim of the Loch Rannoch and Glen Lyon Study of 1987 was to articulate clearly what essential features of the landscape needed to be conserved and enhanced, and to set out the steps whereby this aim could be realised. The Dumfries and Galloway and Wester Ross projects were intended to pilot the development of management strategies for NSAs as part of the drive to reinforce the designations. The special qualities were defined as follows:

#### 5.2 Loch Rannoch and Glen Lyon NSA (1987)

In Loch Rannoch areaLoch RannochRichly wooded loch shoresBlack Wood of RannochConical peak of SchiehallionDunalastair WaterReed beds, meadows, willows, woodland fringe

#### In Glen Lyon area

Deeply incised valley, strong sense of enclosure Diversity of landscape character (e.g. mountains, meadows, rivers, etc.) Mountain summit (and alpine area) Birch and other deciduous woodlands Heather and blaeberry moorland Caledonian pinewoods Ornamental policy plantings and avenues Tree-lined burns

## 5.3 Dumfries and Galloway NSAs, e.g. East Stewartry Coast NSA (undated, assumed 2002)

ComplexityDiversityIntimacy of scaleChange/movementLightCompositionHarmonyLandmarksSensory qualities (climate, sounds, smell, peacefulness, naturalness)

Summarised as a "sheltered, enclosed coastal landscape, valued for its peacefulness, intimacy, and sea views across the Solway". The irregular topography, indented coastline and variety of land cover form a managed landscape of great complexity and diversity.

#### 5.4 Wester Ross (2002)

Expansive space and distanceSense of height and vertical scaleUneven shapeIndented coastlineSense of massSense of naturalnessRichness of detailSense of naturalnessComposition – juxtaposition and contrast; proportion; successive layering

5.5 How the scenic qualities are experienced was also discussed and led to a spatial variation expressed in a distribution map combining the scenic qualities by showing areas of:

Seaward experience Coastal edge Moorland expanse Mountain core Eastern Hills

- 5.6 There are notable differences between the outputs. The 1987 Study of Loch Rannoch and Glen Lyon NSA is heavily based on a landscape character approach, with objective, almost 'detached' descriptions, by professionals, of mainly physical characteristics lochs, moorland, pinewoods etc.
- 5.7 By contrast, the East Stewartry Coast qualities are strongly influenced by local people's perceptions, through a participative project that successfully articulated an intimate, community analysis of the experience and sense of place of the NSA, with very little reference to its physical characteristics. The outputs of this work, in 2002 (repeated in the other Dumfries and Galloway NSAs Fleet Valley and Nith Estuary) concentrated on the subjective experience of landscape visually as in descriptions such as complexity and diversity, and non-visually such as intimacy and peacefulness.
- 5.8 The Wester Ross NSA work of 2002 provided an in-depth, professional, qualitative, subjective description of the visual experiences of scenery, strongly orientated to perceptions and personal responses which provide "*a sense of …*", and how the whole forms a special combination.
- 5.9 Each study reflects something from the original designation citations in some way. Each has its own, but different, strengths. All recognised the importance of the combination of characteristics, acknowledging the complexity and diversity of physical landform and land cover and elements that provided harmony. Importantly, each study recognised that the NSAs were not homogenous in terms of the special qualities and identified spatial variations in the form of sub-areas.

#### 6. IDENTIFYING AND ANALYSING SPECIAL QUALITIES

#### Work in Scotland

- 6.1 The Cairngorms National Park Authority (2005) undertook an analysis of the special qualities of the Park in 2004. It recognised that "each individual is likely to have a different perception of the special qualities, influenced by their connection to the area, knowledge and interests." It concluded that the qualities expressed across a range of stakeholder interests and literary sources, fell into two broad categories: 'natural' and 'cultural'. In respect of each, the National Park looked at 'evidence based gualities' and 'experience based gualities' and researched publications widely to draw on perceptions of the value of the area. It identified landscape, biodiversity and the human experience (including wildness, accessibility, tranquillity and recreation) as important themes of the natural heritage; and land use, people, traditions and recreation as important themes in the cultural heritage. It found a broad consensus existed between the communities and interest groups that shared the Cairngorms. "Above all, there appears to be a recognition that while there are many individual qualities, it is their particular combination that gives the area its unique identity. There are many qualities that the Cairngorms share with other areas. but their particular combination here is what makes the Park special."
- 6.2 **Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority** has also undertaken considerable work to define the 'special qualities' of the Park. This work formed part of the preparations for the production of the National Park Plan, but is seen as having wider application in the future. It aimed to describe the concept of special qualities and the methodology that had been used to identify important heritage features and evaluate these and their contribution to the special qualities within the National Park. The methodology adapted the 'Quality of Life Capital' approach, discussed further in paragraph 6.19 below, following a series of steps which are summarised in paragraph 6.3. However, whereas Quality of Life Capital assesses some socio-economic and recreational aspects, the National Park work limited consideration to:
  - sense of place / scenic qualities based on Landscape Character Assessment;
  - cultural Heritage based on Historic Land use Assessment and designated sites, buildings and monuments etc.;
  - biodiversity based on designated sites and biodiversity audits;
  - geology based on geological Sites of Special Scientific Interest; and
  - associations based on a range of literary sources, community futures profiles and other records.

It recognised that individual features, such as woodlands, contribute to more than one of the qualities.

6.3 The Park was already divided for planning and management purposes into four widely recognised 'Landscape Areas': Argyll Forest; Breadalbane; Loch Lomond and The Trossachs. The first step in the process was to divide some of these areas further, into a total of nine 'Park Character Zones', based on broad variations of landscape character. This had the effect of embedding landscape character into the whole process, as a primary influence on the assessment of special qualities, because the zones were defined on the basis of the Landscape Character Assessment.

- 6.4 Step 2 broke down the 9 Park Character Zones into "*more manageable units*" based on key variations in natural and cultural heritage, but in effect on the basis of the Landscape Character Types in the Landscape Character Assessment, merely recording for each Landscape Character Type the elements of the Historic Land use Assessment in the "*key features and qualities*". Step 3 considered the benefits provided by the key features and qualities defined for each of the Landscape Character Types, in Step 2.
- 6.5 Step 4 sought to attach 'importance' to the features and qualities, where this was not already evaluated (for example by a national or international designation). Where an evaluation had to be made, it was based on informed advice and professional judgement, using criteria that included distinctiveness, quality and condition, rarity, vulnerability, representativeness, setting, context, historical continuity, accessibility and popularity. Step 5 identified detectable trends or pressures acting on the key features and qualities, to help prioritise Park management. However, in practice little data was available and the analysis of change to the features and qualities relied on professional judgement, though this produced useful and rational outcomes. Step 6 drew up priorities for policy, based on the foregoing, and devised management objectives and opportunities for conservation or enhancement.
- 6.6 The key features and qualities could probably have been identified relatively easily by local archaeological, ecological, geological, landscape and planning professionals. Outcomes strongly resemble the descriptions, pressures for change and guidelines sections of the Landscape Character Assessments in the Scotland-wide series, especially those that had stronger recognition of historical dimensions and historical change. For each Landscape Character Type there is only a handful of (usually only 2-6) objectives and opportunities.
- 6.7 Recognising the influence of the evaluation of benefits and prioritisation of management objectives as a result of the work in Steps 3 6 is difficult in the first set of outcomes. Rather the work appears to address all the key features and qualities that have any indication of pressures for change, or opportunities, irrespective of their importance. Most would have been identified in the Guidelines section of a Landscape Character Assessment, usually with many others. Nevertheless, the work plays a valuable role in assembling a disparate range of datasets into a consistent and useful presentation, giving a rational explanation to the management objectives and opportunities on a consistent and (for the subjects covered) comprehensive basis across the Park. Its strength will be in this consistent expression of perceived features and qualities that non-environmental professionals would not be familiar with.
- 6.8 In the *Guidance on Local Landscape Designations*, SNH and Historic Scotland (2005) also draw heavily on the combination of Landscape Character Assessment and Historic Land use Assessment, recommending that both are undertaken as a pre-requisite to refreshing the use of local landscape designations. These should help to identify what is locally typical, rare or unique and what condition the characteristics are in. The Guidance goes on to say (para 3.4) "*In addition to these aspects of landscape character, a number of landscape qualities are also likely to be particularly relevant to the identification of valued landscapes for designation. While linked to the type, range and composition of the physical components of the landscape, these qualities are a function of our own personal response to landscape. Such qualities can be commonly recognised and valued, though they are influenced by a wide set of factors, including the prevailing social attitudes to landscapes".*

- 6.9 The landscape qualities comprise the four interrelated qualities of scenic; enjoyment; cultural and naturalness. The Guidance recommends the use of landscape criteria (significance, representativeness and relative merit) and practical criteria (need, integrity and support), the former being of more relevance in this context. The Glossary contains the following definition of *"landscape qualities less tangible and experiential aspects of a landscape such as the appreciation of its beauty or history, its sense of wildness, or its challenge for recreation. While these qualities are dependent on individual perception, they are commonly recognised and valued by people."*
- 6.10 In July 2003, the **National Trust for Scotland** published a paper entitled *Acquisitions and Disposals: Evaluation of Heritage Significance*, which established criteria for assessing the heritage significance of assets in respect of acquisition and disposal by the Trust. The paper distinguished between some natural aspects of landscape under natural heritage and, in a separate category, aesthetics including natural beauty, visual and aesthetic appreciation of landscape and nature, including scenic or picturesque places. The criteria for assessing significance used indicators of extent / completeness; naturalness / undisturbed; diversity; authenticity; corpus of evidence / study; threat / fragility; and continuity of use / demonstration.

#### Work in the National Parks in England and Wales

- 6.11 There is a general distinction between the ways in which the National Parks of England and Wales have sought to identify their special qualities and those of the majority of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England. The National Parks have generally been quite proactive in seeking public opinion as to what people, both residents and visitors, value. The AONBs, generally, have approached the definition of what is significant about the areas through a landscape character approach. Consequently, the published examples of descriptions of special qualities tend to be based either on subjective public responses or more descriptive character assessments.
- 6.12 The Research Bibliography provides a full list of documents examined in the research. Whilst the following examples are drawn from the English Parks, similar illustrations could have been drawn from the Welsh Parks. The Lake District National Park canvassed public opinion twice, in 1997 during preparation of the Management Plan and again in 2002, as part of the research leading to World Heritage Site inscription. The National Park Authority (NPA) recognised that people's responses depended on their definitions of 'special' and 'quality' and on their knowledge and experience of the Lake District compared to other places. However, the NPA could still identify qualities that, taken together, make the Lake District National Park special (see box 1).

Box 1: The Lake District National Park – "What's so special? – Special Qualities"		
Taken together, these are the special qualities		
Complex geology Concentration of Common Land Wealth of habitats and wildlife History of tourism and outdoor activities Open nature of the fells Distinctive settlement pattern	Diverse landscape Unique mosaic of lakes, tarns and rivers Extensive semi-natural woodlands Opportunities for quiet enjoyment Rich archaeology Celebrated social and cultural roots	

6.13 Similar consultation exercises in other National Parks have led to succinct descriptions of the special qualities of other National Parks, with the authority of public endorsement, see Boxes 2 to 5.

Box 2: "The Special Qualities of Dartmoor" - Dartmoor National Park Management Plan (2001)

Taken together, these are the special qualities

Peace and quiet	Remoteness and solitude
Unspoilt natural beauty	Wide open spaces
Wildness and wildlife (habitats)	Freedom to roam

Box 3: "The Special Qualities" of the North York Moors National Park -"What makes this a special place?" (2005)

Taken together, these are the special qualities

Great diversity of landscape and sudden dramatic contrasts associated with this. Wide sweeps of open heather moorland with distinctive dales, valleys and inland headlands. An abundance of forest and woodland and ancient trees and woodland rich in wildlife. Special landforms from the Ice Age and exceptional coastal geology.

Majestic coastal cliffs and sheltered harbours; distinctive coastal headlands.

A special mix of upland, lowland and coastal habitats and a wide variety of wildlife dependent on these.

Settlements which reflect their agricultural, fishing or mining past and locally distinctive buildings and building materials.

Long imprint of human activity, a wealth of archaeology from pre-history to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. A rich and diverse countryside for recreation with an extensive network of public paths and tracks.

Strong religious past and present with ruined abbeys and ancient churches.

Strong feeling of remoteness; a place for spiritual refreshment.

Tranquillity; dark skies at night and clear unpolluted air.

Distinctive skills, dialects, songs and customs; a strong sense of community and friendly people.

A place of artistic, literary and scientific inspiration with a heritage of authors, artists, scientists and explorers.

Box 4: "A very special plac (2005)	e with very special qualities"	the Northumberland National Park
Taken together, these are th	e special qualities	
As summarised by the pupils	s of Rothbury Middle School:	
Tranquillity	Spirit	History
Culture	Wildlife	Landscape
To which others have added	:	
openness;	peace and quiet;	natural / traditional / unspoilt;
wild / wilderness;	remote;	silence / solitude and diversity

6.14 The Peak District National Park Plan brings together its special qualities as shown in box 5.

Box 5: The Special Qualities of the Peak District National Park - "What makes the Peak		
District National Park a special place" (2002)		
Taken together, these are the special qualities		
Outstanding beauty and character of the landscape. Significant geological features.		
Sense of wildness and remoteness.		
Clean earth, air and water.		
Thousands of years of human influence, which can be traced through the landscape.		
Distinctive character of villages and settlements.		
Opportunities for quiet enjoyment.		
Opportunities for outdoor recreation and adventure.		
Vibrancy and sense of community.		
Customs, legends, traditions and arts.		
Environmentally-friendly methods of farming and working the land.		
The special value attached to the National Park by surrounding urban communities.		

#### Work in the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England

- 6.15 The Countryside Agency AONB Guidance (2002) states that AONB Management Plans should include: "A Description of the AONB and an Assessment of its significance and special qualities. Information about the area itself should stress aspects that give unity to the AONB as a whole, while also identifying individual features or distinct zones within the AONB." It does not, however, offer further guidance on how to identify the special qualities, or examples of what they might be.
- 6.16 Consequently, it is necessary to turn to examples of AONB Management Plans, to see what special qualities have been identified and described in light of this guidance. The research bibliography provides a full list of documents examined in the research. It will be seen how the Surrey Hills concentrated almost exclusively on views; how a number of AONBs recognise the importance of landform, geology and geological / geomorphological features; the recognition of how building styles or materials lend harmony and distinctiveness to an area (e.g. the Cotswolds) and the value of diversity of land cover (especially woodlands) and the presence of water.
- 6.17 Despite the considerable diversity of examples, themselves representative of an even greater diversity in the whole suite of AONBs, some general conclusions can be drawn. The special qualities of AONBs are primarily related to the harmony and / or contrast of their component landscape character types (moorland contrasting with valleys or the harmonious blend of river valley and estuarine areas); 'richness' and 'diversity'; features characteristic of what is perceived to be an unspoilt typical 'English' upland or lowland landscape. For example, lowland hay meadows, large hedgerows enclosing small irregularly shaped fields, villages with tall church spires,

broadleaved woodlands or, in the uplands, rolling moorlands, hill fields with sheep enclosed by stone walls, barns and steadings, waterfalls along fast flowing rivers.

6.18 The North Norfolk Coast landscape character assessment of 1995, however, researched a much wider base in its search for special qualities (Countryside Commission, 1995). It looked at the landscape as part of the national and regional resource, in a conventional approach to landscape character assessment, but also looked at its scenic qualities; how the landscape is perceived and valued (by the general public and by writers and others who may have been inspired by it); and other special values, reflected in historical and cultural associations, and special nature and historic conservation interests (designations).

#### Other evaluation methods in Britain

- 6.19 The **Quality of Life Capital** approach has been widely published and discussed so explanation here is limited to the key elements relevant to the identification of special qualities. It seeks to identify 'what matters', what is important, to whom; and what benefits natural and man-made features may bring; how important they are; how much of them there is; whether they are substitutable and what policy or management aims should be attributed to them. It is a useful approach in that it requires fundamental re-thinking about values attached to features that may, or may not, have been valued in the past. It is a matrix based approach and so has the benefits of being systematic. It is also regarded as potentially subjective and to some potential stakeholders, rather esoteric and difficult to apply, although it has made an important contribution to some evaluation processes (e.g. Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Plan, as described above) and advanced the rigour and comprehensiveness of environmental assessment and monitoring.
- 6.20 In the late 1990s the Countryside Council for Wales, in association with the Wales Landscape Partnership Group developed a landscape information resource under the title **LANDMAP** ('Landscape Assessment and Decision Making Process'). It was launched as a unique tool within a European context which would present a pool of information on the multiple components which come together as the Welsh landscape and create its character and sense of place. It uses a highly systematic method of assessment so that all aspects of landscape are considered equally, and provides a 'product' which can be utilised for a broad range of landscape planning and management activities.
- 6.21 Its core approach is one of making desk-top and field assessments of five core elements of landscape: Geological Landscape; Landscape Habitats; Visual and Sensory qualities; Historic Landscape; and Cultural Landscape. Surveys are carried out at County or National Park scales. The methodology is rigorously defined into distinct stages and assessment criteria, with a further quality assurance stage adding rigour to the consistency between different area assessments. In a number of ways the system reflects Landscape Character Assessment as established within England and Scotland, but also embraces historical and cultural landscape issues in a more systematic way. At the main assessment stage, there is no reference to identifying and evaluating those character elements which may contribute to special qualities.
- 6.22 Within the 'Visual and Sensory Qualities' element of LANDMAP the assessor is required to categorise the Aspect Areas (main spatial units) as being of outstanding, high, moderate, low or unknown quality under headings of *Scenic Quality, Integrity, Character* and *Rarity.* The Scenic Quality element is defined as '*The area will have accessibly-viewed scenes which are of a picturesque quality, demonstrating aesthetically-pleasing elements in composition*'. As a guide the methodological

guidance for LANDMAP (CCW 2003) suggests "*outstanding*" means of international or national Importance, and "*high*" as of regional or county importance. However there appears to be an absence of clear guidance to the assessor as to how scenic quality might be judged and categorised within this framework.

- 6.23 Hence special qualities as a discreet concept or characteristic of the landscape are not clearly acknowledged as core elements or components within the assessment technique. The assessment of visual and sensory qualities in the methodology invites assessment of less tangible or quantifiable elements of landscape, and requires assessors to have regard to factors such as 'attractiveness', 'tranquillity', 'threat', 'wildness' and 'spiritual' qualities of the aspect area. The guidance acknowledges the subjective nature of taking such judgements.
- 6.24 LANDMAP therefore offers a very detailed and widely accessible inventory of landscape topographical and geomorphological characteristics, and human or cultural influences thereon, across Wales. However it does not seek to afford value to discreet landscape components. Whilst offering a broad and consistent assessment of landscape characteristics it does not embrace stakeholder opinion.
- 6.25 Landscape Evaluation in England, especially to justify non-statutory local designations, following a somewhat discouraging approach in Government policy, can help to inform the process of identifying special qualities, even though it is heavily orientated to comparative designation analysis rather than analysis of what is special within a designated area. The Research Bibliography provides a full list of documents examined in the research. An example of a fairly complex, contemporary landscape evaluation is found in the work undertaken on behalf of Colchester Borough Council in the Review of Countryside Conservation Areas in Colchester Borough (2005). In re-assessing the basis for local landscape designations, in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, (ODPM 2005) it adopted the following criteria: Landscape Quality, Scenic Quality, Rarity, Representativeness, Conservation Interests, Wildness / Tranguillity, and Associations; ranking each landscape unit as a high value landscape, a moderate or low value landscape. Whilst achieving its objective of justifying the local designations, this work exhibits some confusion in the selection and application of criteria, possibly because it attempts to combine seemingly incompatible elements (rarity and representativeness). There is the inherent danger of degrading the weight attached to good landscape design and planning in areas ranked as low value landscapes.
- 6.26 Other examples of similar work to review local designations, for example, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (1994), took a simpler and possibly more robust approach. It was based on a method that identified special landscape areas that were the most appropriate examples of each landscape character type, classified in a new landscape character assessment, on the grounds of integrity, spatial extent and representativeness. This endorsed the pre-existing designated areas, with some relatively minor boundary changes, and added a new area, based on the Thorne and Hatfield Moors, a low-lying area of peatlands of high natural heritage value not previously recognised in landscape assessments when compared with the Pennine fringes and limestone hills elsewhere in the Borough.

#### International perspectives

#### Global conventions

- 6.27 Examples of approaches to identifying special-ness in landscapes at the global level are found in the criteria for UNESCO World Heritage Site inscription. There is an emphasis on human creations in and human influence on landscape, for example in criteria:
  - (i) to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
  - (ii) to exhibit an important interchange of human values .....
  - (iii) to bear a unique, or at least exceptional, testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation that is living or has disappeared;
  - (iv) to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history; and
  - (v) to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use or sea-use which is representative of a culture or human interaction with the environment ....

Other criteria focus on geological and other natural phenomena and biological diversity or ecosystems, for example, criteria:

- (vi) to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
- (vii) to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant ongoing geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
- (viii) to be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing ecological or biological processes in the evolution of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals; and
- (ix) to contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in situ conservation of biological diversity .....
- 6.28 It will be noted, however, that criterion (vi) also includes "areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance" thus opening the door to inscription of landscapes for their scenic value. The revised Operational Guidelines (UNESCO, 2005), indicate that the protection, management, authenticity and integrity of candidates are also important considerations. This introduces, in terms of landscape and visual amenity, not only the factor of completeness / intactness / unspoilt qualities (integrity); but also that of distinctiveness (referred to as authenticity in the criteria).

#### European Approaches

- 6.29 In Europe, the typical approach is found in the Council of Europe's criteria for the European Diploma of Protected Areas (Council of Europe website). This is an initiative aimed at promoting the recognition of areas of outstanding natural heritage, in an international (European) context, with a view to promoting their management for conservation. It exhibits a strong emphasis on conservation of wildlife and natural features through protection, but also encourages the recognition of landscapes. Three candidacies are offered:
  - a) areas of particular importance for the conservation of biological diversity in Europe;
  - b) areas aimed at conserving remarkable natural phenomena or geological or physiographic formations characteristic of the earth's history; or

c) areas of particular importance for the conservation of landscape diversity in Europe.

The latter may comprise:

- a) sites or landscapes of outstanding aesthetic or cultural value or of a spectacular nature;
- b) complexes conserved as evidence of the history of the countryside or woodland in Europe; or
- c) country or wooded areas that are cultivated using extensive methods and containing typical examples of European landscapes.
- 6.30 Protected landscapes in many European countries are based heavily on wildlife / biodiversity protection. For example, "The primary purpose of national parks is to safeguard the diversity of Finnish nature. When establishing national parks attention has also been paid to the protection of natural sights and Finnish history." (Natural Heritage Services of Metsähallitus, 2006). However, there are exceptions, for example, Lithuania prioritises a more holistic view of landscape, epitomised by its description of the Dzukija National Park, of 55,000 ha designated in 1991. It refers first to the woodlands, rivers and views, to the ancient towns and other historical attractions, legends and folk tales, forest villages with their vernacular architecture, local crafts and traditions of gathering wild mushrooms and fruit on a commercial scale, with mention of the rare eagles and mammals such as deer, elk, wild boar and wolves at the end of the citation (Lithuanian Government, 2006).

#### An American example

- 6.31 The United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service (2006), has extensive responsibility for designating and protecting a wider variety of heritage resources than just the National Parks. It has set criteria for the screening and selection of candidate park units (which may be relatively small areas or properties) to screen them for national significance. Criteria include a requirement to meet all four of the following:
  - a) an outstanding example of a particular type of resource;
  - b) exceptional value of quality illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our Nation's heritage;
  - c) superlative opportunities for recreation for public use and enjoyment or for scientific study;
  - d) a high degree of integrity as a true accurate and relatively unspoiled example of the resource.
- 6.32 Thus, again the influence of integrity is apparent, as well as high quality. Natural area examples may include (the list is selective):
  - a) an outstanding site that illustrates the characteristics of landform or biotic area that is still widespread;
  - b) a rare remnant natural landscape or biotic area of a type that was once widespread;
  - c) a landform or biotic area that has always been extremely uncommon in the region or nation;
  - d) a site that possesses exceptional diversity of ecological components or geological features;

e) an area that has outstanding scenic qualities such as dramatic topographic features, unusual contrasts in landforms or vegetation, spectacular vistas or other special landscape features

#### Discussions with specialists

- 6.33 The research for this methodology included telephone interviews with a number of practicing landscape, planning and conservation professionals working in the field of protected landscapes and management plan preparation. The discussions ranged from around 25 minutes to over an hour in duration. The discussions began with establishing whether Landscape Character Assessment was a good basis for the understanding of special and scenic qualities. The range of elements beyond landform and land use that could contribute to special qualities was then discussed. In particular the interviews addressed the combinations of factors which come together to make a place special and consideration as to whether individual elements could be of such note, in their own right, as to make a place special qualities to be done by a landscape professional; how important were terminology and rigour in nomenclature; whether it was an intuitive process; and the importance of the opinion of local residents and visitors.
- 6.34 Whilst the discussions were wide ranging and detailed, and many individual points helped to inform the overall conclusions of this report, there was considerable common ground in views held by various people. These discussions widely endorsed the following points.
  - a) A holistic approach to the definition of landscape and scenery should be adopted, which should include historical, cultural and biological associations and influences.
  - b) Use of landscape character assessment is a good starting point to the process of defining special qualities, indeed there is probably no other widely available tool to inform the process at an appropriate level.
  - c) Landscape and other environmental professionals should work as a team and their work should form the basis of wider public consultation which is seen as essential.
  - d) Subjective professional judgement is necessary and so long as it is systematic it provides a sound basis for defining special qualities. However, perception of what is special does change over time and will vary between communities; this is why wide and contemporary consultation is important.
  - e) Special qualities do not necessarily have to be rare qualities, but simply what makes an area important and valued. It is often the combination of characteristics that is special.
  - f) There is a need for methodologies to be consistent and rigorous and for the careful use of some terms. However, method statements should not appear to be esoteric, with over-precise language appearing to draw distinctions between words that most people would regard as synonymous. Methods need to be understandable and user-friendly.
  - g) What is special, described by some as the 'wow factor', is likely to be quite apparent, if not obvious (that is why it is special) and the ability to recognise it

is not confined to landscape, or indeed any other, professionals. People can actually see what is special, though it may take a professional to articulate it.

6.35 Two further points arose from discussions that did not emerge from other research. Firstly, 'scenic' is related to 'scenery', and scenery has a theatrical connotation that is relevant to landscapes; it is the setting for human activity. Secondly, one of the special qualities of many designated landscapes is that they are perceived by people to be more natural and unspoilt, even though apparently wild landscapes are not, in that sense, 'natural'.

#### Conclusions from other work defining special qualities

- 6.36 Despite the enormous range of qualities identified as special, and the considerable variation in levels of detail and emphasis, a number of features and expressions recur, at all levels global to local: such as 'contrast', 'diversity', 'harmony', 'authenticity', 'distinctiveness' and 'representativeness'. Certain descriptive qualities referred to are highly subjective and reliant on personal responses, such as 'spectacular', 'dramatic' or 'wild'; no one seeks to define these descriptions, which are assumed to be recognisable, in the context where they occur. There is a distinction often drawn, explicitly or implicitly, between physical qualities (features and attributes) such as woodland, lakes, moorland or coast, which are frequent or widespread; and people's responses to their particular characteristics or the way they combine to provide a scene that is 'exhilarating' or 'inspiring'.
- 6.37 This leads to the contemplation that there may be two main types of special qualities - physical ones and perceived ones. For physical qualities, special-ness may relate to rare, very fine, authentic or unspoilt examples or combinations of them, or to extremes of scale, shape or intensity, which qualities lead to them being described as 'special'. In respect of perceived qualities, it may be these physical qualities in themselves, or in combination with other qualities related to the experience of a place, that evoke extremes of perception, again leading to them being described as 'special'. There are slopes and cliffs in many places, they are special when they evoke descriptions such as 'spectacular slopes' and 'dramatic cliffs'. This implies that special places are not necessarily places where we might find the rare or unusual, but rather that they can sometimes be places where the commonplace exhibit unusual extremes or come together in ways that invoke a response in people that is regarded as special - inspirational, romantic, wild, dramatic, spectacular, beautiful, tranquil or exhilarating. Those responsible for designating, or otherwise acknowledging, the special-ness of places simply assume that these qualities will be recognisable when they occur; they do not go into detailed or esoteric attempts to define the qualities or tell people how to recognise them, or how to distinguish them from the ordinary.
- 6.38 Special qualities can be a combination of matters of fact (physical features that can be seen, counted and measured), and matters of degree, (the physical features are extreme in some way that appeals to people's senses); or their composition is so unusual or extreme in a way that is so moving it invokes a description such as 'beautiful' or 'inspiring'.
- 6.39 To this extent, experience overseas reinforces that in Britain, and reinforces the subjective basis of NSA designation. It helps to direct attempts to define special qualities away from over-precise language; carefully tuned definitions; and away from a method that purports to be more sophisticated than the process of defining special qualities actually is. Defining special qualities in NSAs will be an essentially intuitive, largely subjective process, albeit one that is capable of being structured and

systematic. Subjectivity and intuition are positive, not negative, aspects of the work, they are essential and widely accepted. However, there is a need to guard against the influence of changing perceptions leaving identified special qualities out-of-date. It may be necessary to review special qualities over quite long periods of time, say 20 years or so, to validate their continued applicability in a changing world.

6.40 Special qualities can also be grouped into categories of similar characteristics, for example related to visual experience, wildlife or experience of the landscape, as explained more fully in section 7 below. Thus the analysis of the results of others seeking to define special qualities enables us to begin to understand their scope and to structure their identification and description in a systematic way.

#### 7. DEVELOPING A METHOD TO IDENTIFY SPECIAL QUALITIES

#### Setting the parameters

- 7.1 The method to identify special qualities should meet the following criteria.
  - (a) Realistic achievable and practical in terms of skills, staff resources, finance and timescales.
  - (b) Repeatable from one NSA to another, now and in the future with different compositions of personnel.
  - (c) Resonant understandable and meaningful to those who undertake it and those who use its outputs.
  - (d) Relevant to people involving as wide a community of people as possible.
  - (e) Respected capable of being adopted and perceived as a method generating consensus through informed professional judgement and wide public opinion that is as free from dispute as possible.
  - (f) Robust capable of withstanding scrutiny, learning lessons from past work but nevertheless flexible and capable of adaptation over time; self evidently it should be applicable to all NSAs.
  - (g) Related to the scenery and landscape of NSAs.
- 7.2 The identification of special qualities needs to be stitched into the wider process of producing, implementing and monitoring a management plan or strategy. It may be useful in the consideration of any further candidates for NSA status and in assessing the need for any boundary changes for existing NSAs. However, the task of this project is to generate a method of identifying special qualities of pre-determined areas, it should not be driven or overly influenced by relationships with designation criteria. Whilst this project is not a justification for each NSA it is seeking to explain why these areas have been identified.

#### Relationship with the designation criteria

- 7.3 It is a truism that everywhere is unique. The reasons for designation of any protected landscape reflect the requirements or criteria of the statutory or other procedures that govern the designation process; they do not necessarily tell us all that is special about the area. In other words, once a designated area has been delineated, its special qualities may, and almost invariably do, extend beyond those qualities that it was necessary to demonstrate in order to achieve the designation. For example, English AONBs are designated on the basis of their 'natural beauty and amenity' but when those responsible for their management take a holistic approach to identifying their special qualities (that need to be understood in order to effectively manage the special-ness of the designated area) they identify a much wider range of qualities that are considered to be special. They emphasise how it is the combination of all of these, coming together in the way that only occurs in that AONB (or National Park) that makes the area special.
- 7.4 Given that the basis of designation of a NSA was scenic value, as opposed to, for example, wildlife value or historic value, it is not necessary to know how the area met

a long list of criteria in order to define its scenic qualities. The two processes: applying designation criteria and identifying special qualities are different. This is helpful, given the sparse information we have about the reasons why one area was selected as a NSA whilst another may not have been. We are not revisiting the designation process, nor justifying the designation against some new criterion. We are taking the designation as read and searching for the special qualities that require protection, conservation, nurturing and good stewardship so that the area retains its national landscape importance.

7.5 Nevertheless, the descriptions in the citations in Scotland's Scenic Heritage are helpful pointers to the special characteristics recognised by those who selected and delineated them. Furthermore, because the potential range of special qualities is so wide, as shown in the examples in section 6 above and Table 1 below, it is necessary to bear in mind the reason for designation when considering the special qualities of a NSA. This helps to constrain the very wide choice of qualities. Otherwise it may result in selection of special qualities that are so far removed from the purpose of designation as to be irrelevant to the purpose of defining the gualities. On the other hand, the special qualities addressed in this report and method statement extend beyond the purely scenic, in its narrowest sense of what can be seen. Traditionally it has been the 'scenic' qualities of landscapes that have been valued and designated, for their amenity value or, as the statutes have defined it 'natural beauty and amenity'. This approach still underpins NSAs and contributes importantly to National Park designation, but now there is a more explicit recognition of the contribution of cultural and natural heritage attributes to landscape and scenery and the qualities they engender. This approach intends to embrace them, without departing so far from the purpose of NSA designation that other elements bear no relation to the landscape or scenery.

#### The role of Landscape Character Assessment

7.6 Landscape Character Assessment is a valuable contribution to the identification process and the basis of landscape description underpinning many aspects of the special qualities. Indeed, it is probably an indispensable tool in the recommended method. It will be an excellent starting point for identifying the characteristics of an area. The spatial expression of landscape character types in landscape character units is also an appropriate starting point for distinguishing the differences between the various parts of a NSA, and how the special qualities may vary spatially. This was the case in the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park work, but less so in the Wester Ross work, described in sections 6 and 5 above respectively. However, the work in England shows that Landscape Character Assessment, alone, will not identify all that is regarded as special. Indeed, the process deliberately stops short of attempting to express people's responses and reactions to landscape, in order to preserve a higher level of objectivity. It therefore cannot embrace human emotional response, such as exhilaration and inspiration; it will not represent people's perceptions of recreational challenge and reward. It may not fully embrace the influence of people and community on the special-ness of an area, although some aspects of the assessments will contribute to understanding these qualities. The discussions in Sections 6 above and 8 below indicate that special qualities extend beyond the range of factors incorporated into Landscape Character Assessment.

#### Why a wide community must participate

- 7.7 In order to make the identification of special qualities relevant to people, resonant, respected and robust (see 7.1 above), it is essential that a wide community of people contribute.
- 7.8 In retrospect one of the impediments to the wider and more immediate acceptance of the existing suite of NSAs in the past may have been that they were seen by some as a rather intuitive, even idiosyncratic, product of a single body that had not consulted in the earlier stages of the evolution of the designation. This is particularly so in light of the acknowledged subjective nature of the selection process, which was selfjustifying. The areas chosen were those considered to be the finest landscape, but by a relatively narrow, albeit well informed group. An obvious measure of specialness, as recognised by a wider public, would be the numbers of visitors that an area attracted. The type of visitor may also be a consideration bearing in mind the differing demands of the mountaineer, compared to those of the car-based tourist. But the description of the selection of the NSAs is silent as to whether such matters were considered. After ten years, the NSAs were seen by many professionals as just another landscape designation of no special priority (Cobham Resource Consultants 1988).
- 7.9 The problem was not that the process of selection was subjective, because subjective judgements are an essential, positive and widely accepted part of designation processes and of assessing what is special about designated areas. Rather, many of the problems associated with the NSA selection process relate to the exclusion of stakeholder and wider public opinion. Such a method is probably inconceivable today.
- 7.10 The Council for Europe Explanatory Report on the European Landscape Convention, at paragraphs 54 – 57 emphasises the importance of the involvement of stakeholders in the assessment of the quality and qualities of landscapes. It explains that subparagraph C 1 b of the Convention "requires Parties to assess the qualities of the landscapes identified, taking into account the particular value of different kinds assigned to them by the general public and interested parties such as landowners and land users or land managers. The point of this evaluation is to provide a basis for judging what landscape features of an area are so valuable that they should be protected; what features need management in order to maintain the quality of the landscape; and what features or areas should be considered for enhancement. The process must take account of the concerned people's opinion and the interests linked to sectoral policies, and here views may well be highly subjective and differ considerably. It may be worth performing the evaluation according to objective criteria first, then comparing the findings with the various assessments of the landscape by people concerned and other interest groups. If necessarv the comparison could be carried out by public inquiry, with the interested parties having the right to express their opinion. Public participation in this type of procedure could be fostered by providing the public with information, consulting all representative bodies, using the media and conducting awareness-raising campaigns at all levels."
- 7.11 The Brief anticipated this point by indicating (paragraph 5): "The work proposed here is solely of a professional / expert nature, which does not involve public consultation nor seek to capture the views of wider stakeholders. SNH recognises the importance of these wider views, which can support and inform the assessments results, but it is intended that these will be captured at some future date when management strategies are prepared through an inclusive process for individual NSAs."

#### The scope of special qualities previously defined in other assessments

7.12 Having examined over forty examples of relatively detailed, published definitions of 'special qualities' (in addition to reading the 40 NSA citations) for areas designated for their landscape and / or scenic amenity value, in England, Scotland and Wales, and bearing in mind the international perspectives described in section 6 above, and the differing approaches adopted by analysts elsewhere, the scope of special qualities may be grouped into eight general topics. These are listed in Table 1 below, with examples taken from actual cases.

General Topic	Examples of qualities expressed
Authenticity and integrity	Distinctive, intact, integrity, unspoilt, unharmed, distinct – not transitional, natural and naturalness, clean earth, air and water, pristine, clean, fresh, pollution-free
Emotional response	Influence of weather and light, influence of the sea, tranquil, secret, hidden, undiscovered, softness or hardness, smoothness or roughness, gentleness or ruggedness, dramatic, spectacular, comforting, reassuring, safe, intimate, rural idyll, exhilarating, exciting, inspiring, surprise, open, windswept, exposed, unified, harmonious, quiet, silent, calm, peaceful, peace and quiet, solitude, spiritual refreshment, wildness, freedom
Visual experience	Diverse, complex, varied, constantly changing scene, intricate, contrasting, juxtapositions, colourful, green, intensity and clarity of light, dominance of the sky, varied views, panoramic views from mountains, cliffs, hills, edges, escarpments; iconic viewpoints, landmarks and 'beauty spots'; composition, proportion, mass, shape, movement
People and community	Vibrancy, sense of community, value attached to area by surrounding urban communities, friendly people, warm-hearted, caring people, delightful people, courteous people
History and culture	Distinctive skills, dialects, songs and customs; legends, folklore; religious associations, strong religious past and present, ruined abbeys and ancient churches; example of medieval land management; past industries including lead mining, wireworks, tin plate works, craft and cottage industries; strong associations with visual arts, literature, science or exploration; local produce including cheese, meat, fruits, beers, mushrooms; special or distinctive crops including lavender, hops and fruit orchards; distinctive or rare breeds of domestic horses, cattle, sheep or goats; distinctive boats, ships or barges; historic infrastructure including leats, bridges, harbours, water meadows, industrial archaeology including mills, factories and military buildings; archaeological monuments, castles, large houses and designed landscapes
Settlement	Uninhabited, sparsely populated, remote, pretty villages, churches, vernacular buildings, distinctive building materials, building types and styles, settlement pattern especially related to natural features
Wildlife	Large scale habitats such as heaths and moors, woods full of wildlife, hay meadows, mudflats, estuaries, cliffs, sea birds, wildfowl, migratory birds, mammals, butterflies, bird song and calls
Landform, land use, land cover	Topography, landform features including hills, drumlins, dunes, beaches, cliffs, scarps, gorges, ravines, clefts, valleys, lochs, lakes, rivers, streams, burns, waterfalls, ponds, fields and field patterns, woods, moors, alpine and montane areas; hedges, stone dykes, walls, shelterbelts, avenues; rich mixture of landscape features, myriad of detail, intricate mix, mosaic, patchwork

Table 1 – Examples of Special Qualities Previously Defined: Grouped by General Topic
- 7.13 However, in most cases, the authors of the lists of these special qualities recognise that it is the way that they interact, or the way that they combine, that makes a particular area special. The qualities are special because of the way in which they contribute to unusual, impressive or distinctive combinations, not because they are themselves unique, or in some cases, even particularly rare.
- 7.14 There is also a strong inter-relationship between the various topics, indeed, some qualities could fit easily into two or more topics and there are other ways of dividing or merging the topics, for example splitting history and culture or joining culture and community. There is flexibility in approach here, but the important point is to recognise the full and wide scope of special qualities, far beyond the immediate visual experience; and the fact that it is the combinations of them that makes different areas distinctive and special.
- 7.15 However, NSAs are designated for their outstanding scenery so special qualities that may be identified for a National Park, for example, are not necessarily relevant to a NSA. A NSA may have a strong sense of community but that is not a special quality relevant to its scenic value, even if it was one that everyone agreed was otherwise important. Consequently, Table 1 is reworked in Table 2 to exclude people and community, to reduce the range of cultural and historical qualities to those with a relevance to scenery.

General Topic	Examples of qualities
Landform, land use, land cover	Topography, landform features including hills, drumlins, dunes, beaches, cliffs, scarps, gorges, ravines, clefts, valleys, lochs, lakes, voes, geos, fjords, rivers, streams, burns, waterfalls, ponds, fields, field patterns, woods, moors, alpine and montane areas, hedges, stone dykes, walls, shelterbelts, avenues, myriad of detail, intricate mix, mosaic, patchwork
Settlement and Features	Uninhabited, sparsely populated, castles, towers, kirks, vernacular buildings, distinctive building materials, building types and styles, settlement pattern especially related to natural features, point and linear features
Visual experience	Diverse, complex, varied, constantly changing scene, intricate, contrasting, juxtapositions, colourful, green, intensity and clarity of light, dominance of the sky, varied views, panoramic views from mountains, cliffs, hills, edges, escarpments; iconic viewpoints, landmarks and 'beauty spots'; composition, proportion, mass, shape, movement,
Emotional response	Influence of weather and light, influence of the sea, tranquil, secret, hidden, undiscovered, dramatic, spectacular, comforting, reassuring, safe, intimate, idyllic, exhilarating, exciting, inspiring, open, windswept, exposed, unified, harmonious; quiet, silent, calm, peaceful, solitude, refreshment, wildness, freedom
Authenticity and integrity	Distinctive, sense of place, intact, integrity, unspoilt, unharmed, distinct – not transitional, natural and naturalness, pristine, clean, fresh, pollution-free
Wildlife	Wildlife that makes a marked contribution to the scenery, e.g. sea bird colonies, machair grassland flowers
History and culture	Associations with visual arts or literature or historic events or periods that have a strong influence on scenery today, including but not limited to designed landscapes

Table 2 – Examples of Special Qualities that may inform the method statement

- 7.16 The first six rows of Table 2 are clearly relevant to scenic value and should have an undisputed place in the identification of special qualities, although wildlife would need to be particularly important to the scene, not merely present as it is almost everywhere. The role of history and culture, however, is less easily related to scenic value, even though it has an established place in landscape character assessment. Artistic, cultural, historic and scientific associations can be important attributes of scenery and landscape and they are frequently referred to in definitions of special qualities elsewhere. Nevertheless, to be relevant to NSAs, there needs to be a link to the scenic value. Thus, an association with a writer per se is not in itself sufficient to make it a special quality for a NSA. However, if the writer wrote about the landscape and scenery, and / or set the story in the scenery of the NSA, which was described in the written work, and people therefore associate the story with the landscape, because of the way the author used the landscape, that association would be relevant to a NSA.
- 7.17 Similarly, historical association is not in itself sufficient to merit consideration as a special quality in a NSA, but if the scenery of the NSA exhibits features associated with a historic event, or a historic period, an association could be relevant to special qualities. The most obvious example is architectural styles or designed landscapes, they represent examples of historic periods and often portray strong visual evidence of cultural and historic design, taste and fashion, they contribute to the scenic value of an area and influence its landscape and scenery. Landscapes exhibiting the evidence of historic agricultural practices or industrial enterprises, including abandoned crofting, and some improvement (enclosure) landscapes would similarly be important and could contribute to special qualities, with physical and visual manifestations in the present scenery.
- 7.18 Mere association with a battle, visits by monarchs, or a birthplace would not in themselves qualify as special qualities for a NSA, whereas they may (and do) for a National Park with its cultural heritage dimension. However, where the battle story is embedded in the consciousness of those experiencing the landscape (e.g. Glen Coe), or where royal association has influenced the landscape itself, it could be regarded as a special quality. This approach is endorsed to some extent by *Scotland's Scenic Heritage*. Whilst making no mention of the battle of Glen Coe (page 51), it refers specifically to the associations of Ruskin and Scott to Lake Katrine in the Trossachs (page 87) and the influence of Queen Victoria and subsequent monarchs on the scenery of Royal Deeside in Deeside and Lochnagar (page 61). The interaction between the scenery and the associations with a place, is a two way process; cultural and historical associations influence our perceptions of a place, and our experience of a place is influenced by our knowledge of such associations. We can view these associations and interpret historical events differently over time.
- 7.19 At the end of the day, this initial exercise of generating special qualities will include the historical and cultural qualities that the professional teams will consider to be relevant and special to each NSA. Public consultation will add others that are considered by community and other stakeholders to be important, and may delete some that were initially selected. This process of revision and refinement will apply to historic and cultural qualities in the same way as all other qualities identified.

### The recommended approach

7.20 The recommended approach to identifying special qualities, as part of the overall management strategy process, is therefore to harness a blend of :

- professional judgement, including that of qualified landscape architects but also engaging a range of disciplines with an interest in the amenity value of landscape (including but not limited to land use / development and spatial planners, ecologists, countryside recreation advisers and land managers), and
- ii) public opinion.
- 7.21 The approach involves a mix of desk research, fieldwork and consultation. It is informed by:
  - a) landscape character assessment to provide a systematic description and spatial analysis;
  - b) references to recorded accolades, where they exist;
  - c) relevant artistic, cultural and historical associations and references where potentially relevant to the landscape;
  - d) professional judgement; and
  - e) public participation.

This approach was strongly endorsed when we discussed the early findings of the project with other specialists (see paragraphs 6.33 - 6.35 above).

7.22 The fundamental question at all times in the identification and analytical processes is "What are the characteristics <u>that individually or when combined together</u> make the area special <u>in terms of its landscape or scenery</u>?" They do not necessarily have to be special – distinctive, important, unique or valued in themselves, it is their contribution to the special-ness of the whole area that is important.

General Topic	Methods and sources
Landform, land use, land cover	Desk research, Landscape Character Assessment, Professional Fieldwork
Settlement	Map research, Landscape Character Assessment, Professional Fieldwork
Authenticity and integrity	Desk Research, Professional Fieldwork
Emotional response	Professional Fieldwork
Visual experience	Landscape Character Assessment, Professional Fieldwork
Wildlife	Desk research, Nature Conservation Records, Professional Fieldwork
History and culture	Desk Research, Landscape Character Assessment, Historic Land Use Assessment, Professional Fieldwork

Table 3 – How the Special Qualities could be Identified

- 7.23 Table 3 explains how the special qualities summarised in Table 2 could be first identified, before the public consultation stages. All the special qualities categorised in Table 3 will, of course, be subject to validation, amendment, rejection or addition by wider stakeholder involvement in later consultation stages.
- 7.24 A structured approach to the initial identification of the special qualities of NSAs is set out in the following guidance. It is intended to produce a list and description of special qualities for an NSA as a whole or, where more appropriate, for spatial units within each NSA. These special qualities will be the result of professional opinion, later endorsed or modified by public opinion. They are considered to include the qualities that underpin designation as a NSA.
- 7.25 The following section (Part B) comprises the guidance as to the methodology for identifying the special qualities; it may be published or read as a free standing document so there is some limited repetition of material found elsewhere in this report.

# Summary of the evolution of the method

7.26 Drawing on the research undertaken in the first part of the study, an initial suggested methodology was prepared as a basis for discussion with the steering group. This was based on three principal stages: desk study, fieldwork and analysis. The three stages remained applicable throughout and are shown on Figure 2 in Section 8 below. The following is a commentary on the changes and evolution of the method. Steps in the guidance that did not change are not discussed here.

# Desk Study

- 7.27 Desk study anticipated the use of landscape character assessment, historic land use assessment, biodiversity mapping (habitats and species), library and web research of historic and cultural associations, OS map study and reading of *Scotland's Scenic Heritage*.
- 7.28 In practice desk study was reduced in terms of historic land use assessment because it was difficult to interpret without expert guidance and, at the scale of NSAs, it was too detailed. The effort of 'grossing up' the areas into more generic classifications, even where this may be possible and appropriate, was beyond the resources of this study. It would probably be beyond the resources of SNH in the other NSAs. Further, a layer of additional expert interpretation and / or evaluation of the detailed material would also be required to 'translate' the historic land uses into historical and cultural qualities.
- 7.29 Similarly, nature conservation records such as habitat mapping, citations of designated sites and species records added little to the value of desk study. In some cases, for example, the Moine Mhor NNR/SSSI/SAC citations in Knapdale NSA, did add to the understanding of the area, perhaps because of its unusual ecology and physiographic structure. However, it is anticipated that extensive analysis of nature conservation information adds little to the process overall. It is more likely to be better to research biological and geological records in response to particular queries or sites arising from (and therefore after) fieldwork rather than before. It is likely that, in any event, SNH staff will have a reasonable background knowledge of natural heritage designations and information that will inform the approach to identifying special qualities.
- 7.30 This point is illustrated by the frequent references to wildlife in the identified special qualities in Part C below. Where colourful or distinctive flora, or woodland birdsong

or riverside or coastal wildlife is noted by the surveyors it was not necessary to know all the relevant species of flora or fauna to recognise that collectively they added to the species qualities.

7.31 Thus, the recommended desk study is limited to: *Scotland's Scenic Heritage*, OS Landranger and Explorer Maps (1:50,000 and 1:25,000), web research for cultural and historical associations and, most important of all, Landscape Character Assessment (LCA).

### Landscape Character Assessment

- 7.32 Two points about LCA are worth recording here. Firstly, the initial methodology required the NSA team to read the LCA prior to fieldwork and to record on field sheets material that was actually available in the LCA descriptions. This was to encourage the team to observe and record all landscape features, as a way of ensuring the observation was diligent and detailed. After the first two trials this approach was changed. It was found to be unnecessary to record all landscape features in this way, the team was observing the landscape in sufficient detail anyway. The additional recording was unnecessary duplication. Rather, the desk study work was increased to produce a summary sheet for each landscape character type occurring in each NSA as described in the final guidance. This was a more effective preparation and reduced fieldwork time and effort at each viewpoint.
- 7.33 Secondly, amongst the five pilot NSAs the LCAs were variable in their level of detail, approach and accuracy. The Loch Lomond and the Trossachs LCA was inconsistent with the others in terms of both approach and outputs, for example, tending to identify characteristic features rather than landscape types and identify differences between areas of the Trossachs, rather than classifying and mapping landscape character types. We believe SNH is aware of the problems associated with this particular LCA.
- 7.34 Variations of detail in the LCAs related, unsurprisingly, to scale of areas. There was a lack of detail and some problems associated with NSA landscape character units differing from the generic landscape character type, because the type was very extensive and the NSA unit only one, or a small part, of the type. This was more apparent in Assynt Coigach and Ben Nevis Glen Coe, as may be expected. The problem was easily remedied by fieldwork recording more accurately characteristics of the type in the NSA. Accuracy problems also related to the incorrect allocation of a landscape character type to a landscape character unit. This was considered to be the result of human error on allocating the 'label' rather than incompetent classification and was again remedied by fieldwork description.

# Spatial Sub-Division of the NSA

- 7.35 The early stages of method development envisaged that it would be necessary to sub-divide the NSAs into manageable units. The early methodologies therefore experimented with the mapping of spatial units using two principal techniques. The first was based on landscape character types, mapping the units from the LCAs. The second was based on "viewsheds", that is the spatial unit encompassed generally in views within the NSA, for example, the enclosure or containment of views in a glen by the ridges of hills separating one glen from the next, similar to the concept of 'watersheds'.
- 7.36 In the first pilot NSA quite a long time was devoted to the spatial division of the NSA, using both techniques to see which was most successful (for example see Part C The Trossachs NSA).

- 7.37 Using LCA as a basis for sub-dividing the NSA involved the mapping of the LCA units for each landscape character type and considering whether any may be amalgamated. This process is described in section 8, Part B below, so it is not repeated here. From a practical point of view, it was anticipated that between one and ten spatial units would be likely to work well in most NSAs.
- 7.38 If the NSA has a strongly rhythmical form of glens (or loch basins) separated by ridges or linear hill masses a 'viewshed' approach was thought to be more appropriate. The object would be to define the areas, or spaces, which are contained by landform and seen and experienced as a single visual entity. This may assist in identifying some, if not all of the special qualities that result from the interaction, juxtaposition or combination of areas that may be defined in a LCA as different landscape character types. For example, in the case of a sea loch, the loch and its shores may be one landscape character type, the slopes of the glen may be a second type and the high ridges or hill mass may be a third landscape character type. Nevertheless, the glen with its loch, enclosed by the hills and the skyline of the ridges may be one of the special qualities of the NSA, and it is the combination of the water and landform that is special. Defining a viewshed is done by drawing along the ridges, hill peaks or other watersheds to create a series of visually contained glens, valleys, plains, coastal edges or other areas that are perceived as a single visual entity, even if the whole cannot be seen from any particular point, owing to obstructions to views caused by local landform or woodlands.
- 7.39 In practice, by the time the five pilots were completed it was concluded that complete spatial sub-division of each NSA is not always necessary. Although it is recognised that it is relatively small in area, the fifth pilot, Upper Tweeddale, is a diverse area. However, it was surveyed without any sub-division. It was sufficient to note the spatial distribution of the landscape character types. The LCA and the familiarisation survey effectively eliminated the need for any sub-division of the NSA other than that already provided by the LCA.
- 7.40 In the fourth pilot Knapdale a very broad mental sub-division of the NSA after the familiarisation survey, into Flat Moss, Canal Corridor, Upper Forested Knapdale, Middle Moorland Knapdale and Lower and Coastal Knapdale (without drawing boundaries on the map) was sufficient to ensure that no special qualities would be missed. If two or more viewpoints (and a route in the case of Upper Forested Knapdale) in each of these general areas were selected, it was decided in the period of reflection and selection of viewpoints and routes (steps 5 and 6 in the guidance) that the NSA would be adequately assessed without formally recording these areas on a map.
- 7.41 Consequently, the guidance in part B does not require sub-division of the NSA. Instead it emphasises the importance of selecting viewpoints, or sample viewpoints and routes where necessary, from which each landscape character type and all parts or examples of differing parts of the NSA will be seen. This was achieved by the process of familiarisation survey, reflection and drawing up an initial list of special qualities and the careful selection of viewpoints and routes for detailed survey (steps 4, 5 and 6 in the guidance).
- 7.42 Thus, amongst other things, the pilot work:
  - (a) reduced the importance of spatial division of the NSAs;
  - (b) increased the importance of familiarisation survey;

- (c) introduced the step whereby a period of reflection is used to consider an initial list of special qualities and how viewpoints and routes need to be selected to ensure comprehensive cover of the NSA;
- (d) demonstrated that the special qualities can be identified from information gathered at a series of carefully selected viewpoints or routes in the NSA, without necessarily mapping different spatial units across the NSA.

### Fieldwork

7.43 Essentially fieldwork takes place in two stages with a period of reflection between them. However, the method is flexible and may need to be adapted. For example, the geography of Knapdale, essentially a series of very long peninsulas with single track roads, meant that it was not possible in the time and resources available to travel all round the NSA on a familiarisation survey and again to access the viewpoints. Consequently, the familiarisation survey was carried out as the team travelled down each peninsula; a brief reflection at the end of the journey considered the qualities, viewpoints and characteristics of that peninsula and the detailed fieldwork was undertaken on the return drive. It is considered that there was no disadvantage in doing the fieldwork in this way. The method was applied consistently but in a different sequence. SNH staff joined one of the peninsula 'runs' undertaken in the course of one day, so experiencing the work of the familiarisation survey and the detailed fieldwork.

### Resources

- 7.44 Having completed the pilots it is recommended that a team of two to four people is used throughout the process. More than four adds little, if any, value. Only one person would be inadequate because the interaction with a colleague is a vital part of the process, at all stages. The choice between a team or two, three or four is a matter of resources. One member of the team in all pilots was a qualified landscape architect. Other disciplines can play a valuable part and environmental planners, ecologists and recreation/land managers would be useful team members. It is difficult to conclude that a landscape architect is essential. However, it would be useful always to include one to lend 'gravitas' to the professional mix of the team, as it may be perceived by others. The non-landscape team members of DTA and SNH had no difficulty in understanding or carrying out the work as effectively as the three landscape architects involved, but it is impossible to separate the influence the landscape professionals may have had on the team as a whole.
- 7.45 Time inputs are critical to the method meeting the expectations of the Brief. Time inputs at all stages were initially underestimated because of the gradual evolution of the method and the piloting of different techniques such as viewshed analysis and reworking of LCA information. However, although still too low, the time inputs of the fourth and fifth pilots were closer to estimated inputs. Now that the method is established we suggest that the time inputs in Table 4 below would be realistic for experienced personnel, working in a team of two. If new team members are used for each NSA they would require more time for practice and familiarisation with the method.
- 7.46 Experience shows that there reaches a point in fieldwork where more time adds very little value to the work. Experienced personnel completed all fieldwork (steps 4-7) for Upper Tweeddale NSA in 20.5 hours each (total of 41 person hours) excluding writing up time for the fieldwork information. Writing up time averages ½ to one hour per viewpoint or route, there were nine viewpoints in Upper Tweeddale. The team was satisfied that further time would not have generated more or different special

qualities, but would have continued to confirm or validate those identified in the time already devoted to it.

Stage	Large NSA person days	Smaller NSA person days
Desk Study Steps 1-3	2-3 (1-2 each)	2-4 (1-2 each)
Fieldwork Steps 4-7	10-14 (5-7 each)	6-8 (3-4 each)
Analysis and Listing including writing up Steps 8-10	3-4 (1½-2 each)	2-3 (1-1½ each)
Totals	15-21	10-15

Table 4 – Suggested Time Inputs

# PART B: GUIDANCE ON IDENTIFYING THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL SCENIC AREAS

# 8. IDENTIFICATION OF THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL SCENIC AREAS



Figure 2 – Process Flowchart

8.1 A team of two to four people should be involved in every step of the process, including this initial preparation. Ideally the team should comprise at least one qualified landscape architect and at least one other environmental professional, to diversify the discipline base and to ensure that the assessment of landscape is not expressed in language that may be difficult to follow for non-landscape professionals.

# Step 1 – desk preparation

8.2 Each member of the team should read the NSA entry in *Scotland's Scenic Heritage* and understand as far as possible the reasons why the area was selected and what it contains (and omits). Each should read this guidance and the research report published with it, together with the outputs of the pilot work, in order to become more familiar with the processes leading to designation of NSAs, and the ways in which other projects, in Scotland, elsewhere in Britain, Europe and America, and global conventions have sought to define special-ness in landscapes. It will be necessary to obtain relevant maps and the relevant Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), and reports on any previous work in the area identifying special qualities.

# Step 2 – drawing the boundary

- 8.3 Each person involved in the team should study and preferably each should draw the NSA boundary by hand onto Ordnance Survey maps. This will help to appreciate the nature of the boundary and further improve understanding of the reasons for designation.
- 8.4 The boundaries of larger NSAs (Assynt Coigach, Ben Nevis and Glen Coe) should be drawn at 1:50,000 scale. The boundaries to the smaller NSAs may be better represented on the 1:25,000 Explorer sheets. However, the greater detail offered by the 1:25,000 series will be necessary in the field for all NSAs.
- 8.5 This work will also be likely to raise questions as to why some areas were included or excluded from the designated area, especially where the boundary is noticeably extended or indented to include or exclude specific areas. The answers may not be apparent until fieldwork is undertaken but it is useful to note these queries in preparation for fieldwork. The reason for this is because the inclusions or exclusions may relate to the presence or distribution of the special qualities. The drawing of the boundary will also highlight differences between the boundary on the SNH GIS, which should be the boundary drawn in this exercise, and both the written boundary descriptions in *Scotland's Scenic Heritage* and the drawn boundary on the accompanying maps in that publication (which are of a more diagrammatic nature). Where variation in boundary lines occurs it should be drawn on to the maps at this stage, so differences can be noted in the field.
- 8.6 The output of this stage is one or more Ordnance Survey map at 1/25,000 or 1/50,000 scale, with the NSA boundary and any variations shown.

# Step 3 – understanding the NSA

8.7 From the relevant Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) in the SNH Review series, identify which Landscape Character Types (LCT) apply to the NSA. The description and other material for each relevant LCT should be studied by all team members. Each person should draw by hand the boundaries and annotate the names of the LCTs onto the OS Map used in step 2. This will further the understanding of the differences between the different parts of the NSA and aid

understanding of the character of the area more generally. For Shetland, this process will need to be repeated for each component part of the NSA.

- 8.8 A summary sheet should be compiled for each LCT that falls wholly or partly within the NSA. This provides a useful fieldwork baseline of many characteristics of the NSA's landscape as well as helping to paint an initial mental picture of the study area. Whilst the initial method had required pre-reading of the LCA followed by fieldwork where the NSA team recorded all characteristics themselves, to ensure they looked hard at all aspects of the landscape, in practice it is considered that the pre-preparation of a summary sheet from the LCA, by the NSA team, will serve the purpose. This summary is a record of what should be there and is validated by observation in the field.
- 8.9 An example of a LCT summary sheet is provided for the Coastal Parallel Ridges LCT in Knapdale NSA, see Box 6 below. It should be noted that this is not simply a listing of the characteristics set out in the LCA but a fuller description drawn from the LCA and concentrating on the characteristics of the particular unit of this LCT that occurs in Knapdale, ignoring the descriptions of features in Islay, Mull and Jura where the LCT also occurs.
- Box 6: Example of a Summary Sheet for a Landscape Character Type Coastal Parallel Ridges, Knapdale, from the Argyll Landscape Character Assessment

# **Key Characteristics**

Distinctive, long, linear, narrow steep-sided rocky ridges with a strong SW – NE alignment formed by tightly folded metamorphic, Dalradian rocks

A flooded coastline, where gullies / glens between ridges are deeply scoured by glaciers, over-deepening the narrow gullies which are inundated by the sea

The ridges break down at the coast to form chains of rocky islands

Horse-shoe shaped sandy bays and extensive intertidal boulder strewn mudflats

Stunted oak-birch woodlands on the rocky ridges separating poorly drained narrow gullies / glens with marginal pastures, marshes or lochs

Small blocks of coniferous plantations

Stone dykes enclosing fields along narrow roads which tend to follow coast and run out as culs de sac at end of peninsulas

Small settlements concentrated in coastal coves

Small estates derelict crofts and cottages

Rich variety of archaeological sites

Part of the transition from sea to upland parallel ridges LCT

- 8.10 If some of the LCTs appear to be quite similar in nature it may be appropriate to consider merging some of them. The reason for this is to reduce the number of units to be summarised to a manageable number, consistent with resources available. Some LCAs were undertaken in more detail than others, and it is likely that in some cases areas with subtle differences, which in the LCA were sufficient to merit distinguishing between two landscape character types, would nevertheless share the same special qualities. When considering the merging of LCTs it will be important to focus on landform, land use and land cover. If there are only slight differences in these characteristics between two LCTs they may be suitable for amalgamation to reduce survey effort. In some cases the pre-existing LCTs will suffice unaltered and with no amalgamation.
- 8.11 Some research should be undertaken, proportional to the resources available, in libraries and the internet, to identify any important associations with the landscape and scenery of the NSA. This work may be supplemented by visits to visitor and information centres and observations and discussions with local people, at the time of fieldwork. Artistic, cultural, historic and scientific associations can be important attributes to landscape character; they are frequently referred to in definitions of special qualities elsewhere. However, to be relevant to NSAs, there needs to be a link to the scenic value. Thus, an association with a writer per se is not in itself sufficient to make it a special quality for a NSA. However, if the writer wrote about the landscape and scenery, and / or set the story in the scenery of the NSA, which was described in the written work, that association could be relevant to a NSA. This is because people associate the story with the landscape, and because the author used the landscape.
- 8.12 Similarly, historical association is not in itself sufficient to merit consideration as a special quality in a NSA, but if the scenery of the NSA exhibits features associated with a historic event, or a historic period, an association could be relevant to special qualities. The most obvious examples are architectural styles and designed landscapes, they represent examples of historic periods and often portray strong visual evidence of cultural and historic design, taste and fashion, they contribute to the scenic value of an area and influence its landscape and scenery. Landscapes exhibiting the evidence of historic agricultural practices or industrial enterprises, including abandoned crofting, and some improvement (enclosure) landscapes would similarly be important and could contribute to special qualities, with physical and visual manifestations in the present scenery.
- 8.13 Mere association with a battle, visits by monarchs, or a birthplace would not in themselves qualify as special qualities for a NSA, whereas they may (and do) for a National Park with its cultural heritage dimension. However, where the battle story is embedded in the consciousness of those experiencing the landscape (e.g. Glen Coe), or where royal association has influenced the landscape itself, it could be regarded as a special quality. This approach is endorsed to some extent by *Scotland's Scenic Heritage*. Whilst making no mention of the battle of Glen Coe (page 51), it refers specifically to the associations of Ruskin and Scott to Lake Katrine in the Trossachs (page 87) and the influence of Queen Victoria and subsequent monarchs on the scenery of Royal Deeside in Deeside and Lochnagar (page 61).
- 8.14 The outputs of this stage are a map (the one resulting from step 2) with the landscape character types mapped and named, a summary sheet describing the key landscape characteristics of each landscape character type occurring in the NSA, drawn from the Landscape Character Assessment (e.g. see Box 6 above), and a summary of the historical and cultural associations that may be influential on the appreciation of the special qualities of the NSA (e.g. see Box 7 below).

Box 7: Example of summary notes on historical / cultural associations and other background information - The Trossachs NSA

'The Trossachs' comes from the Gaelic 'bristled country', referring to its vegetation. The original boundary of the area known as The Trossachs extended from Ben A'an in the north, Ben Venue in the south, Loch Katrine to the west and Loch Achray to the east. The NSA boundary extends this area further southeast to include much of Queen Elizabeth Forest Park and the ridge of the Menteith Hills. Today the area widely known as The Trossachs extends still further beyond the NSA boundary.

Others writing about the area have observed that the area's historical and cultural interest adds to the natural beauty, rural scenery and wildlife, animating and offering a romantic introduction to The Trossachs for many of today's visitors.

Countless writers, poets and artists have been drawn to its loch shores, including William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Samuel Coleridge, James Hogg and John Ruskin. But it was the publishing of Sir Walter Scott's romantic poem 'Lady of the Lake' in 1810 and 'Rob Roy' in 1817 that the scenic charms of the area came to popularity and established The Trossachs as a major tourist attraction.

In his poem 'Lady of the Lake', which refers to Loch Katrine, Scott wrote: "So wondrous wild, the whole might seem The scenery of a fairy dream"

And specifically about Loch Katrine he wrote: "Where, gleaming with the setting sun, One burnished sheet of living gold, Loch Katrine lay beneath him roll'd In all her length far winding lay, With promontory, creek and bay, And islands that, empurpled bright, Floated amid a livelier light, And mountains, that like giants stand, To sentinel enchanted land"

In his novel 'Rob Roy', Scott wrote of the tales of Rob Roy MacGregor and the 'children of the mist', referring to his followers the Clan MacGregor who lived amidst the wild hills. Rob Roy was born in Glen Gyle at the western end of Loch Katrine and is buried near by. The famous Duke's Pass is named after Rob Roy's arch rival, the Duke of Montrose.

Bordering the NSA to the north, Glen Finglas was possibly one of the most popular of the royal hunting forests, with many Kings and Scottish Earls hunting there between the early 1300's to the 1700's. Many veteran trees still remain.

Queen Victoria visited the area on many occasions, and loved it so much she had a holiday house built overlooking Loch Katrine. She is known to have stayed in what is now the Tigh Mor Trossachs hotel, a private, high quality hotel for members of the Holiday Property Bond, with its distinctive turrets and splendid location overlooking Loch Achray.

The very routes once followed by Rob Roy's cattle drovers and the horse-drawn carriages of 19<sup>th</sup> Century tourists, have become the main arteries, which now carry modern traffic over Duke's Pass. The Trossachs Trail is a signposted car tour that takes drivers north from Aberfoyle and over the Dukes Pass to take in the spectacular views of an area commonly regarded as 'the highlands in miniature'.

Since Sir Walter Scott's time, Loch Katrine has changed as a result of it being dammed in 1859 at its eastern end to provide a clean water supply to Glasgow. The loch's popularity now owes much to the presence of the last steam driven passenger vessel operating in the UK, fittingly named the Steam Ship SS Sir Walter Scott, which sails up and down Loch Katrine.

### Step 4 – familiarisation survey

- 8.15 The survey team should undertake a comprehensive familiarisation survey of the NSA prior to detailed fieldwork. It is important that this element is afforded sufficient time because it should not merely comprise a quick look round, but should be the basis of a systematic series of descriptive observations to follow later. A minimum half day is required in the smallest NSAs, but two to three days is required for the largest, so that a familiarisation of all reasonably accessible parts of the NSA and their characteristics (and their spatial distribution and interrelationships) can take place, enabling the combinations of characteristics to 'seep' into the consciousness of the team members.
- 8.16 The familiarisation survey should seek to cover as much of the accessible parts of the NSA as feasible and in all cases should seek to view and experience all the component Landscape Character Types. To cover the ground in the timescale a car is necessary but frequent stops help, some with short excursions to view points. Digital photographs help to record the variation and character of the NSA, they are used again in later stages. Sketching is useful, but time consuming. Whilst it is not proposed to use each Landscape Character Type as a survey unit they do present a sound basis for ensuring that all representative landscape elements are understood and accounted for in subsequent stages of survey. Reference to the pre-prepared Landscape Character Type summaries will be an important element in this familiarisation process.
- 8.17 The familiarisation survey offers a valuable and comprehensive 'read' of the NSA as an entity. The outputs of this stage are a series of annotated maps, notes, sketches and photographs, with a retained mental note as to the likely number and location of viewpoints necessary to capture all of the special qualities of the NSA, and whether assessment of routes will also be necessary and if so which routes would best serve the purpose. As explained in paragraph 8.21 below, routes are not necessarily essential, if viewpoints will capture all the special qualities of an area. Routes are useful to embrace the experience of moving through the scenery of the NSA, which may provide additional qualities to those experienced from static viewpoints. Routes are likely to be useful where the experience of an NSA 'unfolds' as one travels through it, or where scenery changes noticeably in relatively short distances; or where a series of 'surprise' views open up along a road or path.

# Step 5 – period of reflection and initial listing of special qualities

- 8.18 A period of reflection by the team should be taken between the familiarisation survey and the fieldwork. If necessary, as it was in the field trials, the reflection could be very short, overnight, with a discussion the following morning before immediately starting detailed fieldwork.
- 8.19 This period should afford the team, as a unit and as individuals, the opportunity to reflect and consolidate their understanding and appreciation of the tangible and less tangible characteristics of the NSA. It involves both private thought and group discussion. An initial listing of the NSA's special qualities should be recorded by the team at this stage (which will later be refined). This initial distillation of special qualities will be based upon the desk study, the landscape character assessment, the familiarisation survey and the wider understanding of the NSA's historic and cultural associations. A revisiting of *Scotland's Scenic Heritage* citation at this point may also prove useful in the light of experiencing the NSA at first hand. Some of the text can become more meaningful after seeing the area and thinking about it. For example, the reference in the Trossachs to the juxtaposition with lowlands matched the actual

perception of the area being something of a 'transition' or 'gateway' from lowland to highland. The significance of the reference to the hills of 'great stature' was made clear when the importance of the backdrop of larger hills behind the valley slopes of Upper Tweeddale was experienced first hand.

- 8.20 The spatial variation of the qualities that are emerging should also be considered. This will determine whether and how the NSA may need to be divided into different spatial units to aid the identification of special qualities. Much will depend on local circumstances, the size and homogeneity of the NSA and the nature and distribution of the landscape character types.
- 8.21 The qualities are likely to have a hierarchy of importance, even if these are not ultimately set down they are, nevertheless, present in the consciousness. For example, there are qualities of Assynt Coigach that are special but found in many other places, whereas there are qualities which draw people to it, specifically, which are at least rarer if not unique, e.g. the association with geology and the highly distinctive 'lone peaks'. There will be qualities that are important in general terms, for example the panoramic vistas of most of the NSAs, the ridges of Knapdale, the ever present afforested hills of the Trossachs and Upper Tweeddale, whereas others are there in the detail of the scenery, the colour of rocks and flowers close to the observer, all of which contribute to the special-ness of the place.
- 8.22 The outputs of this stage are a preliminary list of special qualities, an example of which is provided in Box 8 below.
- Box 8: Example of an initial list of special qualities drawn up following familiarisation work Assynt Coigach NSA

Dramatic, rugged, exposed, isolated landscape.

The scale and extent – large unspoilt areas – of the landform.

Unique seascape with a combination of scattered islands close to the shore.

'Edge of world' experience on the rugged, exposed coast.

Sparsely populated, with few small settlements and dispersed crofting areas, yet accessible by determined tourists, walkers and anglers prepared to travel.

Larger settlements such as Ullapool (just outside the NSA) and Lochinver comprise sheltered harbours. Other settlements are on flatter land where enclosed grazing and cultivation is easier. Here the brighter greens of pastures contrast with the monotone more sombre heather moorland (colours dependent on season but contrast in colour would remain).

Narrow, long, winding roads follow the base of the mountains and loch shorelines, offering dramatic views of ever changing scenery.

Extensive areas are inaccessible except on foot, giving a sense of remoteness and quiet. Feeling at one with the natural landscape. A core of wild land.

Lack of trees. Coniferous forests are notable by their absence, names such as Inverpolly Forest, Drumrunie Forest and Inchnadamph Forest refer to open deer forests.

Steep-sided glens, with narrow bands of sheltered broadleaved woodland, hidden away in the landscape but when encountered they break up the wider, more exposed, prevailing landscape.

Strong cnocan landscape of exposed, hummocky terrain with extensive lochs / lochans, over much of the central part of the NSA – mysterious, secretive, unsettling.

Internationally famous diverse geological character, being the birthplace of major geological thinking by Benjamin Peach and John Horne. Extensive areas of Lewisian Gneiss and Cambrian Limestone contrast with Sandstones, Quartzite and Syenite. Steep, dramatic, exposed sheer cliffs at Inchnadamph and Knockan are unique examples of the Moine Thrust, where overlying schists have been thrust westwards over much older rocks. Visitor attraction at Knockan Crag that tells the story of the unique geology.

Dramatic mountainous lone peaks with unique outlines and distinctive shapes which are easily recognisable and referred to by their individual names eg Ben Mor Coigach, Ben More Assynt, Suilven, Canisp and Stac Pollaidh. Provide recognisable land marks throughout the area

Unique combination of smooth moorland and peat bog running into rocky moorland / cnocan running up to irregular hill ranges and lone mountain peaks. Exposed, huge glacial erratics give a rugged and desolate beauty.

Unique? combination of mysterious, majestic peaks often with caps of white quartzite and light grey lichen, and often shrouded in mist and low cloud, contrasting with the deep, dark, horizontally flat lochs.

More managed areas of traditional crofting, where sheep grazing and muir burn dictate the changing appearance of the landscape, such as at Ben Mor Coigach.

Wildlife, such as in the Scottish Wildlife Trust's reserve at Ben Mor Coigach, where northern bucklerfern, trailing azalea and dwarf juniper are less common plants to be found. Ravens and ring ouzels nest in the hills, and red grouse, ptarmigan and twite feed amongst the heather. Stonechat, whinchat, redpoll and wheatear are found down on the crofts. Grey seals and otter frequent the shoreline and islets.

### Step 6 – identifying survey viewpoints and routes in the NSA

- 8.23 The essence of the approach to the identification of the special qualities in the detailed fieldwork to follow is the identification of a series of representative viewpoints, or routes from where the NSA can be observed, described and what is special in the scenery analysed. To ensure that this is comprehensive of the qualities, it is necessary to establish sufficient viewpoints (and routes), which are appropriately distributed spatially (in both vertical and horizontal planes), to cover all parts of the NSA, or to be representative of all parts of the NSA. Thus, if a particular type of landscape occurs extensively, or in more than one location, it may be sufficient, especially in the larger NSAs where access to all parts is not possible in terms of time resources, to select sample viewpoints. To ensure that the variations of all parts of the NSA are covered it may be necessary to draw up spatial units so that it can be demonstrated that all parts are covered, or sampled. Routes are not necessarily essential, if viewpoints will capture all the special qualities of an area. Routes are useful to embrace the experience of moving through the scenery of the NSA, which may provide additional qualities to those experienced from static viewpoints (see also paragraph 8.17 above for examples).
- 8.24 It is proposed that identification of survey viewpoints and routes is made on the day following the completion of the familiarisation survey, irrespective of when the later fieldwork may be undertaken. It is likely that memory will be a sufficient record of what was seen in the familiarisation survey, but photographs and notes will assist.
- 8.25 In the detailed fieldwork, the field sheet must be completed (obviously in the field), but it will not be possible to visit every part of every NSA, sampling may be undertaken as appropriate to the resources available and scale and variation of the

area. The choice of viewpoints will depend on the nature of the area. For example, some parts of an NSA may be assessed from elevated viewpoints, other areas from a series of viewpoints along a road or path crossing the NSA. Equally the sheet may be completed after traversing part of the NSA, without stopping, but observing and mentally noting the features as you travel through the area.

- 8.26 The selection of viewpoints should consider important viewpoints shown on the OS Landranger maps, together with other obvious viewpoints such as mountain summits, bridges or headlands and even sequential views as you travel along roads and paths.
- 8.27 Outputs of this step are a list of the general or precise location of viewpoints and the location of any routes which will be used as a basis for detailed fieldwork in step 7.

# Step 7 – detailed fieldwork

### Introduction

- 8.28 In order to inform the process of identifying special qualities it is necessary to consider three main aspects of the scenery, which may be described as the objective analysis of the landscape; the visual analysis of the landscape and personal responses to the scenery. Each of these is recorded in turn for each viewpoint or route in the NSA. In order to provide a structured approach to this detailed fieldwork, and to provide consistency between viewpoints within each NSA and consistency of approach between NSAs, field sheets are used as an aide memoir for this work (see Appendix 6). In practice the completed field sheets comprise a series of scribbled notes that may be legible only to the surveyor. They tend to be heavily annotated and have deletions, examples are not therefore provided here, but Appendices 1 to 5 provide comprehensive examples of the content of the field sheets, in a more structured and legible form, under each of the three main aspects objective, visual and personal.
- 8.29 For each of the viewpoints or routes complete the description of key characteristics set out on field sheet 2. The field sheets should be used simply as prompts and you should use your own terminology where the prompts do not fit well with what you see and experience. The nature of the view should also be recorded. The weather can have profound effects on scenery by changes in the intensity, direction, elevation and clarity of light, the sky can be a dominant or co-dominant element. Whilst you can only record the effects of weather that you see on the visit, from your own knowledge and experience you will be able to anticipate the range of effects and where the weather, light and sky are likely to be important characteristics of landscape

# Step 7A – objective analysis of the landscape

8.30 For each of the viewpoints or routes complete the description of key characteristics set out on Field sheet 1. If the Field sheet does not fit the particular characteristics of a NSA, the field sheet should be adapted or notes annotated to better record the landform etc. The object of this step is to make as objective a record as possible of the key characteristics of the landscape, with emphasis on the visible and physical characteristics. You are not at this stage trying to decide what is special or important, but what is either: typical / characteristic of the NSA; or rare / unusual / untypical. You will not be trying to record every variation and every detail. The field sheet groups the characteristics under the following headings, which relate directly to the range of qualities identified as potentially relevant from an analysis of special qualities defined for other designated areas: Landform, Land cover / land use, Settlement pattern, Specific features and Wildlife.

- 8.31 Landform should be described in bold terms, ignoring minor variations but recording subtler changes to landform where these are distinctive and characteristic. Often the landform in NSAs exhibits important contrasts steep slopes falling to a flat floodplain, steep cliffs at the edge of wide, flat plateaux, the relationship between topographical features is important to record. Land cover / land use determines the surface vegetation in NSAs ranging from bare rock to dense woodland and from saltmarsh to moorland. Ignore minor land uses but look out for pockets of contrasting land cover as these can add to the variety and diversity of areas often cited in the NSA descriptions.
- 8.32 Settlement pattern includes all kinds of built development and infrastructure in the landscape, so it includes the few towns (e.g. Melrose and Stromness), but also the pattern of steadings and individual houses and crofts, and the occurrence of noticeable buildings such as castles, kirks and monuments such as obelisks. Absence of settlement and evidence of previous settlement is important to record. The observed or apparent relationship of buildings and settlement to features in the landscape such as rivers, spring lines, shorelines, bridges and other crossing points etc is also important to record.
- 8.33 Water may be in the form of the sea, sea lochs and freshwater lochs, rivers, burns etc and all their features including especially waterfalls, rapids, shores, intertidal features etc. You should record not merely presence but characteristics of the water, speed of flow, sound, tidal movement, and the effects of light and any contrasts with the shape colour or texture of the land.
- 8.34 Some NSAs may have specific features that may be single points (lighthouse or tower) or linear (roads or former shorelines) that are characteristic of the area.
- 8.35 Wildlife should be recorded where it has a strong influence on the character of the landscape, for example, the sea bird colonies of Shetland, the colourful flower rich areas of the South Uist Machair, the herds of deer on Deeside.

### Step 7B – visual analysis of the landscape

- 8.36 The field sheet is broadly divided into Visual Relationships and Visual Experience. Some Visual Relationships will already be recorded on Field sheet 1, in relation, for example, to location of settlement to topography or juxtaposition of landform features. However, this step should continue to look for further relationships, bearing in mind it is often the way in which characteristics combine or interact that make a NSA special. It is an important way in which commonplace features can become special. Look for important compositions, links, juxtapositions and contrasts in the landscape.
- 8.37 Visual Experience involves more subjective characteristics of a NSA but is usually at the heart of its selection for designation. To structure the description a series of prompts are suggested under the headings of Scale, Openness, Diversity, Colour and Texture, Mass and line, Movement, Weather, Views.

### Step 7C – personal responses to the scenery

8.38 For each of the viewpoints and routes complete the description of key characteristics set out on field sheet 3. This is the most subjective element of the work and is a record of your personal response, in order to make the identification and description of special qualities more meaningful, resonant and evocative. It goes well beyond the normal parameters of LCA by introducing evocative language and personal reactions, normally deliberately excluded from LCA to maintain maximum objectivity.

8.39 Inevitably, this will introduce more variation to descriptions as different people respond differently. It should be borne in mind that your descriptions will be considered later by a wide community of stakeholders. So excessive or generally inappropriate descriptions are likely to be challenged and modified. Consequently, it is important that you consider the descriptive words carefully, but that you are not inhibited by the prospect that others may not agree with your descriptions. Describe the scenery as you experience it, not as you think others might experience it; others will speak for themselves.

### Step 8 – deciding what is 'special'

- 8.40 In deciding what is special it is useful to bear in mind that special places are not necessarily places where the rare or unusual occur, but rather that they can sometimes be places where the commonplace exhibit unusual extremes or come together in ways that invoke a response in people that is regarded as special inspirational, romantic, wild, dramatic, spectacular, beautiful, tranquil or exhilarating. You should also be aware that those responsible for identifying the special-ness of other places expect you to be able to recognise special qualities when they occur; by definition they are special and therefore ought not to be difficult to identify. Your identification of special qualities will, include subjective judgements. In many ways it will reflect the intuitive, subjective nature of the designation process and, like that process, will also be based on informed consensus.
- 8.41 You now have a series of descriptions of the key characteristics of the NSA; they will all be of importance, in the sense that they contribute to the character of the landscape and experience of the scenery. You must now decide which of them, or which combinations / interactions of them, are 'special', what do you consider *are the characteristics that individually or when combined together make the area special in terms of its landscape or scenery*?
- 8.42 It is likely that most special qualities are relevant to all or several parts of the NSA, especially those that relate to the combinations, juxtapositions and contrasts between characteristic areas. Some special qualities will relate to parts of the NSA, for example, the uplands or valleys, which are different to other parts. Some special qualities may relate to a single point or location in the NSA, for example, a castle and its setting. Teasing out the special qualities is a challenging task, there is no one now better placed to do it than the team that has completed the assessment work. It will be for others to consider your outputs and add or change the qualities according to their differing perspectives, yours is the systematic, professional definition of special qualities and you will be able to explain your conclusions on a rational and consistent basis. The diagram in Figure 3 may help you to tease out the special qualities from the many characteristics and their relationships that you have identified.
- 8.43 The whole process should have been undertaken by at least two people and it is particularly important to undertake this step, defining what is special about the NSA, as a team either together in discussion or by merging separate lists and descriptions generated by each team member separately.
- 8.44 It may be concluded from Figure 3 that there could be some criteria that can be used to guide judgements about special qualities. Indeed, fairly obviously, characteristics that are individually rare, outstanding, extraordinary or dramatic would be likely to be special. It is important to look for combinations, juxtapositions, contrasts, harmonies and complexities because research has shown that these are important aspects of identifying special qualities elsewhere. However, it should not be assumed that these

considerations will always and invariably apply, nor should it be assumed that all special qualities will always fit into one or other of these characteristics. Figure 3 should be seen rather as a signpost to the process of thinking about and drawing out the special qualities, rather than a prescriptive process that contains all relevant criteria or considerations. Again, it is emphasised that the team that has undertaken the work so far will be able to identify the special qualities without a carefully defined and explicitly described process.





#### Step 9 - comparing with Scotland's Scenic Heritage

- 8.45 Compare the special qualities that you have identified and described with those in *Scotland's Scenic Heritage* (SSH). Do not expect a perfect match but the identification of special qualities will be further informed by the following comparison.
  - Which of the special qualities that you have defined are cited (explicitly or implicitly) in SSH?

- Which of the special qualities that you have defined are not cited (explicitly or implicitly) in SSH?
- Are there any special qualities cited in SSH that you have not identified?

# Step 10 – describing what is 'special'

- 8.46 List and describe the special qualities selected and provide any commentary or notes that you consider appropriate. There are many ways in which the special qualities can be presented in lists and descriptions, as illustrated in the outputs of the five pilot areas, described in Part C below. None are right or wrong and different people will have different opinions. Short, staccato, bullet point descriptions can be helpful in identifying management objectives, because they are focused and sharply defined. More evocative and poetic descriptions are useful in promotion work because they are more inspirational and evoke interest and resonance in people. Illustrations such as photographs can be useful to supplement the descriptions.
- 8.47 There was considerable discussion in the study as to whether some special qualities were more special than others. There may be a hierarchy of special qualities; some may be very important, unique to the area or defining of its distinctiveness, others may be secondary, more widespread but nevertheless adding to the special-ness of the area. Where there are clear distinctions between these 'headline' qualities and 'detailed' qualities it may be appropriate to distinguish between them, but this will not always be possible or necessary. The consultants wrote the descriptions of the five pilot NSAs, reproduced in Part C, on the basis that the full text expressed all that was special about the areas. Nothing described in the text was not a special quality, or was not something that needed to be described in order to elucidate the special-ness of the NSA. SNH felt that the descriptions of the special qualities were not sufficiently focused on the important qualities and that some highlighting was necessary to make the descriptions useful. The consultants felt that this would detract from the importance of the combination and integration of all that contributed to the specialness of the NSA, which relied on the way that these qualities all came together. It was agreed, therefore, that in order for both views to be available, the text would remain and SNH staff would highlight what they considered to be the more important elements of the qualities. This is why much of the text in Part C is in bold font.
- 8.48 As indicated above, there may be important variations in the spatial distribution of special qualities, many will relate to all or several parts of the NSA, such as those that highlight contrasts between characteristic areas. Some special qualities will relate only to particular parts of the NSA, for example, the uplands or valleys, which are different to other parts. Some special qualities may relate to a single location in the NSA, for example, a gorge or flat moss.
- 8.49 Some special qualities, such as land cover and settlement pattern, will be capable of being changed, by management or development, others will be fixed, such as landform. All should be recorded even if they may not be directly relevant to management strategy actions and policies.
- 8.50 Check that the list of special qualities covers the full scope and range of potential qualities. It is possible that under some headings, for example, wildlife, there is nothing special in a particular NSA, but it is worth checking against the following list. Are there any special qualities relating to:

- ✓ **landform** including geomorphology, natural processes and systems and water;
- ✓ land use and land cover especially their relationship with landform and settlement;
- ✓ settlement including villages, steadings, crofts, houses, industrial and agricultural infrastructure, road and other transport structures;
- ✓ authenticity and integrity expressed, for example, as areas of distinctiveness, sense of place and unspoilt character;
- visual experience, especially the combinations, contrasts, harmony, variety and complexity of the scene;
- ✓ emotional response such as perceptions of remoteness, secrecy, wildness, exhilaration, safety, shelter etc
- wildlife where flora and fauna make a special contribution to the scenery without necessarily expressing them in habitat or species specific terms or scientific language; and
- history and culture, especially where historical land use, buildings, artefacts, or monuments, or archaeological sites such as prehistoric forts, contribute significantly to the landscape character and scenery.
- 8.51 However, try not to write up the descriptions and lists under these headings because it produces a repetitive format that does not portray interest and evocative descriptions that come more readily from text that runs the topics together to emphasise their interrelationships, combinations etc. The best way to highlight the contrasts and diversity of many of the NSAs will be to blend the descriptions of the more physical characteristics of landform, land cover and settlement with the more evocative descriptions of visual experience and emotional response. Consistency can be achieved by checking the evocative descriptions are inclusive, without reproducing the checklist.

# PART C:

# THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE PILOT NATIONAL SCENIC AREAS

9. THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF ASSYNT - COIGACH NATIONAL SCENIC AREA



The lone mountains and mountain scenery

- 9.1 The central and southern parts of the NSA are a land with **lone mountains rising** dramatically from the cnocan and moorland. They dominate the Assynt Coigach scenery and stay in the memory long after departing. The peaks are afforded a platform, a broad stage from which they thrust upwards, often with striking, steep-sided profiles which are recognisable from many miles away. Of these, perhaps it is *Suilven* which most encapsulates the splendour and mystique of Assynt Coigach. Other Scottish mountains may offer greater elevation and concentration, but few can challenge their grandeur, distinctiveness and impact on the viewer.
- 9.2 Whilst distinctive by the notable separation of the mountains, owing to the complexity of the geology, the scenery of Assynt Coigach also offers great variety of topography, colour, water, vegetation cover, land use and recreational potential. Within the NSA the lone mountains stand as the hallmark of the area, but there are also bluffs, sweeping moorlands, sea cliffs, lush grassy slopes with rocky outcrops, massive boulder fields and scree slopes, caves and shallow gorges, sink holes, jagged pinnacles and broad, powerful sweeping summits. Colours range from dark solid sandstone to extensive, dominant limestone greys.
- 9.3 There is a distinct transition in landform and elevation from the coastal fringe and peninsulas of low lying crofts and cnocan through lone mountains of the central plain and upwards to the eastern extent of the NSA across the Ben More Assynt massif, stretching from the head of Loch Glendhu south to the Benmore Forest.

9.4 The wider, open and less steep country of uninhabited rough cnocan and smooth moorland emphasises the remoteness of the mountains, offers a stage from which they are best admired and yet also presents a deceptively tough obstacle to their entry. They present a stark but complementary and harmonious juxtaposition of mountain and moorland landscapes.

# Cnocan

9.5 The cnocan has a strange, unwelcoming character. It is extensive. secretive and mysterious, but its extent is not appreciated until viewed from higher ground such as the tops of the cnoc mounds or the lone peaks. The gneiss ancient Lewisian appears deceptively flat, in comparison to its backdrop of high peaks, but it has a coarse, rough surface hiding many hollows and making aullies access difficult, once off the miles of single-track road. Penetration



is further impeded by the vegetation which is dominated by heather, gorse and grasses on boggy soils between exposed rock and boulders, rarely giving shelter. Locally, the Coigach area reflects a smoother moorland characteristic but the harshness of the Assynt cnocan is readily viewed from the coastal road and the area behind the settlements of Drumbeg and Clachtoll which are held in its grip.

# Remoteness and an open landscape

- 9.6 The juxtaposition of cnocan, sweeping moorland and concentrated pockets of unenclosed pasture emphasises the extreme openness of Assynt Coigach. Apart from the heart of the Coigach range around Beinn Mor Coigach, and the hidden steep sided folds of wooded valleys on the Assynt Coast Road (B869), this is a landscape of vast open space and exposure. There are few trees and the skies are often expansive, particularly on the coastal fringe. Human activity and population is notable by its absence in most areas, emphasising the feelings of openness, remoteness and emptiness. This is notable particularly between Inchnadamph and the Elphin area.
- 9.7 Lack of traffic or transport infrastructure further imbues a sense of remoteness, further emphasised by the effort required to reach Assynt Coigach, enhancing the feeling of being towards the edge of Europe. Access into many areas of Assynt Coigach away from the skeletal road network is limited to walking. Significant tracts of land reveal little evidence of human presence or use. The eastern highlands of Ben More Assynt, the high Coigach Massif and the western cnocan fringe, behind the crofting settlements, have a wild land character. The road network is sinuous and rarely conspicuous in the scenery, apart from the striking Kylesku bridge. Small single track roads provide the road user with a very close and intimate experience of their surroundings.

### The coast and seascapes

9.8 The majesty of the mountains, steep, rocky, individual and dramatic is framed not only by the flats of cnocan, moor and pasture, but also by the sea. It is as though there is an epic struggle for superiority between the Atlantic ocean and the ancient

landmass, especially at Badcall Bay and to the south from Coigach to the Summer Isles. Here the profusion of islands and islets, bays and coves affords sometimes а confused mosaic, blurring the transition from land to sea. Often, from low elevations, these islands falsely suggest unbroken land far into the sea, or appear as monumental stepping-stones out from the shore. The meeting of sea and land is sometimes dramatic and abrupt. The Stoer Peninsular,



crowned by its whitewashed lighthouse and adorned by its great eponymous sea stack, further emphasises remoteness. Here the noise of the relentless north Atlantic waves and tides meet some of the oldest rocks on earth and the movement and noise this affords is in stark contrast to the quiet stillness of the area's interior.

9.9 The seascapes of Assynt - Coigach are not always fierce or dramatic. On occasion the weather affords still conditions and blue skies which reveal an idyllic **coastal refuge of small bays and tight sandy coves**, particularly on the Coigach peninsular.

### Settlements and activity

- 9.10 These bays are often framed in part by strings of small crofts on the fringes of inbye land by the seashore. The depth of the beaches at low tide is often in excess of their width, nestled within tight but soft and low headlands. Lobster pots, fishing boats and netting reveal the importance of the sea to the remote crofting and fishing communities. The low-rising and generally flat cnocan landscape of the peninsulas of Assynt, and of Coigach, screen inland views from the small settlements which perch on the slopes down to the rocky shore or silvery beaches. From the shore the same cottages and crofts can appear perched and standing firm in the face of the prevailing elements.
- 9.11 Concentrations of pasture around small crofting settlements on the coast and inland around Elphin, occasionally offer a sense of relief from the drama and dominance of the wildness of the landscape. Here human activity is at its most obvious but still widely scattered and always subservient to the wider landscape of wild moor and dramatic peak.

### Lochs and lochans

9.12 Only the long, linear, narrow Loch Assynt and the twin **sea lochs of Glencoul and Glendhu** offer significant expanses of deep water in the shadows of Quinag and Glas Bhenn. **The mountains here fall steeply through their moorland skirts to plunge**  to the water's edge, with little change in character, land use or vegetation along the way.

9.13 Elsewhere, there is an intricate multitude of lochs and lochans in the cnocan and moorland interior and coastal fringe. Often extensive tracts of rough and rugged gorse, heather and peat bog contain significant networks of medium and small lochans and burns, with intricate irregular form, interlocking with the low land around them and creating a significant challenge to the cross-country walker. The lochans suggest a relatively shallow depth surrounded by worked peatlands. The true extent of this water network is mostly apparent from the elevated vantage points of the lone mountains. Loch Lurgainn, Loch Sionascaig and Loch Veyatie in the heart of Coigach may appear to rival Loch Assynt in terms of their extent, but their shorelines' complexity and presence of small isles serve to diffuse their scale on the scenery.

# Woodland

9.14 Trees are scarce in the NSA with many eastern parts virtually treeless, the 'forest' names of Inverpolly, Drunrunie and Inchnadamph referring to the open deer forest. It is the cnocan, especially that of Assynt which hides **the most unexpected and extensive tracts of semi-natural woodland**. Here the deep folds in the Lewisian gneiss, which generally run north-west to south-east afford some shelter and sufficient soils for linear woodlands of birch and willow to flow along the landform. These stand in stark contrast and welcome relief to the openness and hostility of the cnocan.

# Geology

9.15 The geological complexities of the area were gradually unravelled in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries through extensive study around Inchnadamph, and helped establish the modern understanding of earth sciences. This complexity and drama of the geology is there for all to view, from skilled geologist to casual observer and affords distinction to the area.

# Wildlife

9.16 The flora and fauna of the NSA contribute more subtly to its special qualities. The **delicacy of the mountain alpines, bog plants and lichens** attract attention at each footfall. Stonechat, ring ousel, cuckoo and wheatear catch the eye and the ear in often silent surroundings. At the opposite extremes, golden eagle, proud herds of red deer, seals and whales close to shore offer the possibility of sighting exciting and spectacular animal life.

# A still, quiet landscape

9.17 Assynt - Coigach is a landscape where human movement tends to be minimal. In contrast the skyscape, governed by the north Atlantic weather systems, provides almost constant change, often characterised by heavy cloud scudding across the landscape, in turn obscuring the higher peaks and providing a more horizontal emphasis to the scene. At other times this movement reveals, sometimes fleetingly, the same peaks, to remind the observer of the drama thus obscured. The extensive waters of the NSA offer a constant, if subtle, sense of movement and change, fuelled by the relentless march of the ocean's weather systems. The absence of significant tree cover in the landscape, as well as the openness, remoteness and lack of traffic also contribute to this being a very 'still' landscape. Small inshore craft slowly working the bays of the peninsula offer occasional movement across the sea.

9.18 The special qualities that combine to make the Assynt - Coigach NSA of national importance are largely embraced by the NSA boundary. However, the boundary line to the east and south east of the NSA appears to be arbitrary, following grid lines rather than topographic features or scenic composition. The special qualities of the NSA are likely to extend beyond this boundary but considerable fieldwork over extensive tracts of difficult-to-access land would be required to draw a more appropriate boundary.

# 10. THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF BEN NEVIS AND GLENCOE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

### Upland grandeur and variety

10.1 This is a landscape of massive proportions, breathtaking grandeur and great variety. It is a land of classic highland vistas, offering the greatest altitude (and

relative vertical relief) in Britain, but also one where, with each crossing of a glen or watershed, the scenery dramatically changes. It is the interrelationships as well as individual qualities of the mountains, moors, glens and lochs that elevate the landscape scenery of Ben Nevis and (particularly) Glen Coe, to **iconic status**.

10.2 This is a landscape where man's influence is sometimes marked, sometimes negligible. It is a landscape where **settlement is** 



**concentrated on loch-side straths**, such as at Kinlochleven, Glencoe and Ballachulish; where the road and ski infrastructure penetrate deeply into the mountains and moorlands. Even the coast of Loch Leven, is characterised by aquaculture, inshore fishing and pleasure craft activities. The mountains, moors and glens are visited by many those in search of the outstanding scenic experience, or outdoor exhilaration and challenge. It is not remote by distance or time from major settlement, particularly Fort William, and a sense of true remoteness must be searched for, human contact in the upper glens and moors is to be expected. Nevertheless, scenic quality and drama prevails, and human settlement and activity does not seriously challenge its grandeur.

# A journey of contrasts

10.3 The most striking landscape drama, contrast and juxtaposition of moor, mountain and seascape is experienced as the visitor crosses from south-east to north-west across the NSA along the A82. The route from Bridge of Orchy rises gradually from the Tulla basin to the lip of Rannoch Moor. revealing an expanse of barren and wet peat moorland which seems prehistoric in its character. The road bisects the moor on a true and straight line; there is a sense that departure from its line



would lead to isolation and exposure in an inaccessible, **intricate mosaic of high**, **but gently profiled**, **wet moorland and shallow peaty lochans**. The framing of the moor by the highland peaks which funnel towards Glen Coe is striking. The Black Mount range rises ominously to the south, gradually encroaching upon the moor until

the entrance of the glen presents a striking contrast to the openness of Rannoch Moor.

10.4 As this classic journey across the NSA progresses, the soaring, dramatic splendour of Glen Coe alters the traveller's experience and a sense of deep enclosure prevails, whilst the scenery increases yet in splendour and drama as the

alen is traversed. The pyramidal profile mountain of the of Buachaille is striking as it stands sentry to the glen's entrance, but is challenged bv numerous other distinctive peaked summits along the glen's twin ridges, one of which is the 10 kilometres long, notched ridge of Aonach Eagach. From here the steep and high sided rocky, rugged mountains soar from the generously proportioned flat valley floor, adorned with scree fans,



**vertical outcrops and hanging valleys**. Access to the foot of the slopes is straightforward, but their high, vast, sheer slopes require skill, energy and determination to scale. The usually broad glen floor of grassland and heather falls gradually to the north-west and the river Coe masks its **seasonal powers** as it **cascades through gorges and across stony washlands**, fed by many waterfalls and lively mountain burns which spill almost vertically into the glen from their lofty source. In the lower reaches of the glen the river plays only a minor role in the summer-time scenery, but its broad and braided gravel beds and boulder debris tell of a thundering power in spate.

- 10.5 Glen Coe's splendour is not diminished as it falls to sea level and meets Loch Leven, albeit some way from the open sea. The meeting of the glen and the loch is enhanced by the suddenness of the **transition between high mountain pass and the lightly wooded strath** which separates the two dominant landscape elements. The twisting line of the glen afforded by the western sentinels of Meall Mor and Sgorr nam Fiannaidh emphasises the suddenness of the transition and from the north serves to obscure the entrance to the mighty breach through the mountains.
- 10.6 The final element to this classic journey is the skirting of Loch Leven, a fjord-like sea loch which strikes deep into the upland of the NSA's core. The A82 meets the loch close to its opening out to the sea beyond the distinctive bridge and narrows, and sees a concentration of settlement of Glencoe and Ballachulish villages. Here the **deep enclosure of the glen is relieved by the narrow, lightly wooded strath with meadows and plantations** aside the loch which prevails as the dominant element in the coastal scene. The wooded slopes of the north shore, the peak of the 'Pap of Glencoe' and the forested southern valley sides provide a less dramatic sense of enclosure, which the bridge contributes to by affording a visual barrier to the openness of the outer loch. Here the **islands of the middle loch add to the detail of the waterscape** and provide natural refuge and shelter for mooring pleasure craft and fishing boats. The expanse of calm waters affords a far brighter light to pervade than across the moor or within the Glen, and this glistening reflection, particularly in early or evening hours adds a magical air to the place.

### **Ben Nevis**

10.7 The huge **Ben Nevis range dominates** the setting of Fort William, lying just outside the NSA. The brooding mountain and its massive rolling shoulders attracts a wide variety of walkers and climbers some drawn to its challenging north east approach up the dramatic, rocky precipices of Coire Leis and Carn Mor Dearg, others will simply want to reach the highest point in Britain, irrespective of its beauty, drama or splendour. The Ben Nevis range differs markedly from the Glen Coe range both in physical character and geological origins. It is a **rolling rounded massif** (except when approached from the north), bisected with **deep, smooth sided glens** cut by mountain burns such as that of Allt Daim. Vegetation is simple, grass and heather moorland flowing over convex slopes. Boulder fields and outcrops proliferate with increasing altitude, but this remains a **simple, exposed, open massive mountain landscape**.

### **Glen Nevis**

10.8 The glen separates the Ben Nevis range from the Mamores and Mamore Forest open rolling moorland and rounded, rocky mountains exhibiting wild integrity and unspoilt character. The glen offers a striking transition from the pastoral lower valley where the river Nevis meanders into Fort William, lined with alder woodlands and stands of mature oak, flanked by gentle meadow, but bounded by the mass of the Ben's foothills. Tenuous groups of willow and birch cling to burn sides in vertical green fingers. Travelling eastwards into the mid glen the valley floor narrows and the steepness and the broken character of the glen sides gradually increases, the hillside profiles become more rugged, with rocky outcrops prevailing. Here the lightly forested glen sides are complemented by remnants of ancient, gnarled Scots pine woods, clinging precariously between boulder and outcrop, and dominating the less dramatic willow, birch and alder woodlands. Here the river energetically tumbles through an increasingly rocky, boulder-strewn and secretive gorge, affording, in the words of Scotland's Scenic Heritage a 'Himalayan' character to the scene. The upper glen is secretive inviting exploration of its extremely flat alpine meadow, bounded by steep upper slopes of the Ben and the Mamores. The drama of the Steall waterfalls is complemented by the **peacefulness** of the enclosure and detail of the cotton grass and broad, gravelly river beds.

### **Upper Loch Leven**

10.9 Here a long, linear, narrow, fjord-like and u-shaped upper sea loch penetrates deep into the mountain setting. Its sides are often concave and banded from the water's edge through thick broadleaved and coniferous woodland, to the open moors of the Mamores and northern Glen Coe ridge. Vistas from sea level, or from upper slopes. its are stunning, with the distinct conical peaks betraying its point as transition between rounded the northern ranges and the pinnacle



and drama of the Glen Coe range. At its head lies the isolated settlement of Kinlochleven, a small town built on mining, industry and power generation. The settlement has a particular charm enhanced by its long access route and an air of self-sufficiency.

### **Glen Etive**

10.10 This glen runs south from the upper reaches of Glen Coe flanked by the towering peaks of the Buachailles and the great slabs of Ben Starav. It is a generally **smooth-sided and extremely long, cleft valley**, gradually sloping to the head of Loch Etive, a **remote, relatively inaccessible sea loch**. This glen affords **tranquillity** and peacefulness, with a narrow sinuous single track road extending to the shore, where

it abruptly ends at the disused pier. From here the narrow, elegant loch stretches seawards, free of obvious human infrastructure, settlement or intrusion. There is a harmonious transition from the broad lower valley floor

of the braided river Etive to the open water of the sea loch. The simple profile of the glen is nevertheless dramatic, with smooth, high, ushaped valleys meeting



the main glen. The upper slopes give way from grass to rocky conical summits, and their sides characterised by **steep streambeds** opening out to rocky fans of scree. The glen's vegetation is predominantly of smooth grassland, with trees in small, sporadic stands or plantations, particularly in its lower reaches. However, in places rhododendron colonises the western valley sides detracting from the semi-natural vegetation but adding striking colour in the early summer months. The upper reaches of the river Etive offer interesting and sharply contrasting detail to the overall simplicity of the landscape. Its **shallow, gorged profile** within the sweeping, smooth grassland draws attention, emphasised by the crystal pools and waterfalls over a complex geological bedrock. Settlement in this glen is minimal, with a single hunting lodge dominating the lower reaches, and the occasional cottage.

# A dark heritage

10.11 The grandeur and drama of the NSA is undeniable and irresistible, and modern development seems not to have diluted this grand scenery. However the village of Glencoe at the foot of the glen itself carries with it a history of betrayal and massacre which remains pertinent to the area's character and ambience. The murder of 38 of the Clan Macdonald in 1692 by order of the crown, and the subsequent loss of life of women and children from exposure after the King's soldiers had lodged within the village for several nights, engenders feelings of sorrow and disquiet. Whilst infamous for the massacre the glen also carries with it legend of cattle rustling and banditry between clans and government, secret refuges in hidden valleys and tales of incredible hardship. All weave together with the scenery of the area to present a dramatic and fascinating experience to the visitor.

#### Extent of the special qualities

10.12 The special qualities that combine to make the Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA of national importance do not generally extend beyond the boundaries, with the possible exception of the southern boundary, in the vicinity of Glen Kinglass. Here the boundary may be considered to be drawn conservatively and could, for example, follow a line along the peaks and the viewshed boundary afforded by Beinn Mhic Mhonaidh, Beinn Eunaich and Ben Cruachan, across Loch Etive at Bonawe, and then northwards to meet the current boundary to the south of Glen Coe across the peaks of Beinn Mheadhonach, Creach Bheinn and Beinn Sgulaird.

# 11. THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF KNAPDALE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA



- 11.1 A landscape of long, linear, narrow, steep-sided ridges with a strong south-west to north-east direction formed by the tightly folded metamorphic, Dalradian rocks which sweep down to the coast and plunge beneath the sea, reappearing as chains of rocky islands off-shore. These distinctive ridges have a strong identity and are dramatically juxtaposed to the flat expanse of the Moine Mhor bog crossed by the sinuous line of the river Add slowly flowing to the equally unusual morphology of the double bay at Crinan.
- 11.2 Thus, the northern part of the NSA is a distinctive flat moss, with occasional, sheer, volcanic 'plugs' such as Dunadd and oakwooded, lower, outlying ridges protruding out of the bog. To the west is the coastal bay at Crinan with its extensive intertidal mud and sand flats, an inner and outer bay each with its own character and a variety of coastal grassland and wetland habitats merging into the toe of the bog.



- 11.3 The rest of the NSA is the parallel ridges evocative of this part of Argyll. The upper, northern parts of the ridges are almost entirely blanketed with coniferous plantations obscuring the landform and hiding the secret lochans within the afforested trenches of the deeply folded ridges, forming rich oases for wildlife and portraying a rather magical, slightly unsettling but calm, secluded, intimate tranquillity. The small lochs appear almost as if they are large wildlife ponds, or a secret garden reminiscent of 'Alice in Wonderland' with a disorientation of scale.
- 11.4 Further south, in middle Knapdale, the forest subsides and is replaced by the billowing crowns of Atlantic oakwoods or open grassy or bracken covered moorlands with a variety of textures and colours. Here the shape of the ridgelines is revealed providing a dynamic, sweeping strongly horizontal skyline enclosing the loch-filled trenches.
11.5 Lower, southern and coastal Knapdale is dominated by the presence of the sea and dramatic sea views from the comfort and safety of sheltered bays, inlets and sea lochs, looking across to sparkling or misty offshore islands and the massive, looming, bulk of Jura, with Islay in the distance. The coast is interesting, often quite active with the movement of people, boats and vehicles, but always peaceful and relaxing with a seaside holiday ambience heightened by children playing and people camping.



- 11.6 The visitor is compelled to explore right to the end of the seemingly endless peninsulas, just to see what is there. The journey, along the winding road through the trenches of upper Knapdale and along the loch shore is slow, with views ever changing and unfolding; sometimes the landform or woodland suddenly opens to present surprise vistas across the hills and sea. The reward is the sea views and the remoteness, isolation and seclusion of the peninsula, a place to stay and contemplate, at the end of the road. The peninsula feeling is as strong as that of disembarking onto an island after a sea journey. The sea views are exhilarating, mysterious, sometimes dramatic yet enjoyed without effort, risk or exposure.
- 11.7 At the foot of the steep edge of the ridges and at the edge of the bog, wends the historic and fully restored sometimes quite busy, basin of the Crinan Canal, which adds to the special-ness and distinctiveness of Knapdale, nowhere else is there this juxtaposition of ridge-land, canal and flat moss close to coastal bays.
- 11.8 Knapdale is a landscape of contrasts, between the steep flanks of the ridges and flat lochs



trapped in the glens by the scouring glaciers, which formed linear, fjord-like, sea lochs in a drowned coastline; or the contrast between the sheer edges of the ridges and the wide, flat expanse of the moss. There are contrasts everywhere, including those of scale between the close-up detail of the coastal flora against a backdrop of large ridges and dramatic topography, or the close-up detail of the flora of the moss in the context of its vast expanse.

11.9 It is a landscape dominated by skylines, providing strong linear features within the landscape, framing and enclosing views, particularly from the sea lochs and within the ridge-framed basin of the moss. In upper, forested Knapdale the skyline is of blunt or jagged lines of conifers at the top of parallel ridges; in middle, moorland Knapdale the ridges are often bare rock or grassy moorland where the variety of skylines are revealed as rounded, undulating, sweeping, crenulated or toothed moorland. In lower coastal Knapdale the ridges fall to the sea forming a steep, rugged coast interspersed with sandy coves, and seaweed strewn rocky shores.

- 11.10 The Atlantic oak woodland is characteristic and adds a wild and natural dimension to many views throughout middle and lower, coastal Knapdale; it rolls around the hills, clings to the cliffs and scarps, flows into the gullies and dips of the burns, billows and wraps around the ridges and occasionally clothes the skyline. It provides a rich haven for wildlife and peaceful, seclusion for people. The woods lend harmony to the scene, a further contrast to the plantations in upper Knapdale, which never quite seem to fit the ridges in the same natural way. The coniferous-covered ridges have different flora and fauna, they can be silent or still and can feel dominating and disorientating, an awareness increased by their height and imposing stature, exaggerated by the height of the trees. They present a sense of adventure throwing a challenge to explore their depths, whereas the oakwoods offer a more welcoming, safe and natural invitation.
- 11.11 Contrasts are further enriched by the variety of colours, sounds and smells in the differing parts of the NSA. The hills and woods adopt an ever changing, dynamic of patterns created by sunlight or cloud, rain or mist, sometimes casting light and brightness on the foreground contrasting with the darker ridges, alternately hidden and revealed as the mists or cloud lift and fall. Along the coast is the contrast of the bright greens of pastures and iris beds with a backdrop of dark green or grey moorland. Birdsongs and calls from woodland, moorland and bog are complemented by the cries of seabirds and waves gently lapping in the bays and coves. Inland, the water moves slowly along sinuous rivers, marked by riparian tree belts, or lies still in the drains of the bog, or rests mirror like in the canal until the lock gates are released. Smells add considerably to the landscape, especially the smells of the sea, the shore, the dank coniferous woodlands, damp oakwoods, bog myrtle and iris beds on and near the moss, and the freshness of the moors.
- 11.12 **The** combination of the distinctive ridged landform and the loch filled trenches of deeply folded rocks the epitomise Knapdale the landscape. The lochs in and middle lower, coastal Knapdale penetrate finger-like, deeply into the land, to create the distinctive peninsulas, each subtly different to the others. The lochs form gateways and corridors to the sea. The tidal edae adds interest and diversity as well as a cyclical change to the shorelines.



The surface of the lochs is continuously moving with ripples or waves, usually quiet and calm, owing to the deep shelter of the incised glens of which they form the floor. The shorelines provide as strong horizontal lines as those of the ridged skylines.

- 11.13 Despite the dramatic edges of the different landforms of ridge and moss, sea and slopes, the vegetation has more gradual transitions between habitats, from forestry plantation, to woodland, bracken, grass moorland, pastures, coastal wetlands, shorelines and intertidal. The colours and striking flora of the iris beds, saltmarsh, rush pasture, wet cotton grass and short turf of grazed rocky outcrops adds to the sense of place and naturalness of the scenery.
- 11.14 The sense of place and history is profound stretching from prehistory, through the centuries to the ancient kingdom of Dalradia. The iconic landmark viewpoint of Dunadd provides a breathtaking 360 degree panorama, more spectacular than its modest height might portray. Here and across the northern part of the NSA, in the Glens of Kilmichael and Kilmartin are found some of the

finest examples in Scotland of standing stones. reclinina stones, stone circles, cup and ring marked slabs and other prehistoric landscape features. Dunadd may have been a viewpoint used to define the boundary of the NSA as it expands beyond Bridgend and follows the ridges and hills that define the view from the coronation rock. This is a profoundly evocative, ancient place where everyone will draw some inspiration, sense of space or history; a landscape of great historical continuity.



- 11.15 Other, more contemporary human influences on the scenery include activities in a working landscape of fishing, farming, crofting, forestry, sailing or boating along the canal, all strongly related to the natural heritage and appearing as quiet, harmonious and sustainable. Small cottages nestle into the landscape; steadings are hidden by their sheltering tree groups. Small villages lie in the plain of the river Add or hide in remote coastal coves. There is a sense of pride and identity in the area with neat, white painted or grey stone buildings capped with slate, and the carefully restored waterway with its bright cottages, and gardens, yet another contrast to the remote wildness of the coastal moorlands at the ends of the peninsulas.
- 11.16 The special qualities that combine to make the Knapdale NSA of national importance do not generally extend beyond the boundaries.

## 12. THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL SCENIC AREA



- 12.1 The special character of the Trossachs is a product of an intricate **blend of elements**; not necessarily outstanding in their own right, but when **concentrated in a small area**, offer a distinctive and very attractive landscape that is in effect familiarly **recognised as a gateway to the Highlands**, the epitome of the romantic Scottish landscape encapsulated in a relatively small and accessible area.
- 12.2 The three core components of the Trossachs' scenic quality are the tight concentration of loch, woodland and open hill/mountain. These merge harmoniously with broad-leaved woodland framing the lochs, particularly attractive around Achray and eastern Katrine; and framing the open hillsides, particularly those of the dominant Ben Venue. Sometimes the change from water to woodland and woodland to open hillside is transitional, broken and intricate, like eastern Katrine's relationship with Ben Venue, whilst in others the change is abrupt, as in upper Gleann Riabhach's plantations.
- 12.3 Frequently the three core elements reflect a 'banding' to the landscape, which affords a stepped appearance to the glen sides. This is emphasised or diminished dependant on season and the colour and extent of the deciduous tree cover which characterises the lower slopes of the Trossachs.
- 12.4 From all road approaches to the Trossachs' core (but not the water-borne approaches on Loch Katrine) the **alpine-like profile of the upper reaches of Ben Venue** suggests a mountain of greater stature and challenge than its actual height. It is, nevertheless, the **centrepiece of the Trossachs** and guards the narrow entrance to the beauty of Loch Katrine and the expanse of Highlands beyond.

- 12.5 The five main water bodies of the Trossachs are essential components of the overall blend, yet each has its own distinct character. Only Achray can make claim to being a natural entity, with the others all shaped to varying degrees by water supply infrastructure.
- 12.6 Achray and Venachar Lochs are easily accessible and offer a soft blend of tranquillity and relief from treed enclosure as they shelter within their lush framing of broadleaved woodland. Glen Finglas reservoir, hidden behind the tight



and wooded entrance to the glen and separated by a higher relief than the other Lochs provides the setting for the north-eastern boundary of the NSA and exudes peacefulness and isolation, belying its accessibility and artificial nature.

- 12.7 Loch Drunkie hides within coniferous plantations with only hints of a broad-leaved woodland frame softening its edges. However its setting has gently sloping woodlands, long interlocking fingers of land, water, grassland and marsh all of which blend to form a tranquil place, sheltered from the winds of the larger lochs and glens, and constantly enticing the viewer to discover the next turn of path or track.
- 12.8 Loch Katrine is perceived as the queen of the Trossachs. Dominated by Ben Venue, it offers the viewer both intimate close vistas of inlet and dense woodland, hinting at its depth, and yet also the chance of further travel beyond the comfort of the Trossachs and into the openness of the glens beyond.
- 12.9 The weather is highly influential in setting the mood in the Trossachs. The water surfaces of the Lochs can be still, glasslike and reflective, perfectly setting off the woodlands and hillsides above, lulling the viewer into a sense of deep tranquillity and Scottish idyll and a wondering of what might lie beneath. Yet the ever-changing winds, channelled and sheltered by relief and woodland, can create a myriad of changes to colour and movement, at once changing the mood from sheltered warmth and tranquillity to darker melancholy.
- 12.10 The heavily wooded lower slopes of the Trossachs vary considerably in their character and contribution to the scenery. Broadleaved woodland is extensive and broadleaved trees line the edges of the plantations, but large areas of the NSA are covered by coniferous plantation. The contribution that these relatively recent forests make to the wider scenery varies. Where the plantations' edges have been managed and shaped to 'dissolve' as they give way to open hillside, such as in Glen Finglas, or where they blend seamlessly with indigenous broadleaved birch, oak and beech woods, their contribution to scenic quality is considerable. In other areas, notably around the Duke's Pass and Gleann Riabhach, edges to the forest are harsh and straight, diminishing the naturalness and romance of the scenery and the sense of a wild or ancient landscape. Felling the Trossach's plantations has resulted in significant changes to character.

- 12.11 This is a generally quiet landscape except for the murmuring burns and passing road traffic. Built development is sparse.
- 12.12 The importance of the Trossachs in part lies in the way that it occupies a small area that is widely considered to define the transition from settled, pastoral lowland Scotland to the more rugged upland of the Highland glens and lochs. It offers the first hint of the 'wilder' lands north and west, but offers a far safer, accessible and concentrated experience than the lands beyond. This 'potted' classic highland scenery is occasionally spectacular and generally regarded as very attractive and comforting. It is widely acknowledged to be quintessential Scotland, accessible to the urban areas of the central lowlands. It is at once a gateway to the Highlands, and also a goal, beyond which many will choose not to venture, instead sampling this inviting Scottish idyll. Its accessibility is in part its strength as it plays an important role in national identity.
- 12.13 Fiona Leney encapsulated the essence of the Trossachs special qualities:

"Although the terrain is extremely broken, the tree cover and quiet water bring a gentleness to the rugged landscape. Compared with the adjacent lowlands, the area is wild and rugged, yet compared with the northern Highlands, its small scale and dense tree cover reduce its grandeur, though contributing to variety and beauty. For many people the scenery .... epitomises the landscape of Scotland." (Leney, 1973).

- 12.14 Travelling through the Trossachs provides a series of changing vistas, characterised by views looking down the expanse of Loch Katrine to the mass of Ben Venue, or glimpsing loch or hillside through gaps in the trees, or turning to discover surprise views as the woodland gives way to open moorland. The woodlands are intimately enclosed, sheltered, quiet, still landscapes contrasting with open, exposed, hills, from which 360 degree panoramic views of the NSA and far beyond may be enjoyed, for example, from the summit of Ben Venue.
- 12.15 As already hinted above, most of the Trossachs lochs are the result of 19<sup>th</sup> century engineering projects to provide water to the Glasgow conurbation and hydro electric power. Loch Katrine was dammed in 1859, at its eastern end, and its popularity now owes much to the presence of the last steam driven passenger vessel operating in Britain, fittingly named the Steam Ship *Sir Walter Scott*. Many writers, poets and artists have been drawn to the romantic shores of Katrine, including William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Samuel Coleridge, James Hogg and John Ruskin. But it was the publishing of Sir Walter Scott's romantic poem 'Lady of the Lake' in 1810 and 'Rob Roy' in 1817 that brought fame and popularity to the scenery of the area, establishing the Trossachs as a major tourist attraction, perhaps the epitome of the romantic highland landscape.
- 12.16 In his poem 'Lady of the Lake', which refers to Loch Katrine, Scott wrote: "So wondrous wild, the whole might seem The scenery of a fairy dream."

And specifically about Loch Katrine he wrote: "Where, gleaming with the setting sun, One burnished sheet of living gold, Loch Katrine lay beneath him roll'd In all her length far winding lay, With promontory, creek and bay, And islands that, empurpled bright, Floated amid a livelier light, And mountains, that like giants stand, To sentinel enchanted land."

- 12.17 In his novel 'Rob Roy', Scott wrote of the tales of Rob Roy MacGregor and the 'children of the mist', referring to his followers the Clan MacGregor who lived amidst the wild hills. Rob Roy was born in Glen Gyle at the western end of Loch Katrine and is buried near by. The famous Duke's Pass is named after Rob Roy's arch rival, the Duke of Montrose. The routes once followed by Rob Roy's cattle drovers and the horse-drawn carriages of 19<sup>th</sup> Century tourists, have become the main arteries, which now carry modern traffic over Duke's Pass. The Trossachs Trail is a signposted car tour that takes drivers north from Aberfoyle and over the Dukes Pass to take in the spectacular views of an area described as 'the highlands in miniature'.
- 12.18 Bordering the NSA to the north, Glen Finglas was one of the more popular of the royal hunting forests, with many Kings and Scottish Earls hunting there between the early 1300's and the 1700's. Many veteran trees still remain. Queen Victoria visited the area on many occasions and had a holiday house built overlooking Loch Katrine.
- 12.19 The special qualities that combine to make the Trossachs NSA of national importance do not generally extend beyond the boundaries.

## 13. THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF UPPER TWEEDDALE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA



- 13.1 Upper Tweeddale is a NSA undoubtedly designated for its rich diversity, prominent landforms combining with rivers, woods and moorlands, to produce a 'pleasing physiography with varied land use' and 'scenery of great charm and soft beauty' (Countryside Commission for Scotland 1978). The NSA is distinguished by being, physically, the most sharply defined, densely wooded valleys with the higher, steeper, darker rather more rugged and wilder surrounding hills providing greater enclosure compared to the wider, gentler, more open valleys elsewhere in this part of the Scottish Borders.
- 13.2 The valley profiles are typically flat bottomed, often narrow, shallow 'V' shaped, green, pastoral valleys with the Tweed flowing smoothly down the middle of a narrow floodplain. The valleys have even slopes steepening as they rise to scree-strewn ridges or rolling, rounded wooded hills with a backdrop of interlocking moorland slopes or high, rolling moorland hill massifs.
- 13.3 Sometimes there are wider, flat-bottomed, green pastoral valleys with the river on one side of the valley floor eating away at the hillfoot below a precipitously steep, rocky edge to the high moorland massif. The valley floors widen at the confluences of the Tweed with the **Holm, Manor and Lyne Waters** which **run as small rivers** or large burns, giving views up the **tributary glens**.
- 13.4 Everywhere across the valleys are coniferous or mixed plantations, mature broadleaved trees, groups of trees around steadings and houses, large billowing crowns of trees marking the sinuous line of the otherwise often inconspicuous rivers and burns crossed by distinctive but disused railway bridges and old stone arched or modern flat road bridges. In several places, small designed landscapes with a strong parkland ambience enrich the variety of woodlands and trees.

- 13.5 In contrast to the sinuous line of the river, picked out by mature riparian trees, the improved grasslands are laid out in large, regular, geometrically-shaped, flat or gently sloping fields, divided by straight stone dykes or occasional fences and hedges. The field pattern is locally emphasised by mature shelterbelts.
- 13.6 **Buildings comprise steadings**, most of which are compact and traditional in style, splendid



houses of Victorian 'baronial' architecture, lodges and cottages strung along the roads as they wind through the valleys. The predominant building materials are a distinctive, mellow grey stone and slate, or contrasting white rendering with slate.

13.7 There are no lakes, ponds or waterfalls but the rivers and burns are clean and fastflowing over pebbly, boulder-strewn or sandy and gravelly beds with natural weirs



and riffles. In places the Tweed is wider and flows more sedately with a smooth surface that reflects the sky or clouds, and trees and buildings close by. The sounds of the river are complemented by those of grazing animals, insects and wading birds; birdsong is seasonally ubiquitous in the valleys. Apart from the sounds and movement of traffic on the roads that pass down the dales, the valleys are calm, quiet, still, tranguil landscapes with occasional agricultural activity or sometimes an angler or walker.

- 13.8 The valleys are varied, locally diverse or complex, safe, inviting, interesting, settled landscapes with innumerable remnants and reminders of the historic past scattered throughout the dales. The many towers, castles, sheepfolds, stone and hut circles, standing stones, cultivation terraces, ancient settlements, cairns and forts emphasise the historical continuity of settlement and timelessness of the valleys. The forts are often located atop conspicuous promontories which offered commanding fortification sites and now the best vantage points to enjoy the scenery.
- 13.9 The intimate, sheltered valleys are tightly enclosed by wooded or open moorland slopes along the flanks of the dales, rising more steeply with elevation to either a gently undulating series of hill tops or a dale-long series of interlocking ridges, in turn often backed by a hill massif. The valleys are also invariably enclosed at each end, usually by massive humps of steep-sided, seemingly free-standing hills that block and guard the ends of the dales; the moorland on these hills sharpening the contrast with the rich pastoral fields and woods of the dales.

- 13.10 A relatively short, sharp, steep scramble up bracken, heather or grassy moorland slopes will lift the walker to a peak with a 360 degree, panoramic view across the Southern Uplands. From here and other viewpoints above the valley floor and lower slopes, the sinuous line of the rivers and burns are more conspicuous. From the hill tops and ridges the view may be spectacular in its sun-lit clarity with deep summer purples, greens, browns, grey and gold, or blue and hazy, or covered in crisp, white snow, or misty, or darkly overcast, depending on season and weather. The tops of the hills are vast, open, exposed windswept, inspiring, exhilarating, inviting and rewarding landscapes. The NSA is distinguished by being the most densely wooded valleys with the higher, steeper, darker rather more rugged and wilder surrounding hills providing greater enclosure.
- 13.11 The enclosing hills appear as great guardians of the valleys, their height and mass often appearing greater than they actually are because of the contrast with the valleys. From the tops of the hills and ridges, and especially from the few landmark summits such as Black Meldon (right), the views are panoramic, round 360 degrees, across a vast rolling hill mass covered in grass and heather moorland, with occasional bare rock and scree adding variety to the colours and textures of the varied



hills which appear to recede endlessly to the horizon, way beyond the boundaries of the NSA. The hills are varied in their landform; there are interlocking lines of steep-sided ridges sweeping from the surrounding hill mass into the valleys, gently undulating or rolling, smooth, rounded, massive, bulky, steep-sided hills with stone-piled cairns visible from far away and mysterious, evocative names such as Hammer Knowe, Horse Hope Hill, Hundleshope Heights, Stob Law, Trahenna Hill and White Meldon.

13.12 These valleys and hills were the chosen home of John Buchan, author of *'The thirty-nine steps'*, who described them in some of his work. The valleys have been photographed and painted by innumerable artists but perhaps the most enduring fame of Upper Tweeddale is that of its history as a great salmon river, epitomised today by the sight of an angler casting over the river from its grassy banks.



- 13.13 Equally inviting, the walker may choose between the intimate shelter of the quiet, tranquil, wooded pastoral valleys and the **short rewarding climb** up the slopes to the welcoming tops with their **exhilarating panoramas across the valleys and the hill massifs**.
- 13.14 The special qualities that combine to make the Upper Tweeddale NSA of national importance do not generally extend beyond the boundaries.

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## **APPENDICES**

- 1. FIELDWORK OUTPUTS ASSYNT COIGACH NATIONAL SCENIC AREA
- 2. FIELDWORK OUTPUTS BEN NEVIS & GLEN COE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA
- 3. FIELDWORK OUTPUTS KNAPDALE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA
- 4. FIELDWORK OUTPUTS THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL SCENIC AREA
- 5. FIELDWORK OUTPUTS UPPER TWEEDDALE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA
- 6. RECOMMENDED FIELDSHEETS FOR USE IN FIELDWORK

## **APPENDIX 1**

## FIELDWORK OUTPUTS ASSYNT - COIGACH NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

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Objective Analysis	Visual Analysis	Personal Response
A transition from land to open sea, but one where the	Land and water challenge for dominance within the transition	Remote, almost secret, quiet and calming, Badcall
change is gradual due to the presence of many islands	from one to the other. With the bay's waters, coves and islands	Bay can present a very peaceful scene, belying the
and islets between the two. Landform and cover to the	vying quite evenly for superiority, particularly when one	harshness of the coastal environment, wave, wind
mainland is of a coastal cnocan, reflected by the form of	approaches towards sea level and the vista to sea is one where	and tidal assault on the land.
the low rocky islands in the bay. The mainland slopes	the islands seem to form a network of giant stepping stones	
steadily to the sea, but in a broken and rugged form	affording access on foot out to sea far further than is the	It at once offers shelter and haven from the open
typical of Assynt - Coigach's cnocan tracts. It is	actuality. It suggests a patchwork of water and land.	ocean, but also offers routes out through the islands
characterised by heather and grass moorland		to ocean waters which must be endured to harvest
vegetation, with very sparsely scattered small shrubs	The horizons are generally low, with a more horizontal	the seas. It is a transitional zone between land and
and trees. The land cover mosaic is further comprised of	emphasis and absence of steep slopes or harsh profile. The	sea, but also between safety and risk, and hunger or
scattered bare rocks and outcrop and some wet sedge.	land is however far from even, and within this low -lying coastal	bounty. The shelter of the bay is never fully
	fringe the surface is distinctly undulating and at times broken.	separated from the danger or threat of the elements
Despite the transition from land to sea, there is little in		beyond.
the way of beach, sand or shingle. Tidal range appears	This is a landscape of an open medium scale, where despite	
narrow and rocky and characterised by dark lines of	the proximity to open ocean, the horizons are interrupted by	It is the intimacy of the landscape juxtaposed with the
seaweed and inter-tidal organisms.	islands, serving to dilute the sense of being at the land's end. It	presence of wild seas which affords this viewscape
	is however a remote landscape, with very low-key activity, well	its greatest value. It is not spectacular but is
The waterscape is a prominent, but is perhaps	hidden beyond deeply undulating cnocan and the lifeline of the	extremely alluring, tempting the traveller to linger and
surprisingly not the dominant element of the viewshed.	A894. It is secluded, almost hidden. The mix of water and land	find peace within a multitude of coves or rocky
Land and water are relatively evenly present in the	creates an intricate landscape with many complex small scale	shelter. At the same time the fishing vessels which
viewshed,	variation, but its basic components remain simple.	occasionally venture from the bay's shelter to more
		open waters remind one of the danger ever present
		hevond

Personal Response	
Visual Analysis	The weather and skies are more influential here as the horizon is wide and the waters of the sea and lochs serve to mirror and reflect changing light and add movement to the scene. The tidal lines of seaweed and wet and dry rock present a strong if irregular linear feature to the landscape. The vegetation to the islands varies greatly dependent on their relative exposure, from barren to low but lush dense foliage of shrub and grasses.
Objective Analysis	Hurnan influence is apparent but far from significant. The shoreline to the head of the sea loch is occupied by the small smattering of fishermen's cottages and fishing infrastructure of Lower Badcall, including launch slip, small breakwater and storage sheds. However these do not dominate the landscape and again suggest a tough or even subsistence existence. Upper Badcall is a collection of small cottages and croftings, some in use, some suggesting seasonal occupation and others displaying serious neglect or abandonment. Here there is evidence of field enclosure and working of the land, offering some contrast to the harsh cnocan habitats that abound. These influences suggest a historic working of the land more apparent than in most of the rest of the NSA.

Assynt - Coigach NSA - Viewscape: West Face of Ben More Assynt







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Personal Response	Despite its potential for harm and misadventure the western approaches to Ben More Assynt also offer	remoteness, tranquility and a peacefulness seldom	experienced even in other areas of upland Britain. The	Ben hides its dangers whilst always beckoning the visitor	to a return visit.											
Visual Analysis	Colour is typically muted green and brown, but with significant contrast to the light grey of the boulders, scree	and exposed strata of the summits. Noise and movement	is minimal apart from the wind, which will often be fierce,	and the gurgle of the river <i>Traligill</i> .		Red deer stake claim to the ridge-tops, with stags	standing in prominent guard of their herd. This too is the	land of the Golden Eagle, although a glimpse of the most	majestic of British birds is seldom afforded. But it is also	the delicacy of the micro flora, alpines and mosses which	offer great interest and minute beauty to the walker.	Birdsong on the lower slopes, particularly cuckoo and	stonechat provides a welcome soundtrack in the early	summer months.		
Objective Analysis	The limestone geology is clearly evident from the significant presence of boulders and loose stone, but also	from sink-holes and dry stream beds, characteristic of the	underlying geology at this point.		Man's evidence, apart from the well trodden – and less	well trodden, mountain paths, is negligible. On rising out	of the <i>Gleann Dubh</i> gill, the wildness of the landscape	becomes dominant. Scree and boulders begin to	dominate and the mass and elevation of the Ben more	marked.		The rolling moorland lower and middle slopes which lead	to the summit host less surface water than elsewhere in	the area. Lochans are more dispersed, with only Loch	Mhaolach-coire prominent in the landscape in its stark	contrast to the moorland in which it sits.

Assynt - Coigach NSA – Viewpoint: to South East over Kylesku Bridge



Demonal Demonso	Personal Response	The vista used for the viewshed offered itself without	need for second analysis. The opening out of the twin	fjords of Glencoul and Glendhu beyond the narrows of th	re of   Kylesku bridge demand that the traveller stop and take	stock of the landscape.		This is an awesome, 'heavyweight' landscape which	stands with immense power, grandeur and permanence.	and   It defies taming or any tolerance to significant change. It	is a landscape which reflects the massiveness of the	forces and eons which formed it. It offers challenge and	adventure, but defies all but the most prepared and	resilient to the wildest of natural forces Britain can offer.	Whilst peaceful as a function of its remoteness, this is a	very wild landscape.		As the eye is drawn up the fjord the Stack of Glencoul	presents an natural but unflinching 'full stop' to the vista	npact	Here, human activity hangs on against the odds rather	transfer the second through the viewscape offers a	precarious lifeline to the few people who chose to forge	ider an existence in the fjord. The bridge offers a visually	se it. striking challenge to the elemental forces around it, but	will surely succumb in time to nature's power.	
Visual Analysis	VISUAI ANAIYSIS	It is without question a remote, rugged and bleak	landscape, but hugely impressive as a consequence.		This is a vast landscape, despite the relative enclosur	the viewscape. It combines elements of exposure,	openness with 'microscapes' of shelter and seclusion	within the broken topography of the loch sides. The	viewscape is at once both simple and complex. It	comprises several different elements of ground cover	land form, yet they merge into a perfectly coherent	highland scene of the utmost grandeur. It is a deep	landscapes which draws the eye along the fjords and	across the enclosing ridge and mountain horizon.		The landscape is complex by landform but relatively	simple in terms of land-cover and vegetation.	Consequently the colours are harmonious but muted,	although the weather and season will considerably	influence to what degree. Apart from the changing im	of the water surface from bright reflective to dark and	cold, the abundance of flowering gorse on some lower	slopes adds untypical intensity of colour and warmth.	The small plantations of conifer are untypical of the wi	landscape and serve to punctuate it rather characteris		
Objective Anche	UDJeCTIVE ANAIYSIS	A landscape of high mountain peaks and ridges, falling	through hillside and cliff to deepwater sea loch within long	enclosed fjord like glens.		The viewpoint offer extensive views of the transition from	the exposed upper summits of the northern NSA, through	montaine and moorland ground-cover, bare rock outcrop	and small pockets of cultivated or afforested areas	towards the waterscape of the extensive, double valleys	of Loch Glendhu and Loch Glencoul. The contrast in	ground cover and landform offers a particularly 'busy'	landscape despite its distinctive highland characteristics.	There is a distinctive pattern of interlocking mountain	ridge horizons, sloping moorland, and sea loch whose	emphasis changes from shallow through to steep-sided	and then through to the vertical as the eye is drawn	deeper onwards and upwards.		Kylesku road bridge is a prominent engineered feature	which draws the eye despite the grandeur of the	landscape. The main A894 road cuts through the heart of	the viewscape but is never dominant away from the	bridge. Human habitation is very sparse with very	sporadic small concentrations of whitewashed	fishermen's cottages by the loch side.	

Objective Analysis	Visual Analysis	Personal Response
The influence of the weather and skyscape on the	Middle and near distance vistas consist of moorland and	Because of the need to pass into this landscape via high
viewscape is considerable. The vertical elevation of the	waterscape mosaics with multiple horizons offering	pass or remote sinuous road the area affords a feeling of
tops and the proximity to the north Atlantic weather	glimpses of loch and glen between and across. Here the	isolation. This vast landscape is oddly a hidden one
systems presents often heavy cover of the peaks and a	landform is broken and complex, with multiple gullies and	which requires relatively determined expedition to access.
brooding blanket of quickly moving cloud cover across	mounds and parts of the loch sides complicated by tidal	
and between peaks. The wind on the surface of the lochs	rock outcrops and small islets. Apart from the occasional	Even in early summer the lochs remind one that the
affords a frequently changing surface appearance.	small plantation or cottage, the land use is simple rough	power of the ocean is close at hand, and their obvious
	grazing across the cnocan like rough moorland.	depths suggest an icy finger of influence deep into the
The overall impact of the viewscape on the observer is		mountains, challenging their superiority in the landscape.
one of a great depth and vertical change and a gradual	More distance views offer a true taste of wild, upland	
transition from the flat of the waters surface through to the	Scotland with sweeping but broken moorland swathes	
impressive and powerful steep and vertically sided	meeting steep, rocky and dramatically profiled peaks of	
highland mountain peaks and ridges.	Beinn Aird da Loch, Beinn Uidhe, Stack of Glencoul and	
	the infamous Quinag.	
	The fjord-like topography, high summits and deep waters	
	make for a powerful landscape where the skies add to the	
	drama and the winds trouble the loch surface and keep	
	vegetation to all but the toughest species.	
	Evidence of human activity is sparse apart from the	
	striking Kylesku road bride which introduces a strong	
	visual counterpoint to the wildness of the viewscape.	

Assynt - Coigach NSA – Viewscape: East, South and West from Stac Pollaidh







Objective Analysis	
Stac Pollaidh is one of a series of distinctive 'lone	Thi
mountains' within the Assynt - Coigach area and draws	evi
visitors to both wonder at its profile and drama as well as	rec
those who wish to conquer its deceptively attainable	sm
heights. It stands proud within a broad mountainous glen	
dissecting a series of dramatic and challenging peaks,	μ
each with distinct profile and identity. The generally linear	5
and flat bottomed glen, runs south east to north west and	is 0
encloses a series of lochs and lochans, most notably	loc
Loch Lurgainn, creating a waterscape through the heart	as
of the mountains.	the
	the
The complex series of large and small lochs and lochans,	exp
portane as a consecutioned of the next accelerate	; ;

The complex series of large and small lochs and lochans, perhaps as a consequence of the peat ecosystems around and above appear dark within the valley floor. Their shorelines are complex in shape and often promontories and islands within them obscure their scale and extent as unbroken bodies of water. This illusion is not remedied without venture to higher slopes. The lower valley sides are gently sloping but this soon gives way to a dramatic increase in gradient, drawing the eye across both heather-clad and bare rocky and boulder strewn slopes to soaring, barren and broken summits. Hence slope profile is generally concave. This is a classically profiled glaciated valley.

Visual Analysis his is a large scale wild landscape with virtually no vidence of on going land use apart from low intensity ecreational facilities, such as footpath management and mall parking facilities.

ense of enclosure by the higher peaks. There is within space of only a few hundred metres contrast between itself on any of its often higher neighbour peaks. Despite hans, but slope angles change dramatically to provide nerence as a classic highland setting. The valley floor posure and opening up of distant views from the Stac this contrast this is however a coherent and harmonious white and reflective lichen to exposed rock surfaces and peat, grassland moss and heather out of flower, but the enclosure and overbearing of the valley floor to the light grey of the underlying geology, scree and boulder fields makes a stark contrast to the vegetation cover of landscape. Colour is dominated by the muted tones of the valley floor and north south facing slopes. Often a the minerals themselves afford an almost snow like often rather flat and dominated by the lochs and ere is great contrast within the glen despite its reflective, white appearance, belying the season.

**Personal Response** Standing above the valley floor, and below the rocky thrusts of the Stac's peaks and pinnacles offers exhilaration, awe, and challenge. This is a spectacular mountain in a dramatic setting. Views over the surroundings reveal how the highest peaks occupy their own places above the lower, less vertical undulations of the cnocan and moorland from which they thrust upwards. The glen draws the eye from end to end, and at many points demands that the majesty of the peaks be examined. These sometime suggest an impenetrability to which challenge should be undertaken only by the well prepared, experienced and energetic walker. The valley's sides contrasting topography, with dramatic vertical pinnacle, exposed and extensive open rocky surfaces, through to scree and boulder field before calming into the relative safety of the flat glen floor sharply reminds the onlooker of the status of geological wonderland that this area boasts. The contrast in geology, even to the layman is obvious from one side of the west, through its high walled tunnel to open moorland in the east.

Objective Analysis	Visual Analysis	Personal Response
Ground cover alters from the valley floor where the loch	Movement in the landscape is apparent from both the	However, the grandeur, distinctive Assynt - Coigach
and lochan-side vegetation is peaty heather and tussocky	changing reflections and surface patterns of the lochs and	character and remoteness the glen offers belie its
grassland with small, scattered stands of willow and birch	lochans, and also from the clouds which 'scud' over the	accessibility. The road through the glen offers immediate
hugging the lower slopes. As the slopes rise the	close horizons, often obscuring and then revealing the	access to significant upland terrain within short walks
vegetation cover is predominantly heather, mosses and	peaks themselves. The noise from the burns often	from the car or bus. The road is seldom busy but nor is it
cotton grass on a rich, wet peat soil. Willow bushes and	affords a constant 'chatter to the lower slopeside	unused or abandoned. Yet short venture is rewarded by
alder becomes more sparse and give way to open, steep	experience.	landscape inspired drama and excitement, exhilaration
moorland. As the slopes change to mountain sides the		and challenge. The juxtaposing of coastal plain and
peat becomes thinner and rock strata becomes	The scale of the glen, particularly in its linear extent	upland summit and pinnacle afford the walker stunning
prominent. To the southern side of the valley, across the	affords great variation in terms of weather conditions, light	vistas through the changing topography over significant
mid and upper slopes of Beinn an Eoin the distinctive	and water surface reflections all within the same	and extensive views, allowing one to sense the wider
striated strata becomes particularly visible and distinctive.	viewshed. Light and skies can highlight and reveal peaks	context of the striking peaks not often afforded in upland
	and colour whilst at the same instant further along the	areas where vistas are often foreshortened by the next
There is a constant presence of moving water on the	glen, cloud cover can be oppressive, dark and suggest a	summit or ridge.
lower and middle slopes, often from burns deeply incised	depth to the lochs of some significance.	
into the peat, who's vegetation has all but obscured the		This is an awe-inspiring landscape whose special
streams almost until one stands over it. To the lower		qualities are enhanced above the physical grandeur by its
slopes these burns are noisy and energetic mountain		isolation and context of its wider setting of coastal plain,
streams where the valley floor trees sometimes extend		minimal treescape and absence of serious visual
upwards along the water course line.		detractors. It stands unchallenged in its drama and
		permanence and ensures that the visitor understands it is
Despite the grandeur of the whole composition it is the		on the land's own terms, and that human effort to tame it
rocky summits of Stac Pollaidh and the peaks of central		will not be tolerated.
Coigach to the south which demand most attention.		
These offer wild, dramatic and foreboding profile and		
elevation and create a seemingly impenetrable barrier to		
the south and the relative havens of Ardmair and		
Ullapool.		
The only evidence of man in this primeval landscape is		
the sinuous single track road and telephone line running		
the length of the glen to the open cnocan and crotting settlement of the <i>Rubha-Mor</i> peninsular to the west.		

Assynt - Coigach NSA – Viewscape: Stoer Peninsular (note, immediate coastal fringe characteristics of Stoer Peninsular are reflected very closely by those of the western fringe of the Coigach Peninsular to the south of the NSA)





Objective Analysis	Visual Analysis	Personal Response
An exposed, gently undulating, smooth grassy	This is a relatively homogenous landscape unit,	This is an isolated but less harsh environment than has
landscape bounded by open slopes steepening to rocky	comprised of simple enclosed and open grasslands with	been experienced in accessing it. It offers something
cliffs, the Stoer peninsular generally enjoys an elevated	sporadic scattered cottages and croftings therein. It is	more familiar to many visitor in contrast to the wild and
plateaux feel, but not upland, above the open Atlantic.	of a medium scale, rolling and open. There is little	broken land of the cnocan which surrounds its landward
	opportunity for natural shelter from the ocean's	extent. Nevertheless, this is a land at the very outer edge
It is a managed landscape in comparison to most of	influence. The open ocean's movement and significant	of Europe, and its linkages to major settlement are
Assynt - Coigach and evidence of human activity far	noise is in stark contrast to the stillness of the open	extremely tenuous, both physically and psychologically.
more obvious. There is a field network of medium to	fields and grassland.	Stoer peninsular feels like a long, long way from
large sizes, scattered but frequent crofts and a strong		anywhere. Perhaps in this lies its attraction to those who
network of drystone walls. The condition of the farmed	The horizons are long and low, with the hills offering	still make a living on its oasis-like qualities in comparison
landscape varies considerably across the viewscape.	only limited elevation to the north and hence allowing for	to neighbouring landscapes.
This managed core of the viewscape does however give	open uninterrupted vistas across the viewscape. The	
way to the open unenclosed but clearly grazed northern	skyscapes are significant, and the lower lying land offers	Yet despite the remoteness there is a softness and
section of the headland. Sinuous narrow lanes framed	glimpses of the lone mountains to the south and east	familiarity to the peninsular absent in other parts of Assynt
by drystone walls cut through the headland.	when the weather permits.	- Coigach. However harsh the climate may be, man
		appears to be 'on top' of nature, even in the immediate
	Colours are muted, dominated by the greens of the	proximity to the elemental forces of the ocean. The
	grazing lands and punctuated by the stark white if the	managed nature of the landscape offers psychological as
	crofters cottages, many of which appear to have been	well as physical relief from the wild and unwelcoming
	afforded significant restoration in the recent past.	nature of it cnocan tourniquet which can begin to grow
		oppressive as the visitor travels deeper therein.





# Scotland's National Scenic Areas – Special Qualities – Assynt - Coigach

# **Cultural and Historic Associations**



## Cultural Historic and Other Important Associations

mind-bending periods of time. Inchnadamph is perhaps the most famous of Assynt's geological sites, with its bold clifts encapsulating the concept Assynt - Coigach can reasonably lay claim to being the Mecca for earth scientists and geologists on mainland Britain. The area presents some of the most complex, varied and dramatic geological surface features in the UK, features which are fundamental to the landscape's form, vegetation discipline, and consequently enjoys a status within the geological world far exceeding that of the general awareness of wider population. Study of of monumental shifts within the earth's crust. These special qualities have been recognised and reflected in Assynt's status as Scotland's first the rock strata in Assynt has been a cornerstone to the growth in understanding how our planet has evolved, particularly plate tectonics, over cover, water bodies and land use. It has been the focus for some of the most influential scientific study and advancement of geology as a European Geopark. The story of the underlying geology of the area is graphically expressed at the Knockan Crag Geological Centre.

<ul> <li>Whilst fundamental to the scenic quality of the area, the distinctive and often mysterious lone peaks of the Assynt - Coigach mountains moorland and cnocan hinterlands also provide excellent scope for outdoor pursuits, particularly fell walking. Here the landscape is vas empty of almost any insensitive tourist related development or paraphernalia. Paths are quiet even in summer months. The experienci solitude, married with the grandeur of the outlook and detail of the immediate geology and flora is one that affords a special place in Br mountain pursuits. Even by Scottish standards the experience of walking in Assynt - Coigach is special and distinct.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Significant Parts of Assynt - Coigach, and particularly the coastal fringe of crofting communities and 'worked' landscape has for many y in the ownership of large sporting (shooting and fishing) estates, managed primarily for such purposes. Crofters have paid rent and wo landlords. The Land Reform (Scotland) Act afforded the communities within ancestral estates the right to buy the land on which they v exist. A number of community buy-outs have been successfully completed within the area and may represent a significant era in the s exist. A number of community buy-outs have been successfully completed within the area and may represent a significant era in the s environmental history of north-west Scotland. Communities, supported by significant donations from the Scottish Land Fund, contribut Government Agencies, charitable trusts and fundraising appeals have now been afford the chance to own the land on which they live, manage it according to achieve more sustainable social, economic and importantly, environmental objectives.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Assynt - Coigach offers superb trout fishing opportunities across its complex and extensive network of lochs and lochans. This in itself function of the landscape or the scenic quality of the area. However, what is important in this respect is the overall experience that the offers to enthusiasts. The setting of the water bodies, remote, intensely peaceful, free from disturbance of almost any kind lures fisher far north, well beyond many other fine fisheries, but which cannot offer the special experience of Assynt - Coigach.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>The shores of Loch Assynt present an atmospheric reminder of the pasts influence on the area at Ardvreck Castle and the Calda Hous castle dates from around 1409, home to the Macleods of Assynt and played a role in the clan disputes and Royalist wars of the 1600s. the Mackenzies in 1672, it was eventually sacked and destroyed in the mid 1700s by Crown forces seeking retribution for the Clan's in in the 1745 uprising.</li> </ul>	
ountains and pe is vast and kperience of ace in British	r many years been tt and worked to ch they work and in the social and contributions from ney live, and	s in itself is not a that the angling es fisherman to the	da House. The e 1600s. Taken by Clan's involvement	

## Assynt - Coigach NSA

## **Initial List of Special Qualities**

- Dramatic, rugged, exposed, isolated landscape.
- The scale and extent large unspoilt areas of the landform.
- Unique seascape with a combination of scattered islands close to the shore.
- 'Edge of world' experience on the rugged, exposed coast.
- Sparsely populated, with few small settlements and dispersed crofting areas, yet accessible by determined tourists, walkers and anglers prepared to travel.
- Larger settlements such as Ullapool (just outside the NSA) and Lochinver comprise sheltered harbours. Other settlements are on flatter land where enclosed grazing and cultivation is easier. Here the brighter greens of pastures contrast with the monotone more sombre heather moorland (colours dependent on season but contrast in colour would remain).
- Narrow, long, winding roads follow the base of the mountains and loch shorelines, offering dramatic views of ever changing scenery.
- Extensive areas are inaccessible except on foot, giving a sense of remoteness and quiet. Feeling at one with the natural landscape. A core of wild land.
- Lack of trees. Coniferous forests are notable by their absence, names such as Inverpolly Forest, Drumrunie Forest and Inchnadamph Forest refer to open deer forests.
- Steep-sided glens, with narrow bands of sheltered broadleaved woodland, hidden away in the landscape but when encountered they break up the wider, more exposed, prevailing landscape.
- Strong cnocan landscape of exposed, hummocky terrain with extensive lochs / lochans, over much of the central part of the NSA mysterious, secretive, unsettling.
- Internationally famous diverse geological character, being the birthplace of major geological thinking by Benjamin Peach and John Horne. Extensive areas of Lewisian Gneiss and Cambrian Limestone contrast with Sandstones, Quartzite and Syenite. Steep, dramatic, exposed sheer cliffs at Inchnadamph and Knockan are unique examples of the Moine Thrust, where overlying schists have been thrust westwards over much older rocks. Visitor attraction at Knockan Crag that tells the story of the unique geology.
- Dramatic mountainous lone peaks with unique outlines and distinctive shapes which are easily recognisable and referred to by their individual names e.g. Ben Mor Coigach, Ben More Assynt, Suilven, Canisp and Stac Pollaidh. Provide recognisable land marks throughout the area
- Unique combination of smooth moorland and peat bog running into rocky moorland / cnocan running up to irregular hill ranges and lone mountain peaks. Exposed, huge glacial erratics give a rugged and desolate beauty.

- Unique? combination of mysterious, majestic peaks often with caps of white quartzite and light grey lichen, and often shrouded in mist and low cloud, contrasting with the deep, dark, horizontally flat lochs.
- More managed areas of traditional crofting, where sheep grazing and muir burn dictate the changing appearance of the landscape, such as at Ben Mor Coigach.
- Wildlife, such as in the Scottish Wildlife Trust's reserve at Ben Mor Coigach, where northern buckler-fern, trailing azalea and dwarf juniper are less common. Ravens and ring ouzels nest in the hills, and red grouse, ptarmigan and twite feed amongst the heather. Stonechat, whinchat, redpoll and wheatear are found down on the crofts. Grey seals and otter frequent the shoreline and islets.

## **APPENDIX 2**

# FIELDWORK OUTPUTS BEN NEVIS AND GLEN COE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA – Viewpoint / Route: Glen Coe

Objective Analysis	Visual Analysis	Personal Response
Huge granute mountain ranges of volcanic origin, with the A82 and River Coe following the narrow 'u'-shaped hanging glaciated valley in between. Sweeping concave slopes of steep rock faces plummet into the valley.	vast, imposing, awe-inspiring mountain ranges with spectacular prominent peaks making them easily recognisable.	wost people probably first see Gien Coe when approaching from the east along the A82. The contrast from the roughly level plateau of dark, hummocky peat moorland, dotted with innumerable lochs, lochans and
The mass of Buchaille Etive Mor (the Great Shepherd of Etive) soars 1200 ft above the valley floor at its junction	A generally exposed, simple landscape dominated by the tremendous visual force of the smooth rock faces that sweep down from summits into the broad 'u'-shaped glen.	bogs, on Rannoch Moor to the east, with Glen Coe could not be starker.
with the River Etive and the road that runs south- westwards towards Loch Etive. This marks the entrance to the glen from the east.	The overpowering nature of these is emphasised by tumbling burns and waterfalls, especially when swollen with water.	Similarly, most walkers on the West Highland Way will approach from the south-east, from the edge of Rannoch Moor. Having probably stayed overnight at the Kings House Hotel, the long distance footpath continues
The road continues down the glen for another 12 miles. Three peaks dominate on the south side, known as The Three Sisters of Glencoe, the outlying spurs of Argyll's highest mountain, Bidean nam Bian, at 3776 ft. The	Occasional buildings, grazing sheep, the A82 and the river on the valley floor are totally dominated by the glen sides rearing up dramatically from the flat base.	through the Glen on the section of Old Military Road, before diverting northwards to Kinlochleven via the Devil's Staircase.
Hidden Valley runs between the first two, and Ossian's cave is seen high up on the cliffs of the third.	Deep rocky clefts within the mountain sides, carved and highlighted by silvery burns and shadows, sometimes with birch trees, form meandering mossy veins on the	Several lay-bys provide the traveller the opportunity to take in the breathtaking views, safely off the busy road.
Opposite The Three Sisters is the Pass of Glencoe, where the road squeezes between the mountain sides.	rock face.	With towering mountains sweeping down on both sides, Glen Coe is both spectacularly beautiful and yet strangely forbidding – a legacy perhaps of the infamous massacre
On the opposite side of the glen runs the serrated ridge of Aonach Eagach, which forms the northern boundary of the glen.		that took place here in 1692.
Fans of scree and bracken hug the slopes where water drains down to the river. Above, the craggy summits are bare, whilst on the valley floor relatively lush grazed rocky meadows line the inconspicuous river. Trees are few, with occasional patches of birch following the sheltered gullies up the mountain sides.		
The Kings House Hotel lies on the edge of Rannoch Moor at the eastern entrance to the glen, whilst the Clachaig Inn lies at the western end. In between are a few small isolated farmhouses. The remains of sheilings can be seen in the valley floor.		
Typical glacial forms such as aretes and corries are found within the mountain ranges, and moraine and erratics along the valley floor.		
Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA – Viewpoint / Route: Glen Etive







Personal Response	ad The upper glen offers a gentler visual experience th	i neighbouring Glen Coe, and almost affords some re	from the latter's great splendour and drama. Howe	ht this is still an impressive scene and its unspoilt natu	adual welcomes the traveller and serves to refresh the spi	Etive.   mind. This is not to say that the summits and buttre	sides to some of Etive's peaks are not impressive, t	part   they do not exude a <i>threat</i> in the way the sides of G	Coe's present.	nc	icity   The gradual winding and sinking of the road into the	n or   middle distance, regularly obscured by relief and the	and apparent again, tempts the visitor to progress deep	ed the glen, a phenomena which will lure one steadily a	pose, inevitably to the head of the beautiful Loch Etive.		With this journey the serenity and peaceful aura of t	valley grows, and seeps into the observer. There is	a to compromise the experience of a perfect Scottish	The detail and life of the river, its modest gorge,	occasional bank-side trees and colourful exposed	bedrock offer a focus of interest which demands a s	walk from the narrow lane for further investigation.	it would be very easy to while away many a peacefu	hour.	
Visual Analysis	This is a very large scale landscape although the bros	enclosure from which the viewshed is taken does not	afford distant views affording greater superlatives of	scale. Twists, albeit minor alterations from the straigh	serve to truncate views down the glen despite the gra	and consistent rate of fall towards the head of Loch E		There is a pleasant openness throughout the glen, in	as a result of the wide valley sides but also through	absence of means of enclosure either in valley floor o	upon its sides. This contributes to the pleasing simpli	to the glen. Colours are also uncomplicated in pattern	mix and are dominated by muted greens of the grass	heather before flower. Higher reaches of the viewshe	are more influenced by the light grey outcrop and exp	boulder and stone fields.		The river and road and at times the telephone cables	emphasise the funnelling effect of the glen and create	strong lines in the scenery.						
Objective Analysis	Deep, steep sided but broad upper glen, branching	southwards from the head of Glen Coe. Massive upland	scenery with granite / volcanic outcrop, a narrowing valley	floor and shallow but marked gorge in valley floor.		The high mountain sides sweep into a less pronounced u-	shaped valley floor than at lower points of the glen,	although the surface characteristics are similar in that	grass cover is dominant although heather and bilberry is	also widespread. Upper slopes of grass give way to	exposed rock and stone fields towards the summits.	Vertical streams plunge from upper slopes sometimes in	deep clefts of the hillside, whilst at others seeming to run	over broad and stubborn exposed bedrock where	channels seem impossible to carve. They valley's sides	smooth appearance is often interrupted by large glacial	boulder or exposed buttress to one of its many	intermediate peaks.		There is occasional and relatively small tracts of	coniferous plantation, but these do not truly characterise	the glen. Small areas of fences off riverside woodland is	regenerating with willow, birch and alder but again, whilst	more natural, is not widespread. On occasion the trees	seem to cling precariously to steeper sections of valley	

Objective Analysis	Visual Analysis	Personal Response	
The sweeping, relatively smooth topography is reflected in the main by strong but not jagged mountain peaks,	This is a very still landscape with very little traffic on the long dead-end road. Only the skies and water of the river		
somewhat in contrast to the drama of Glen Coe near-by.	tumbling over rocks and into pools draw the attention by movement. Noise is likewise minimal with only		
The river Etive is a feature of significant detail rather than	occasional birdsong making impact, particularly that of		
prominence in the generally simple valley scenery. It	cuckoo and skylark.		
often occupies a shallow but significant narrow gorge to			
the valley floor within which it cascades over rocks and			
waterfalls and forms deep still pools in its hollows. Here			
the bedrock strata is striking in its colour and geometric			
form of vertical drops and horizontal shelves.			

Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA – Viewpoint / Route: Glen Nevis

Objective Analysis	Visual Analysis	Personal Response
A dramatic glen curving around the foot of the Ben Nevis range, with great variety of landform and land cover resulting from actions of huge glaciers during the last Ice-Age.	The summit of Ben Nevis is not visible from the floor of the glen, but an impression of the mountain's immense bulk is gained through views up the granite sides often punctuated by low lying cloud or mist.	The glen is easily reached from Fort William and is a popular destination for the outdoor enthusiast. The lower glen is far from being remote – it is a busy area used by cyclists, campers and walkers, as well as car-based fourists.
The <u>lower glen</u> includes a winding road alongside the River Nevis which lies in a broad, flat but gently rising valley floor with steep valley sides. Huge, steeply inclined slabs of metamorphosed sandstone. known as Filde	Views vary throughout the glen, being confined and enclosed on the lower valley floor, but opening out further up the glen as vegetation thins out.	The floor of the lower glen is a managed, sometimes manicured, landscape. Limited views up the glen and towards the mountains on either side create a feeling of
Flags, are visible close to the river. These are the oldest rocks in Glen Nevis, used to build Fort William.	The valley floor of the lower glen is well treed, the trees thinning out irregularly up the valley sides. Broadleaved woodland contrasts with coniferous plantations. Exposed	this being the gateway to a much more remote, hostile environment beyond. This is an area where people are either preparing for an exciting adventure (the 'lull before
Land cover in the lower glen comprises broadleaved woodland clinging to the steep slopes to the valley floor. There are also coniferous plantations and more open grazing pasture land on the broad valley floor. There are	rock, often huge, folded and upended, are key features in the landscape, especially where they are closely related to the river, creating loud waterfalls.	the storm'!) or recovering from just having experienced one. The lower glen is thus comforting, relaxing and safe. The gentle river with its broad shingle beach and the picnic areas outside the visitor centre add to this
picturesque stream pools and small waterfalls. The lower glen includes occasional dispersed farmsteads but predominantly large caravan and camping sites, close	There is a gradual transition from enclosed tree cover to open grassland, offering views up to the exposed rocky summits. There are ribbons of broadleaved trees in deep qullies, and other small fans of loose scree.	experience. The middle glen is much more remoter, wilder and natural. There is a sense of adventure when following the
to the Ben Nevis visitor centre and car park. Here access is gained to the walks up to the peak of Ben Nevis. The West Highland Way long-distance footpath passes through Forestry Commission-controlled woodland (Nevis Forest) to the west of the glen prior to reaching its destination at Fort William.	The middle glen gets increasingly more rocky and noisier as the river falls over huge boulders. Managed recreation on the flat valley floor of the lower glen gives way to a more remote, wilder, natural, secretive gorge. This is the	unprotected, rocky, slippery path with the fast flowing river and huge boulders and rock pools below. There is a sense of achievement at the end of the gorge as it opens out into the flatter, broader, pastoral upper
The road up the <u>middle glen</u> gets narrower, more twisty and steeper. Woodland of willow, birch and alder thins out as the road climbs high above the river. Mature Scots Pines are features on the valley sides, old and gnarled and clinging precariously between boulder and outcrop.	Thimalayam landscape as described in <i>Scotland's Scenic Heritage.</i> There is a dramatic change in scenery at the eastern end of the gorge, where the rocky, enclosed, well-treed middle glen opens out at the start of the upper glen into an alpine meadow. Here there are open views across the broad,	glen. This is a time to take a preather and probably linger on the pebble beach at the foot of the impressive An Steall waterfall before deciding whether to take the rocky route back or continue the long walk eastwards to Loch Treig and the railway line at Corrour Station.
Much of the middle glen is covered by river deposits and glacial till, sometimes heaped up into mounds of moraine.	pastoral valley floor to the exposed, steep sided mountains which enclose the glen.	
The middle glen includes the Lower Falls, twin water falls formed by the river eroding along the lines of two separate dykes cutting through the red coloured granite of Mullach nan Coirean. In other areas the river tumbles		

Objective Analysis sily over the rocks. attered across the mountain sides to the north of the d are the Polldubh Crags, popular with rock climbers. e slabby south faces of these crags, made of mica iist, show clear evidence of scraping by ice. ngside the road are examples of 'roches moutonnees', all rock outcrops with a smooth whaleback shape on a side where ice has scraped over the rock, and a eper face where rock has been plucked by the ice scending on the downstream side. the of Ben Nevis rushes down granite slabs for more n 350m. <u>Jupper glen</u> is reached by walking for 1.5km through Nevis gorge from the car park at the end of the row twisting road. A steep, often slippery path winds if the rocks high above the river, its sides unprotected. g deep potholes, cut into the schist by boulders being in around by eddy currents in the fast flowing water, seen in the gorge below. gorge opens out into a flat alpine meadow as the if follows a more flatter course in between the steep of mountains. Woodland gives way to open, exposed or and and occasional broadleaved trees in the valley of and and occasional broadleaved trees in the valley	Visual Analysis	Personal Response
m high wall of white quarzite rock from Coire ă Mhail, maina vallev.		

Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA – Viewscape: Loch Etive



UDJective Analysis	VISUAI ANAIYSIS	Personal Response
Unsettled inner reaches of fjord like sea loch. Bounded	This is a stunningly beautiful, highly attractive landscape	This is a site where the meaning of peacefulness can be
by high smooth, concave profiled sided mountains.	which enjoys great serenity, and balance of composition.	redefined in gentle early summer weather! The
Broad bottomed u-shaped glacial valley reaching far into	Its scale is large but not overawing, with subtle variety	hypnotising rhythm of the loch's lapping waters, allied
the mountain massif of the Glen Coe / Black Mount areas.	within general simplicity of slope, vegetation and water.	with absence of human activity, shelter from the winds by
Broad grassy strath at the braided mouth of the river	The very low key level of human activity, and the absence	high valley walls and absence or rugged drama in the
Etive gives way to the open and calm waters of the upper	of road links from the head of the loch to its settlements to	immediate landscape affords a very special ambience to
loch. The Loch sweeps south westwards in a linear	the south west afford an extremely peaceful ambience to	the viewscape.
fashion through undiluted mountain scenery.	the view.	
		The long and extended single track lane from the junction
Land cover is predominantly open water of the loch,	Shape is particularly important within the glen as the	at Glen Coe to the head of the loch offers a gradual
moving to grass moorland slopes of the lower reaches of	sides of its mountains are consistently concave, and its	descent from the grandeur and drama of Glen Coe. As it
the fjord and then giving way to steep and extensive	summits rounded but prominent peak profile. Sharp edge	falls in altitude and distance is gained from the A82, the
scree, exposed rock and boulder strewn summits.	or rugged feature is not prominent in the vista, although	feeling of remoteness and peacefulness grow on the
Heather is notable by its absence. Above the head of the	rock detail is important to upper slopes and the deep	traveller and this feeling is epitomised by the experience
loch the lower strath is increasingly colonised by	fissured streams plunging to the valley floor.	of scenery and tranquility at the head of Loch Etive.
extensive swathes of rhododendron. Alder and birch		
woodland is patchy but an important component of the	The lower gien is enclosed in that the peaks of either side	There is nevertheless drama of the peaks of the middle
strath floor, extending for some distance northwards into	of the valley are always prominent and draw the eye, but	glen which soar to over a thousand meters in little time
the middle alen.	the broadness of the lower glen floor and vistas down the	from the loch shore, but their gentle form and serenity do
0	length of the glen afford relief from this, resulting in a	not perhaps stimulate challenge and adventure as much
	pleasantly open character of ample spaces.	as their near neighbours of Glen Coe. Rather they
		demand reflective admiration, and a sense that their
		peace should not be disturbed without good cause. This
		is remote country and further disturbance or expedition
		would engender feelings of unnecessary trespass

Personal Response	There is an almost ghostlike quality and ambience to the derelict pier at the head of the loch. It is easy to envisage the Victorian steamer or tramp ploughing its way up the water from the bustle of Glasgow to deliver much anticipated supplies and news to the isolated game keeping occupants of the glen, particularly in bleak winter	months. How it must have generated excitement and hustle in this most tranquil of places.
Visual Analysis	Texture is provided by the rippled loch surface and rocky outcrops and exposure of the summits, but the lower slopes are generally very smooth in terms of landform and short grass vegetation. Only the gills of steep mountain stream-beds bisect and subdivide these horizontally divided extremes of texture and pattern.	Colour within the lower glen is highly influenced by the natural light and reflection thereof from the loch surface. In light conditions the slopes of the mountain sides are bright and contrasting between their grassy lower slopes and light grey exposed summits. However passing cloud can produce great contrast of brightness and shadow on the steep sided glen, flattening the detailed relief and affording a striking element of movement across the suarce start.
Objective Analysis	Land use is very low intensity grazing, although parts of the middle glen appear to be managed for trout fishing and shooting. Apart from isolated individual game keepers / wardens cottages settlement is extremely spartan, with the main hunting lodge below Invercharnan the only building of significance. Remnants of a landing	pier at the head of the loch suggest a more intensive level of activity I days gone by. The glen is characterised throughout its length by a sweeping, u-shaped profile of its mountain slopes and rounded but pronounced peaks. The valley sides are marked by steep, grey rocky stream beds broadening into rock debris fans at the lower changes in steepness.

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Objective Analysis	Visual Analysis	Personal Response
An inland sea loch with extensive settlement confined to a	This is generally a medium to large scale landscape. The	This is a very scenic, peaceful landscape with a dramatic,
narrow fringe of flat land alongside the loch, squeezed	general viewshed is extensive down the loch, with views	natural backdrop contrasting sharply with the settled loch
between the open water below and steep, often concave,	framed by the mountains either side. There is great	side.
loch sides above. This was formed as sea levels fell after	variation in depth of view, however, sometimes confined	
the last Ice-Age.	by steep loch sides and oak – birch woodland, but	Most people probably view the loch for the first time when
	elsewhere more extensive along valleys between the	travelling northwards, emerging out of the dramatic Glen
The long, linear, narrow, fjord-like and 'u'-shaped loch	mountain ridges.	Coe into Glencoe village, framed by the loch. The vast
penetrates into and contrasts with the steep, often		expanse of water provides a welcome relief from the
wooded loch sides rising steeply to peaks and more	In some areas dense woodland extends to the loch shore,	overbearing enclosure of the mountains.
rounded mountains above.	loresnortening views along the loch.	Moored pleasure craft bob up and down on the water,
The loch is framed to the north by the open moorland of	There are very distinctive folds in the landscape,	providing sites and sounds usually encountered at a
The Mamores, whilst to the south the northern ridge of	providing a tiered effect which is emphasised by sunlight	seaside resort.
Glen Coe creates a natural viewshed.	and shade. The calm water reflects the imposing	
	mountains.	Bird song, including sea birds, the whitewashed buildings
The loch head and river mouths permit more extensive		and the twinkling of night time lighting along the loch side,
settlement and development on wider areas of flat land,	Man's influence is visually apparent throughout the area,	add to the calming influence.
such as at Kinlochleven at the loch head to the east,	for settlement, employment, tourism and recreation.	
North Ballachulish and South Ballachulish to the west,	Whitewashed buildings dot the shoreline, but appear	Most visitors probably travel the whole 22 miles around
and Glencoe on the south shore where the River Coe	small beneath the vast mountains above. The loch itself is	the loch since this is easy to do, and makes a very
enters the loch.	calm and sheltered, qualities that make it popular for	pleasant run for the cyclist. The more adventurous can
	sailing, and fishing.	take to the hills for an energetic, challenging climb
The B863 runs around the loch and joins the main A82		through one of the woodlands. The overall experience is
between Glencoe and North Ballachulish, providing a	The distinctive bridge between North and South	that this is a centre for recreation, and a popular base for
continuous communications corridor linking the main	Ballachulish at the seaward end of the loch is a feature in	a varied holiday. Accommodation ranges from camp sites
settlements, occasional houses and other land uses such	the landscape which adds to the enclosure of the loch.	to large hotels.
as caravan sites. The concentration of settlements		
alongside the loch is the highest within the whole NSA.		
and over within the viewehold is mixed with smooth		
candcover within the viewshed is filiated, with shroom		
woodland contrasting with the open water. The foreshore		
is diverse, with pebble beaches, wooded banks and more		
open wetland areas, and is subject to tidal influence.		
Occasional designed ornamental planting within policy		
grounds of individual houses provides further contrast.		

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Objective Analysis	Visual Analysis	Personal Response
The southern-most edge of the NSA, just north of Bridge	Loch Tulla lies adjacent to the busy A82, the main tourist	The diverse landform and landcover within this landscape
of Orchy, this area is centred around the shallow, settled	route to Fort William and beyond, but is largely unaffected	offer a refreshing, pleasing change to other more remote
loch basin. Flat loch-side grassland, gently sloping	by it. The road follows the toe of the huge Beinn an	or simple parts of the NSA.
smooth moorland and mixed forest frame the loch side,	Dothaidh and Beinn Dorain range which lie to the south-	
with high peaks and ridges defining the viewshed.	east just outside the NSA. The railway and old military	This is not an awesome, challenging or dramatic
	road also follow this route, squeezing between the	landscape as some other areas of the NSA are. It is more
Bare rock and scree close to the top of more rounded	mountains and the River Orchy which feeds into the loch.	of a comforting, interesting, relatively peaceful area.
high peaks and ridges contrast with the extensive areas		
of flat grassland, and heather and bracken-covered	A surfaced, narrow road with passing places runs along	The area is well used by people, particularly walkers,
moorland. Forests, which form part of the managed	the southern and western edges of the loch, between	giving it a human perspective. Evidence of on-going
Blackmount Deer Forest, comprise distinctive Scots Pine	Bridge of Orchy and a car park at Victoria Bridge.	management in the form of fencing, signs and
(remnant Caledonian Forest) with extensive areas of	Thereafter vehicles are not allowed without permission of	interpretation, do not detract from the natural
planted birch and rowan.	the Blackmount Management Partnership.	characteristics.
The area is recognised internationally for its variety of	Walkers along the West Highland Way are more	
plants and animals, including rare beetles and moths.	frequently seen than vehicles. An interpretation board at	
	the Victoria Bridge Car Park identifies footpaths and off-	
Black Mount is a distinctive, attractive, large lodge set in	road cycle routes.	
well-tended gardens along the loch side. There are a few		
other smaller lodges an old drove inn and the inveroran	The viewshed for this area is relatively tightly drawn	
Hotel contine the Wast Highland Way Iong-distance	around the lock built it is an area of areat visual contrast	
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rootpath which passes through the area. This rollows the old public road and sections of the Caulfield Military	probably more so than any other area within the NSA.	
Road, the section between Bridge of Orchy and Inveroran	The scale, openness and diversity of views are mixed.	
being a scheduled ancient monument.	The large scale, exposed, extensive views across the	
,	loch contrast with the much smaller scale, more intimate	
The traditional use of hill land for deer management is	scale of the forests and plantations which offer shelter	
evident by the extensive deer fencing around the	and diversity.	
plantations, and signs warning of deer stalking by		
shooting between mid August to mid October.	Consequently, colour and texture within the landscape of	
	this area is varied due to the variety of vegetation cover	

Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA – Viewscape: Meall Beag and Ben Nevis Ski Range



Objective Analysis	Visual Analysis	Personal Response
High mountain massif, moor and deep mountain valley.	For all its mass and elevation this is a relatively simple, if	The accessibility of the viewpoint at once affords access
Massive rounded summits with rugged corrie and ridge	massive landscape. However views out of the NSA	to high mountain experience to a wide variety of ages
lying below summit height. This is a wide open	primarily draw the eye and are complex and varied as	and abilities and thus is an experience many will enjoy
landscape which through absence of significant drama	well as vast. The elevation of the viewpoint, rather than	and savour. The views are stupendous. However, in
actually masks its notable elevation. Extensive vistas are	the immediate topography afford an experience of	comparison to many other upland areas or mountains in
enjoyed far beyond the NSA itself across Fort William,	exposure, but this is very much diluted by the presence	Britain this is a crowded and despoiled visual and
Loch Linnhe, the Great Glen and distant peaks extending	of other people at this recognised viewpoint and its ease	personal experience. The busyness deadens the high
as far as the Cullins of Skye.	of access via ski-lift.	mountain exposure and the access via ski-lift removes
		any sense of achievement in reaching relatively
Slopes from the foot of the mountain (and close to the	The main contrasts within the NSA from this viewpoint is	significant height. Moreover, the vistas to the summit of
NSA boundary) rise in swathes of relatively uniform and	the transition from the very simple steadily rising grass	Ben Nevis further diminishes the value of this visually
consistent angle, before becoming more convex towards	moorland slopes into boulder field and dramatic corrie	quite unremarkable summit, not particularly special other
the upper reaches. The deep even sided incision of Allt	and crag. However this ruggedness is not typical of the	than its unsurpassed elevation. This is not a site of high
Daim is a prominent rift in the rounded mountain massif,	wider setting, which despite its height is smooth and	mountain endeavour or adventure. Here the perception
and provides for constant noise of moving waters.	rounded, generally devoid of interest or focus points.	and experience is surely shaped by the other mountain
		experience of the visitor.
Vegetation is predominantly that of grasses and heather	Colour within the NSA IS muted, subdued shades of	
moorland, giving way to rocky exposures to the summits.	merging browns and greens, with a generally smooth	However the elevation of the site is reinforced when
Boulder and stone fields are extensive. Snow remains in	surface as rai as topograprity is conficentied, with a slight toyturing produced by the moorland vegetation and	views out of the NSA are enjoyed, and when the weather
summer time in high north facing corries.	exiating produced by the mountaing vegetation and	affords it, glimpses of the Cullins are a fine treat to those
	boulder and stone field and outcrop affords a strong	who understand their particular grandeur and challenge. It is portage ironic that within a relatively modest
	interjection of light and dark grey colours within the	distance from the summit of Britains highest peak. the
	landscape.	great attraction lies in views in the opposite directions.

Objective Analysis	Visual Analysis	Personal Response
Land use is very low intensity grazing but there is a	This is a landscape of few distinct features and therefore	Nevertheless, the viewer is extremely close to dramatic
concentration of leisure activity, primarily focused to	the ski infrastructure, lifts , piste fencing and buildings are	upland landscape and challenge which would require
outdoor pursuits of winter sports and mountain biking, as	relatively strong features in the setting. This simple	only a short travel from the viewshed, but seems to
well as walking. Infrastructure for these activities in the	landscape is paradoxically one of significant busyness,	attract few to do so.
form of ski-lifts, mountain centre/café, paths and	belying its elevation.	
delineated pistes are obvious. The top of the lifts sees a		
focus for visitors even in summer and affords the very		
young and the elderly exposure to high mountain		
experience and vistas. Concentration of visitor pressure		
and presence of people is marked.		
The wider landscape, particularly at higher elevations is		
otherwise devoid of man made interference.		

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Objective Analysis	Visual Analysis	Personal Response
A roughly level plateau at approximately 1000ft,	The visual characteristics of this unique area are	If one's emotional response to the Scottish landscape
comprising of dark, hummocky peat moorland, dotted with	distinctive in their own right, but the contrast with the	depends on the weather, Rannoch Moor is an extreme
innumerable lochs, lochans and bogs, joined by an	spectacular mountains to the north, south-east, and	example of this.
intricate web of minor streams. The area for the most part	particularly the west provide an unforgettable setting.	
overlies granite.	· · · ·	To most people their first glimpse of Rannoch Moor is
	This is a vast, extensive, exposed, and essentially simple	when driving north from Bridge of Orchy, as the road
This is the watershed of central Scotland, where rivers	landscape.	sweeps up to the moorland plateau. What is found there,
start their journeys towards the Atlantic in the west and to		and what personal experiences are felt, depends on the
the North Sea in the east.	The moor comes to an abrupt conclusion at the junction	weather.
	of the A82 and Glen Etive, which is spectacularly marked	
Thousands of huge rocks, torn from hillsides and corries	by the rocky pyramid of Buchaille Etive Mor at the	When shrouded in mist or driving rain or snow, this is a
by a giant glacier moving eastwards some 20,000 years	entrance to Glen Coe.	wild and remote landscape to be passing through, and an
ago, are scattered throughout the area. Occasional small		especially terrifying wilderness for a lonely walker. A
trees, bent and gnarled by the wind, lie amongst the	The road, safety barriers and other infrastructure	seemingly endless labyrinth of hazardous routes offer
boulders.	including snow poles alongside the road, are the only	peril at each step. A place of wonder, probably one of the
	man-made features across the area. Traffic movement	last really wild places in Scotland.
To the north, Rannoch Moor is surrounded by granite	and noise do detract from the remoteness, although this	
mountains that rise to over 2000ft, whilst to the west and	impact is only really evident close to the road.	In good weather, however, with the sun on your back or
southeast they reach more than 3000ft.	- -	shining through the windscreen, the shimmering lochs,
	Clearance of a sole plantation by burning is evidence of	grass and purple heather waving in a gentle breeze, with
The NSA houndary follows the northern and eastern	successful management to retain the character of the	panoramic views towards the unlands beyond provide a
sides of this unique landscape which is shaped roughly		partorante rioro toma de avariado ao aprando ao oração de la contrada de avariance
as an inverteu triangle, stood on its apex. Achailader		
marks the southern tip, Rannoch Station the north		
eastern tip of the triangle, and the junction of the A82 and		
Glen Etive marks the north western tip.		
-		
The railway line between Bridge of Orchy and Rannoch		
Station follows the eastern boundary of Rannoch Moor,		
whilst the A82 runs a little inside the south western side of		
this triangular area.		
The area can only be crossed from east to west by foot. A		
10 mile track links Rannock Station with the Kings House		
Hotel on the A82. The hotel is a welcome stop over for		
walkers on the West Highland Way long distance		
footpath, which runs just beyond the south-western side		
of the area.		

Objective Analysis	Visual Analysis	Personal Response
The rare, delicate, Rannoch Rush is found no-where else in Britain, and its habitat is protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Other flora of interest include		
The lochs on the moor are good for trout, while black-		
throated diver, goosander and merganser are attracted to		
the numerous islets. Higher up, mountain hare and red		
deer may be spotted, and even golden eagle and osprey.		





### Ben Nevis and Glen Coe National Scenic Area. Historical, Cultural Associations and Other Background Information

### The Glen Coe Massacre

The grandeur and drama of the NSA is undeniable and irresistible, and modern development seems not have diluted this great scenery. However the village of Glencoe at the foot of the glen itself carries with it a history of betrayal and massacre which remains pertinent to the area's character and ambience to this day. The cowardly murder of the 38 of the Clan Macdonald in 1692 by order of the crown, and the subsequent loss of life of women and children from exposure after the King's soldiers had lodged within the village for several nights to this day engenders feelings of sorrow and disquiet, for the soldiers ordered to carry out the massacre were in part of the Clan Campbell, fellow highlanders. Whilst infamous for the massacre the glen also carries with it legend of cattle rustling and banditry between clans and government, secret refuges in hidden valleys and tales of incredible hardship. All weave together with the scenery of the area to present a dramatic and fascinating experience to the visitor.

### The Highland Clearances

The effects of the Highland Clearances denuded the glens of the bulk of their population and the remains of their sheilings can still be seen in Glencoe.

### Film Locations

The spectacular scenery of Glen Coe and Loch Leven has provided the backdrop for some famous films. Scenes in *Braveheart*, *Rob Roy*, *Bonnie Prince Charlie*, *Highlander*, *Master of Ballantrae*, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, *The 39 Steps*, *Harry Potter* and *Kidnapped* were filmed around the Glencoe area.

### **APPENDIX 3**

## FIELDWORK OUTPUTS KNAPDALE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

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Objective	Visual	Emotional
A flat valley of floodplain grassland with a sinuous river.	A medium scale view, but one that is relatively enclosed	A pastoral agricultural valley – an essentially 'working
Slopes steepen to a higher ridge that forms the horizon	by the near ridges. These ridges form the horizon line	landscape.' It is sheltered and pleasant, and typical of
line. No further ridges are in view beyond.	are further ridges cannot be seen. The view is enclosed	the scenic views of an Argyll pastoral river valley.
	by the arc of Black Hill and Achnashellach ridges.	Whilst not particularly special in itself, the main function
Land use is mostly pastoral, with the lower slopes		of this area is its enclosure and backdrop for Moine
indicating a more improved pasture and the steeper	The view is varied, and has some textural variations,	Mhór. The enclosure function of the ridges provides an
slopes being of rough grazing. The higher parts	particularly from the jagged conifers to the grassland.	obvious boundary line for the NSA.
towards the ridge merge into coniferous plantation, with	Seasonal variation is likely to be seen most in the line of	
a few rock exposures at the very top of the ridge.	broadleaved tree species that mark the meander of the	The addition of this area of 'working landscape'
	river through the valley bottom. The view taken in	compliments the rest of the northern end of this NSA,
This area is close to 2 villages, one of which, Bridgend,	summer offers a mix of green shades from the yellow	which has numerous human influences and historic
falls within the NSA boundary. Bridgend consists	green grassland to the dark green conifers. Other	evidence of use.
mainly of modern bungalows, both grey and white in	colours are largely absent.	
colour. An occasional cottage is nestled into the slope.		A close up view of this area, taken from the road bridge,
	The strongest visual lines, and leaders around the view,	takes the eye up the river itself, which then leads the
Main features of the view are the tree lined river that	are the straight edges to the conifer plantations, the river	viewer into the scene and up the gentle slopes to the
meanders through the basin, although unless close to	meander, the skyline against the ridge and then the field	horizon line.
the river itself is not in view, but rather its line is given	boundaries and mosaic of pastures offer secondary and	
away by the riparian trees, and the expanse of low flat	more detailed lines.	
grazing land. It is a typical river basin farmland		
landscape. Some straight and stark edges are seen	The area is close to settlements, so a general	
with the coniferous blocks, and further distinctive lines	background of noise is present, but not significant.	
are marked by field boundary trees and fences. There	Birdsong is noticeable and varied, including song thrush	
is the occasional stone wall, but hedges are absent.	and blackbird as well as the typical open grassland	
	species.	

2. Knapdale NSA – Above Aird Ranich on the east coast road of Loch Sween, below Daltote Cottage (at the milestone)

Objective	Visual	Emotional
The immediate view is of grazing land on the lower ground and woodland on the higher slopes. From this	The view is harmonious, with the only contrast being between the flat grey/blue loch water, which is glassy	The loch is open and exposed, and its tidal nature gives a feeling of being close to the sea.
immediate view the eye is taken across the flat expanse	and still, and the variety of textures and colours found	The former of the second of th
or Loch Sween and then over to the lower hages of Danna.	iniario within the misides.	i ne inmediate area is preasant, sneuered, quet and calm. The smaller scale of the immediate area is
	The general scale of view is medium, with a greater	interesting and visually attractive with the drowned
The loch surface is extensive, and from the small area of	openness viewed in the distance over the loch. The	ridges.
rocky shore the land cover is grazing land and	loch is open an exposed, whilst the grazing land and	
broadleaved woodland. Bracken is present in large	wooded slopes is medium in scale. The road itself is	The shoreline is inviting and easily accessed from the
swathes. There are occasional cottages and small	secluded with some tight encloses for long stretches of	road. The feeling of being close to a rocky shore adds
farms along the road.	the journey along Loch Sween.	an opportunity for exploration amongst the rocks.
The skyline of distant ridges beyond the loch and the	The view is diverse, both in features, colour and texture.	There is a definite 'peninsula' feeling. Travelling down
small islands dotted on the smooth loch surface, along	Lines within the view include the horizontal line of the	the road leaves the viewer increasingly distant from the
with the intimate area of rocky shore inlets are important	loch, far ridges on the horizon line and in the near	main land mass. There is a strong element of travelling
features. This particular view is given added interest by the lines of parallel ridges that head onto the loch	distance the parallel ridges drowning into the loch.	to an end point. As this journey to the end of the peninsula is made, there are 'surprise views' of the loch
waters.	Viewed on a sunny day the area is pleasant, calm and	as the road emerges from the trees. The road changes
	still. It is anticipated that the loch would be very	in elevation, so some views are above the loch whilst
	exposed and windy in bad weather.	others emerge very close to the shore, all of which adds to the journey and the feeling of expectation.
	The various boats dotted on the loch add interest and	
	movement.	

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Objective	Visual	Emotional
The landform is of undulating rocky ridges, with steep	A complex layering of vertical rocky slabs at the top of	The scene is inviting a day's exploration with the variety
bare rock and heather patches. The lower valleys are	the ridges, followed by patches of heather and then the	of slopes and undulations creating unseen corners
rough grazing land.	Atlantic oak woodland wrapped around the slopes.	beyond. The scene is not dramatic or exhilarating,
	Bracken dominates at this level where woodland is	despite the larger ridges, but rather gently rolling, and
Atlantic oak woodland in the middle slopes runs along	absent. Rough grazing then continues into the lower	more remote and semi natural that other areas within the
burns and at the bases of the bare rock outcrops.	areas that eventually grades into rushy pasture in the	NSA that have stronger human influences.
Heather and bracken cover is the main aspect of the	lowest parts. This layering is not precise, and each	
upper slopes below the vertical rock slabs. Grassy	layer pushes up and past the other in places. This	The scene is interesting, with woodland gently lapping
moorland on the lower slopes eventually leads to rush	creates a flow of lines and interest.	up to higher crags, and it is likely that the woodland has
and cotton grass patches in the lowest lying parts.		been a long standing feature, whilst the grassland has
	It is clear that the grassland is in transition, and that	evidence of change. The historic occupation of the area
The area is fenced and is mainly private estate.	bracken is encroaching. These stands are fairly new	encourages imagination of a scene past, with
Settlement is largely absent when a view to the north up	because the typical build up of bracken litter with more	shepherding being the main part of a very simple living.
the parallel ridges is taken. Some cottages and clusters	mature stands is absent from this area.	
of holiday homes are present a little further back up the		The view would change with adverse weather, and
road.	The scale of the view is medium and is fairly open in	would certainly alter with the seasons in terms of colour
	nature. Diversity is largely due to the folded layers of	and light.
Specific features include the craggy skyline of the	vegetation types described above, which also add a	
parallel ridges, which is a varied and indented line. Little	good variety of colour, with grey rock, purple heather	At the end of the road along the Loch Caolisport/Loch
carpets of flowering cotton grasses in the low lying parts	and bright green bracken. The jagged skyline is the	Sween peninsula there is some feeling of remoteness
add detail to the undulating rough grassland.	most dramatic feature.	from the main land area and an end of journey or
Broadleaved woodland flows around the steeper slopes		'peninsula' feeling. This is not as pronounced as the
and down the clefts of burns.	There is little to disturb the quiet and stillness of the	peninsula feeling of Keillmore because at Balimore there
	scene. All sounds are natural and there is considerable	is further land beyond the end of the road and the area
Small ruined buildings indicate a former occupation of	calm.	is not as exposed. Feelings of absolute isolation are
the land.		therefore absent here.

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Objective	Visual	Emotional
The view is dominated by the coast and seascape.	Key visual features are the flat edges to the inlets which	Lochwards the scene evokes feelings of peace and
The main landform is linear steep sided coastal ridges	form the seas lochs, the strong intear striation of land form and drowned coast – the layers of ridges terminate	The viewer feels safe and confortable, but being at the
on the adjacent peninsula, and offshore rounded islands	in the sea which is punctuated by low drowned islands	end of a journey down the peninsula, there is some
and the coastal ridges on this peninsula that continue	offshore. The transition of rough grazing, iris bed,	feeling of a hidden and unspoilt place. Not everyone
out and into the water.	saimarsh to rocky keip covered shore and the varying topography and height of ridges are further important	will have seen trils. It reels like a place that is at the end of a long cul-de-sac. All who visit this place are likely to
Land cover is rough grassland that merges into iris beds	visual features.	stop, pause, and contemplate before travelling away
and then coastal saltmarsh before the rocky and kelp	- - - - -	again. It is definite end point.
covered shore. The rough grassland is dotted with	The smooth greenness of the lower slopes is backed by	· · · · ·
shorter sheep grazed turf where grasses are less course	steeper, rockier and grey green distant slopes of higher	The semi-natural nature of the area is important, and the
and interence sweeter. Rocky outcrops provide the main concentrations of calcareous grassland species	linges.	eye is caught by the tiny detail of striat colourur who flora that is in miniature to the dramatic and vast nature
with typically tiny flowers, including wild thyme, fairy flax,	The scale is a medium enclosed view that is sheltered,	of the open sea and hint of distant islands seen only as
eyebright and crosswort. English stonecrop creeps	secluded and hidden, complemented by a much wider	grey outlines, including that of the large island of Jura.
over the rock surface.	expanse of open sea.	Outward views to the sea are large, exposed, wild and isolated.
Swathes of bracken and gorse are seen amongst the	The landscape is diverse, with a subtle mix of greens,	:
grazing land and there are occasional small coniter	browns and greys, and the eye is drawn to the detail of	The evidence of human presence is low key but
plantations.	the colourful ground flora on the short cropped turts.	reassuring - poats, occasional crotts and grazing animals. Wildlife is verv important within this scene:
Land use is predominantly sheep grazing, with	Significant bird song and the opportunity to see a variety	birds flit around the view and song posts are all around.
occasional walkers and local boating, although the small	of avian species adds to the peaceful, calm tranquillity.	The tiny delicate flowers of wild thyme and stonecrop
boats present are likely to belong to the few peninsula	Situated at the end of a peninsula, this area will	are attractive and draw the eye in to appreciate their tiny
residents. There is the occasional croft and the small	experience quite different views in bad weather, where the detail is likely to be lost but the overall scene will be	beauty, which makes the wider landscape all the more
open for visitors and has interpretation material.	of considerable movement and drama.	and distant lands.
The key features of this area are the flora and birds,		The large expanse of intertidal sand provides for the odd
both shoreline waders and passerines (which will be		basking seal, again bringing nature in close proximity to
seasonal), the linear ridges against the skyline, the offshore islands and drowned coast and secondary		the viewer.
features such as the chapel and standing cross.		The chapel and an awareness of its history brings
		secondary or background emotions of the historic
This is iconic Scottish coastal landscape with ridges and		spiritual connections of the place, adding to feelings of
shorelines.		long term continuity, although it is the many other features that remain the primery influences
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<u>5. Knapdale NSA – Upper parallel ridges within conifer forest</u> Qualities described as a result of an assimilation of responses whilst moving through the area.

Objective	Visual	Emotional
Steep sided coniferous ridges with deep trenches are the dominant feature. This is interspersed with areas of broadleaved woodland, which tend to be more open. Some trenches between the ridges are water filled, i.e. secluded lochs, some are dry trenches, which are either so arrow that the coniferous of antisition simply	The scale varies as the journey is made through the area, from medium scale in more open areas to enclosed and intimate amongst the closely folded ridges, where the view is sheltered and hidden. The view in the forearcurud is often very varied, with the	Within the thick of the conifer plantation it is dark and dominating, dense and enclosed. The vertical slopes are imposing and there is a real awareness of height and the parallel ridges looming above. The steepest ridges are a dramatic feature.
continues down and up the next ridge, or wider and flatter with small pockets of rushy grassland. Land cover is predominantly conifer plantation, even on	range of textures and colours from the roadside rocks and vegetation. At a larger scale the spiky lines of the coniferous plantation woodland contrasts the more rounded and varied shapes of the broadleaved	On the ground the trenches feel secret and hidden. The structural complexity of the parallel ridge feature and repetition of the scene is disorientating and possibly unsettling, particularly when alone or in adverse
the steepest of ridge slopes. Opportunities for grazing land have been taken where the low trench is wide enough, resulting in narrow informal fields of rough and rushy pasture and patches of bracken	woodland, particularly where the stunted growth of oaks has left them twisted and gnarled. Colours are monochrome amondst the plantation	weather, although it does also invoke a sense of adventure to discover secret glens and mini lochs. Within the plantation woodland it is extremely still cool
Much of the land is used for recreation, with Forestry Commission cycle trails, footpaths and picnic points.	although in some places however there is variation in coniferous species, which adds a greater variety of deep greens.	and calm. There is the typical smell of dank, damp earth and decomposing pine needles. Light is occasionally dappled, which can be very attractive.
Settlement is very sparse with only the occasional small house by the road. Forestry has obscured the more subtle landform features, and any evidence of historic land use.	Insect and bird life is prevalent, particularly along the sunny rides by track sides or along the road edge, where there is also more lichen and bryophyte covered rock and fallen timber. Where dappled light penetrates the	Features are very close and monotonous, hence the viewer is often unsure of the exact location. The scene does change as a journey is made along the
Closer examination into the plantation reveals old field boundaries.	woodland canopy there is added ground flora interest. Clear linear influences are the sinuous nature of the road, and the strong almost vertical lines of the ridges and deep trenches. Sound is deadened by the vertical structure and there is a stillness in the trenches.	winding road, often going from the monotony of plantation to secluded open glades amongst broadleaved woodland. The landscape appears to be unfolding as the viewer reaches the edges of the deeply trenched rides and gradually progress to more broadleaved woodland.
		It is likely to be a personal view as to whether the dense woodland is deterring, and may depend on a knowledge of other places to go in the wider area of the NSA.

Objective	Visual	Emotional
The immediate areas close to the road are completely	The most striking feature is the broadleaved woodland	The presence of the dun, against a backdrop of the old
dominated by bracken. A small but steep sided rocky	covered ridge on the far shore of the loch, which makes	Atlantic oak woodland evokes some reconstruction in
outcrop lifts at the side of the loch and drops to the tidal	a refreshing change from the plantation woodland ridges	the mind of times past. The scene may be similar to
shores of the loch itself. The flat loch surface has small	that are prevalent in northern Knapdale. This backdrop	that when the fortified dwelling was occupied. The Dun
islands and the far shore climbs up to parallel ridges of	is softer than the usual plantations, and appears more	is a key feature – intriguing and provoking the
Atlantic oak woodland on all but the skyline, where a	natural when viewed with the historic dun in the	imagination.
grassy plateau caps the top of the ridge.	foreground because it is the native woodland that would	
	have historically occurred in the area prior to plantations.	The loch is narrow and there are clear views to the far
The immediate fields of bracken swathes are likely to		shore, thus the scene is intimate, despite its scale, and
have been pasture land in the recent past, and some are	The scale of the view is medium scale, and the tree	interesting. It is full of variety yet harmonious and
still in use, although bracken is encroaching. Plantation	covered parallel ridge forms the horizon line, with the	peaceful, with the Dun inspiring further thought and
woodland is virtually absent and the ridges are therefore	continuation of further ridges out of view behind it.	mystery.
clothed in a softer and more varied broadleaved		
woodland.	This area has a diversity of scenes, with woodland, loch,	
	loch shore and rocky mounds that once would have	
Settlement within this view is absent, but occasional	been part of a ridge. The islands within the loch are	
cottages do occur along the roadside. The rocky	also linear in nature and therefore part of the same ridge	
outcrop shows the remains of a historic fortified dwelling,	system, each also with their own rocky shores.	
hence the site name.		
	With the loch in view there are strong horizontal lines of	
The broadleaved woodland of the far shore is a	the loch water surface meeting the far shore, which runs	
significant feature, as is the Dun ruin on top of the near	in parallel with the lines of ridges.	
rocky outcrop.		

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<u>7. Knapdale NSA – Mòine Mhór</u> An assimilation of qualities determined from several journeys around the area.

Objective	Visual	Emotional
Flat, low lying and open moss extends across the Basin, which is framed at the outer reaches by unland parallel	The view is medium to large in scale, depending on the viewer's position around the Môine Mhór area The	The open, flat expanse immediately feels exposed and wide in contrast to other inland areas within the NSA.
ridges. Volcanic plugs of rock rise up from the moss in	dominating feature is the flat expanse framed by the	Straight lines dominate and take the viewer around a
a few locations, which break the expanse and detract	parallel ridges in most directions. There is a mixture of	360 degree view. The straight roads invite you across
from the generally long views across the basin.	horizon lines, with the immediate ridges dominating in	the Mhór, and offer safe passage through what would
The land cover is arses moorland variation serves	some directions, whilst the purple grey outlines of	otherwise not be explored.
Moine Mhór, unfenced and dotted with small birch and	others. The skyline is therefore distinct and ragged.	The parallel ridges sweep around the edges of the Mhór.
alder trees, and localised patches of heather. Low	with the eye drawn to a few distinctly higher peaks in the	each with their own distinctive character, providing
density sheep grazing occurs across the moss. The	distance.	orientation and identity. The drama of the ridges and
moss grades out to the iris beds towards the coast, and		expanse of the Mhór is in contrast to the small
the drains running alongside the road or across Moine	The edge of the moss against the start of the parallel	settlements dotted around the view, which give comfort
Mhór are floristically diverse, echoing the range of	ridges is a very strong horizontal line because of the	in an otherwise expansive and almost wild landscape.
species found near the coat amongst the iris beds, and	immediate contrast, and in some ways mimics the same	
can therefore be picked out from a distance. Patches of	strong horizontal line seen across a loch where the	The Mhór has an anonymity about it, and one can feel
flowering cotton grass are distinctive in the near view	water's surface meets the start of a ridge.	small and anonymous in its vastness. Yet within the
where wetter ground is present across the moss area.		enormity of the flat moss is considerable detail, with
	Looking landward there is an increasing amount of	birds flittering in close view and singing from nearby
The flat expanse of the moss leaves the river	plantation woodland on the ridge, as opposed to the	song posts, and moorland flora drawing the eye into the
inconspicuous until viewed close up. The main lines	more natural broadleaved woodland that creeps in more	near distance after appreciating the farther views. This
dominating the scene are the straight narrow roads and	significantly coastwards, although the plantations and	detail breathes life and gives comfort into the wild
low straight stone walls.	broadleaved sections do not merge significantly, rather	expanse.
Those is an object and the total according to the the terms of	they remain in distinct areas.	
I nere is an obvious contrast between the liat expanse		
and the steep parallel ridges that frame the edge of the view and denote the boundaries of this northern section	The rough textures of rocks, spiky plantations, more rounded shapes of broadleaved woodland and smooth	
of the NSA.	flatness of the moss with sudden plugs of steep rock	
	adds considerable variation in texture.	
	In fine weather the view is long around the basin of the	
	moss, but in adverse conditions it is imagined that the	
	low moss area would cling to mist and create a very different perspective.	

<u>8. Knapdale NSA – Crinan Canal Corridor</u> An assimilated field sheet based upon several journeys along the canal corridor.

Objective	Visual	Emotional
A linear canal following the hill foot of the upland and coastal parallel ridges on the south side of the moss	The view is usually small scale along the canal, but with linear views up and down the waterway. It is sheltered	The Crinan canal area is tranquil and hidden, peaceful and comfortion of travelling to the canal area from the
basin.	and calm, but with a range of features, colour and	moss the area is surprising, a real contrast to the wild
	texture. The still water, rock bullions, neat canal sides	expanse.
The canal is lined by rock bullions, with short amenity	with mown grass and small garden areas with bedding	- - - - - -
grassland along its sides. Numerous locks appear	plants and pots of flowers, small white cottages and	The area is very relaxing and enjoyable, and there is a
along the length of the canal, which are the focal points	secluded mini marinas, are in contrast to a backdrop of	real feeling of being on holiday. One could spend
for settlement, with lock keepers cottages leading to	the parallel ridges to one side and the flat expanse of	several hours watching the boating activity, wandering
further small white painted cottages at some lock points.	the moss on the other. At many points along the canal,	along the towpath and picnicking at the colourful lock
	the moss is obscured from view by lines of small trees	sides. There is always something to see, something of
The key features are the canal line itself, which despite	along the towpath, but frequently comes into view along	interest. There is active sound of movement, people
being a manmade teature is sinuous like a river, titting to	the journey.	and enjoyment.
the contours of the land. A second key feature is the		
black and white locks, which are well maintained and	The canal and its associated towpath are the most	The strong identity and black and white colour of the
neatly painted, along with the associated dwellings and	dominant linear features, whilst other lines and form are	canal side cottages and locks reminds the viewer of the
buildings that are similarly neatly painted white.	complicated and diverse with the range of features	history of the canal as a working waterway, and also
	present.	turther adds to the feeling of a holiday place.
	There is great interest and movement along the canal.	The backaround feeling is one of being on a journey.
	with boats. vachts and barges travelling along it. There	The viewer is constantly moving along the canal, albeit
	is a busy but relaxed atmosphere, as holiday boaters are	slowly and with pauses that could last for hours or a day.
	constantly manoeuvring the locks, bringing boats in to	The journey unfolds along the canal corridor as it winds
	moor or pushing boats off again.	from inland to sea.
	Thora is a strong human influence along the second	
	corridor with the heating activity and the inne and guest	
	bollises reinforction the feeling activity and the milling and guest	
	place.	
	The canal corridor has a clear historical context, being a	
	purpose built Itlatt Itlade water way, titat provided a III.K from inland to the sea	

Objective	Visual	Emotional
Crinan Bay is divided into an outer bay and inner bay,	The scale is small to medium, with the enclosed feeling	The Crinan Bay areas has lots to see and explore.
with extensive intertidal areas. At low tide there are	of the bay leading to wider views across the moss or out	Distant views out to sea or over the moss can be
large expanses of sand around the bay, with virtually all	to the open sea.	enjoyed from a safe and relaxing vantage point within
of the inner bay being devoid of sea water. Saltmarsh		this hidden and secluded area. It feels lazy and happy.
around the bay gradually grades into Moine Mhór.	The bay area is secluded and sheltered and very varied	Time drifts by as people tinker with the boats or fish from
Localised rocky areas are at each side of the mouth of	in its features. The influence of settlement on the scene	a rock at the edge of the grey cottage hamlet.
the bay, as the peripheral ridges tumble into the sea.	is important, with the boating activity in Crinan village,	
	and the hidden hamlet of grey cottages on the opposite	There is considerable interest in the detail of the birds
The view is contained by coastal parallel ridges, but with	shore. Colour is also an important aspect of this area,	feeding, the colourful floral diversity of the salt marsh
a framed view out to the open sea through the channel	with the brightness of the intertidal sand, grey rocky	and iris beds, and the rocky edges.
of the bay.	coast line, white cottages of Crinan and splashes of	
	bright colours from the yellow flag iris and cerise ragged	Attention is drawn to the different characteristics of the
There are a few cottages nestled into the edges of the	robin flowers within the iris beds. In the distance the	inner and outer bays, which are constantly changing as
ridges, which differ from the characteristic white painted	dark ridges take on different hues depending on the	the tide creeps in and out, and the viewer has much to
cottages, being grey stone.	weather conditions. With the range of features also	occupy the eye as the area is scanned. Views out to
	comes a variety of textures, from the smooth sea water	the open sea do not feel exhilarating or expansive
The settlement of Crinan is again reflecting the white	and intertidal sand, to the rocky areas of the coast, and	because they are taken from the shelter of the bay.
painted trademark cottages and also has small boat	swaying grassland and iris beds.	
yards and associated buildings.		The view has a real seaside ambience. It is slow-
	Line and form is also varied, but dominant horizontal	moving and dreamy, peaceful, idyllic and relaxing.
The most significant features are the costal edge and	lines of the water surface and the undulating ridge tops	
intertidal area with its expanse of light sand, and the	of the parallel ridges against the sky remain prominent.	
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are against a backdrop of the towering ridges.	Movement and sound are influential in the scene, with	
	the activity around Crinan and lazy feel to the grey	
	cottage hamlet, the calls of the waders feeding in the	
	intertidal and the movement of the iris beds in the	
	breeze.	

# <u>9. Knapdale NSA – Crinan Bay coastal area</u>

Objective	Visual	Emotional
The land for is the flat moss area of Moine Mhor, fringed	The view is large scale and very open. It is	This is an inspiring and memorable view. It is impressive
by the steep parallel ridges. Occasional outcrops of	homogenous other than the variety added by the	and refreshing. From this viewpoint the scene takes the
volcanic plugs are seen across the moss, and the	woodland clumps and the line of the river.	eye across the flat moss and right out to the open sea.
sinuous River Add winding its way across the moss is		There is considerable drama in the immediate
clearly seen.	Colour is essentially a combination of greens and	sheerness of Dun Add, the fanning out of space across
	browns. Shades vary from the lighter moss area to the	the flat moss and the encapsulation of the ring of parallel
Land cover is the grass moorland of Moine Mhór, with its	dark parallel ridges. The distance of the views and	ridges around the entire basin.
patches of heather and clumps of broadleaved trees.	height given by Dun Add smoothes out what would be a	
Areas of the moss rise to semi-improved pasture land.	more textured view when taken from the moss level	There is significant exhilaration as a result of the
The river meander is lined by riparian trees, and from	where detail could be better appreciated.	impression of height at the top of Dun Add and there is a
the height of Dun Add the path of the old river, prior to		feeling of dizziness as a result of the combination of this
an alteration in its course, can clearly be seen in the	The edge of the moss against the ridges, and the moss	height and the spacious 360 degree view.
change in vegetation.	surface is the dominating horizontal line, with the skyline	
	at the tops of the ridges and the meander of the river	The historic relevance of this place, being the site where
The majority of the view is of the National Nature	being secondary forms that attract the eye.	the Kings of Scotland were once crowned, is a powerful
Reserve of Moine Mhór, with additional land used in the		influence on the emotional response to the scene. It is
plantation woodland on the ridges and scattering of	Sounds are audible a considerable distance from their	inspiring and contemplating. The viewer cannot help
small farmsteads across the moss.	source because of the height of the viewpoint. The	but imagine this same view more than a thousand years
	experience is therefore influenced by a frequent traffic	past. For some it is likely to be spine tingling. For
Prominent features are the sinuous line of the river and	hum.	others it will be at least exhilarating.
the clumps of woodland across the otherwise flat		
expanse of the moss. The parallel ridges rise up	The sheer volcanic plug of Dun Add is an iconic	
around the basin sides of the moss and push into the	viewpoint from which the boundary of the northern	
skyline.	section of the NSA may well have been defined. Two	
	prominent peaks; Cnoc na h-Eilde and Creagan Braed	
	are important distant hills in the scene. The inclusion of	
	the 'Bridgend Bump' within the NSA is also explained	
	from this view, as its ridge backdrop completes the 360	
	degree view of the parallel ridge lined basin.	

<u>10. Knapdale NSA – Dun Add</u> View taken from the top and is a description of the view in all directions.

Objective	Visual	Emotional
The main land form within the view is long parallel ridges	The scale of the view is large with and open and	The scene evokes feelings of comfort, sa
in the far distance across the loch and parallel to the	exposed views out to the south as the loch expands out	and rest. Human influence in this area is
shore, which are rugged and undulating and slope	into the sea, and an increasingly sheltered view as the	a place to stay for a while and enjoy its p
gently down towards the sea. The flat sea loch with its	loch tapers inland to the north. There is also a more	is a place to relax and gently explore.
occasional low and flat islands widens out to the open	intimate scale along the loch road, which is much more	
sea and has a rocky shoreline with occasional sandy	enclosed by trees.	Whilst the landscape is complex it is still
beaches		although plantation woodland may detract
	The landscape is diverse with ridges contrasting with	beauty of the scene for some. The farm
Land cover consists of the rocky heather ridges with	pasture land, open water and shorelines. Colour is also	seen when looking inland is settling and I
broadleaved woodland on the steeper slopes and grass	varied, with muted reds, purple and greys in the bare	there is shelter in the woodland and scrul

fety, tranquillity

11. Knapdale NSA – Loch Caolisport coastline at the southern end of the NSA boundary

beaches.
Land cover consists of the rocky heather ridges with
broadleaved woodland on the steeper slopes and grass
moorland with heather and bracken on the lower slopes
and some enclosed pasture. Sandy shores inter
disperse the rocky shoreline of the sea loch.

pastoral agriculture with some small scale sailing and Primary land uses are conifer plantation, estate land, tourism around the loch. Cottages and some larger houses including a couple of and inlets along the loch shore. Settlement appears to traditional estate houses are located in sheltered bays be absent form the higher slopes.

bare rock and again with grazing land. Because of the angle of the view, the edges of parallel ridges are seen Immediate features are the woodland contrasting with incised, crenulated and compressed ridges and finally apparent at this viewpoint with lazy undulating ridges, strong dark green. The variety in the ridges is quite appearing a hazy blue whilst the nearer ridges are a in an interlocking sequence, with the more distant rocky wooded ridges.

predominates the foreground and the calls of the waders is a significant contribution to the scene, particularly The bolder and rocky shore with its shoreline birds given the absence of any other obvious noise.

12. Knapdale NSA – At the head of Loch Caolisport, close to Lochead House

<b>Ubjective</b> The land rises from the flat saltmarsh at the head of the loch, towards undulating and gently rising enclosed fields, which reach the foot of the steep sloping parallel ridges where the land suddenly rises into the wooded ridges. The ridges are dominated by broadleaved woodland, but with some coniferous woodland also being present. The pasture land below is rushy, with some fields clearly in recession. Enclosure is by way of hedgerows, which	VISUAL A small to medium scale view, which is sheltered, secluded and hidden where the woodland copses are more prevalent, creating locally intimate areas amongst the more open pastures. The scene is therefore varied in features, but is very much dominated by shades of green. The intertidal beach area acts as a sharp contrast in colour against a verdant wash across the landscape.	<b>Emotional</b> The area is safe, sheltered and harmonious. It is a relaxing and familiar landscape. The sense of settlement history is significant, along with the evidence of a social hierarchy with the estate houses and small cottages surrounding them. This more recent and more grandiose settlement history is in contrast to the more ancient duns, stone crosses and chapels experienced elsewhere in the NSA.
have been absent from all other viewpoints undertaken within the NSA. Hedgerow trees are dotted along the hedgelines and small copses are interconnected by riparian tree lines following streams heading towards the loch. Bramble tumbles out from the field edges along the road margins, indicative of a higher nutrient content in these solic. The lond dive down to a solumerch and	Strong lines are created by the hedges that cross at right angles the general lochward flow of lines within the landscape, by the tree lines following streams to the sea loch and by the line of the ridges against the sky. The road is sinuous to the landform.	The woodland billows around the valley, settled into the topography where it would be expected to be. The grazing cattle lazily moving around the rush pastures is a familiar, soft, traditional and warm scene that is 'green and pleasant.'
interest source rule range ups down to a sample and intertidal sandy beach, with stream lines cutting through the marsh and widening towards the loch.	The scene is influenced by agricultural sounds and smells, and background birdsong. There is a marked reduction in floristic diversity in comparison to other	The parallel ridges remain a critical feature, taking the view from being a typical and pleasant lowland Argyll scene to that of something very special.
The grassland around this area is clearly more enriched, but some areas appear to be in decline with increased rush cover, suggesting a reduction in grazing and rush management.	areas of the NSA.	
There is a continued feel of estate land, with the Elary Estate and its associated hamlet, and Lochead House and its associated cottages commanding views down Loch Caolisport. Further occasional cottages are found along the roadside. Lochead House is impressive with its dressed masonry and slate roof.		
The variety of broadleaved trees and their flow into the landscape, following meandering stream sides down towards the loch and wrapping around the parallel ridges, is a key feature within the view. The contrast between the steep ridges and the low pasture land is striking and the lines of hedges also make a distinctive contrast to the natural flow of the land form towards the loch. Despite the greater intensity of agriculture in the area, there is still a lack of modern infrastructure or modern farm buildings, thus retaining the attractiveness of the view.		

Objective	Visual	Emotional
On the western side of Loch Caolisport the road winds	The scale is medium to large and the view is very open	The view is influenced by the addition of a multitude of
hard against the edge of a steep parallel ridge. The	and panoramic looking over the loch, whilst being very	ridges where as many other views within the NSA are
main landform within this view is therefore the loch edge	enclosed and overpowering when viewing the close and	enclosed by a single ridge line.
and steep parallel ridges, with little transition between.	very steep slope of the parallel ridge behind this western	
Land cover is broadleaved woodland, which is clinging	shore of Loch Caolisport, where the road hugs into the	The view of the open sea is from a safe and reassuring
to the steep sides of the ridge, along with the loch itself	landform.	distance, but the feeling of coast and open sea is still a
and its shoreline. Occasional islands are dotted in the		significant influence. The view of the far parallel ridges
loch. The far shore has views of plantation woodland	The craggy area of woodland behind the road adds	falling into the sea as a 'drowned landscape' is dramatic.
on its ridges above and occasional modern bungalows	great local interest, with some floral diversity and the	The view of the sandy beaches on the far shore is
are nestled into the side of the ridge.	ferns and mosses that trail from the fallen rocks.	inviting.
Significant wildlife features are the mix between the	The jagged skyline to the opposite shore is created by	The immediate broadleaved woodland is lush and lifting,
woodland birds occupying the steep sloped woodland	the plantation woodland on the far ridges, and the	with its bright greens and colourful rocks. There is
and the sea birds of the loch. The colours of the rocks	golden beaches on the far shore stand out in contrast to	however an obvious human influence to the landscape,
within the woodland, the vegetation they support and the	the dark greens of the plantation. The ridges in the far	with estate management and the introduction of non-
frequent rock slippage adds local interest to the	distance are interlocking, creating significant lines in the	native species. Rhododendron is particularly prevalent.
woodland.	landscape, but the horizontal line of the loch surface	
	remains the most prominent line in the view.	There is a slight 'peninsular' feeling, but the estate and
This side of the loch does not offer any space between		ancillary houses and tinkering with the landscape with
the loch edge and the parallel ridge, with the road	The sound of sea birds in the distance, woodland birds	non-native trees and shrubs prevents any real feelings
clinging to the bottom of the steep rock side of the ridge.	in the woodland behind and the gentle appreciation of	of isolation, remoteness and exhilaration.
This is in contrast to the far shore, which has numerous	the scene.	
beaches and gradually rises to the ridge some distance		
away from the shore.		

13. Knapdale NSA – Mid point on Loch Caolisport, adjacent to rockfall woodland

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Objective	Visual	Emotional
The scene is located within a narrow trench, which is	The scale of the scene is small and enclosed. The	The scene is hidden, intimate, tranquil and restful. It
filled by a small freshwater loch, giving the trench a flat	ridges can be intimidating, but the loch edges are very	feels like a secret place, and is rewarding to the eye
base. The scene is immediately surrounded and	intimate. The wider view of the plantation covered	after the walk through the monotonous plantation. The
enclosed by the closest parallel ridge on each side.	ridges is homogenous, but there is a diversity of features	fragrance of the pines and loch-side vegetation, and the
The topography of the ridges is obscured by the dense	at the local loch level, particularly in the loch edge flora.	quiet lapping of the loch water awakens other senses to
plantation woodland. At the loch edge is a variety of	Colour is also contrasted between the dark monochrome	appreciate the scene.
aquatic, emergent and bankside vegetation. White	of the plantation and the interest of the loch, with its	
water lily floats on the loch water, which is fringed by	smooth surface and floating and emergent vegetation.	The scene is very green and varied. The naturalness of
common reed. Locally rocky shores support heather,	The density of the plantation removes any subtle lines in	the loch contrasts with the 'man-made' feeling of the
bog myrtle and bilberry, amongst hazel and birch	the landform, and the wavy edge to the loch becomes	plantation above, which serves to heighten the viewer's
saplings. Away from the rocks soft cushions of	the predominant line in the scene. The pronounced	awareness and appreciation of the loch area.
waterlogged Sphagnum mosses are found	horizontal line of a loch surface seen within the NSA on	
	larger, more open lochs is blurred on this small lochan	There is a feeling of wanting to stay by the loch and hide
The area is in the heart of the Forestry Commission	by its emergent vegetation, which gives a very different	rather than venture back into the conifer desert. The
plantations, and informal recreational use is encouraged.	feel to this small, soft and intimate lochan.	plantation area is austere, dense, dark and silent. It is
Any evidence of historic settlement is obscured by the		disorientating and intimidating. In contrast the loch area
thick plantation, or is absent. The plantations create a	The lack of sound is of considerable influence to the	is a hidden oasis. It feels like a children's landscape
prickly skyline, which dominates the view when not	scene, with the areas away from the immediate loch	and is an adventure somewhat akin to an overgrown
engaged in the local detail of the intimacy of the loch	being dead calm and silent. Viewing from the loch edge	garden. The loch is reminiscent of a wonderful garden
and its flora. Occasional woodland birdsong is the only	adds some wildlife sounds and small movements in the	wildlife pond, and the view is constantly drawn in to
background sound.	loch surface.	appreciate the smaller scale.
	The immediate contrasts are between the silent density	
	of the plantations and the movement and interest close	
	to the loch edge, particularly the contribution of the	
	flowering plants in the water and amongst the rocks.	



### Knapdale National Scenic Area Cultural, Historical and Natural History Background Information

The name 'Knapdale' is thought to originate from the Gaelic words 'Cnap', meaning hill and 'Dall' meaning field, which describes the ridge and trench topography of the area, with many of the trenches between the steep ridges providing small pockets of pasture. Knapdale is rich in natural history and cultural heritage, both of which make a significant contribution to the landscape and what makes this National Scenic Area so very special.

### Moine Mhor

Moine Mhor, locally known as the moss, is Gaelic for 'Great Moss' and is a relic landscape that has been forming and evolving for the last 5000 years, with the gradual build up of vegetation developing into peat. The acidic nature of the bog ensures that bacteria normally responsible for the deterioration of dead plant matter are largely absent, thus causing a build up of waterlogged material which eventually becomes peat. The accrual of peat continues and from its current depth of about 4m the bog is rising at a rate of approximately 1mm per year. The uniqueness of the moss is its coastal influence. Being next to the sea the moss grades from the intertidal to shoreline and then saltmarsh before the raised bog. The transition between saltmarsh and bog is botanically of great interest, as the habitat grades from sea water fed marsh to freshwater fed bog.

Being one of the last remaining raised peat bogs in the United Kingdom, Moine Mhor was designated as a National Nature Reserve in 1987 and is managed by Scottish Natural Heritage. The waterlogged bog was once much more extensive but a significant amount of land has been improved and drained for agriculture and in the recent past, for grouse shooting. The remaining reserve is still very expansive and wildlife rich, supporting numerous species of dragonfly and butterfly and an array of plants including the insectivorous sundews. At least nine species of *Sphagnum* are recorded at the site, along with many other species of moss, all contributing to the raised bog system. Bird life includes hen harriers and curlews, along with a number of small songbirds such as whinchats and stonechats, warblers and pipits. Otters are also reported on the River Add, which winds its way through the moss.

### Atlantic Oakwoods

Atlantic oakwood is a woodland type that is restricted to the Atlantic fringes of Europe because of its requirement for a damp humid climate with high rainfall. The Atlantic coast of Britain, Ireland, Spain and France have the largest stronghold of this habitat, which is a rare and important habitat listed within the European Habitats Directive. Consequently, much of the larger tracts of Atlantic oak woodland is designated as a European Special Area of Conservation (SAC). With 35 UK Biodiversity Action Plan Species also found in the Atlantic oakwoods this habitat type is of considerable nature conservation value nationally as well as within the wider European Union, and much of the oak woodland outside the SAC boundary is nationally protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) . The parallel ridges of Knapdale are clothed in Atlantic oak woodland wherever plantations are absent. The oak woodland was cleared to make way for commercial forestry and grazing land. Since the national and international importance of the oak woods for nature conservation has been recognised, this clearance now no longer occurs and the remaining native woodland is now appropriately managed and enhanced alongside the commercial stock.

### Crinan Canal

The canal was built to link the western coast and its associated islands with the Clyde Estuary, to remove the long journey, either by road or by sea, around the Kintyre Peninsula. Prior to railway travel the route through the Crinan Canal was the fastest mode of travel in the area. The early years of the canal were problematic, with completion behind schedule and over budget, locks not functioning properly and reservoirs collapsing. Sir John Rennie was originally responsible for the canal construction, but the problematic start led to Thomas Telford being brought in to rectify the initial problems, which led to some redesigning and reconstruction and further deepening of the canal in parts. Thomas Telford was also responsible for the greatest engineers of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, working across the British Isles on many major engineering works, and it was his reputation as an engineering expert that led to the request for him to come and rectify the malfunctioning Crinan Canal in the early 1800s.

The canal is now a honey-pot area for boating tourism, with fishing, walking and cycling along the tow path. A number of B and B's, tea shops and a small hotel have developed as a result of the tourism interest in this area. The Vital Spark is one of the most striking old boats moored at Crinan, which was used in the filming of the BBC dramatisation of the novel Para Handy by Neil Munro, who was a local novelist.

### Dun Add and other historic associations

This rocky outcrop emerges from the flat Moine Mhor to a height of 175 metres. This small hill offers impressive views across the entire Moine Mhor area, and appears deceptively high against its flat surroundings. Dun Add is historically one of the most important sites in Scotland. It is thought that the Scots originated from Ireland, and that they reached Argyll from Ireland at around 500AD. It is from this settlement that the Kingdom of Dalriada is believe to have evolved. Dun Add was the place where the Kings of Dalriada were crowned. At the top of the outcrop is a carved footprint where it is thought that the kings would have placed their foot to receive their anointment. The most famous and last King of Dalriada, Kenneth MacAlpin, would also have been crowned on Dun Add around 800 AD' He then went on to be Kenneth I, the first King of a unified Scotland after merging the Dalriada crown with that of the Picts. Considerable archaeological work has been undertaken on and around Dun Add, revealing in some detail the likely construction of the fortifications around the hill. The site is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument and is cared for by Historic Scotland.

Celtic crosses, tiny chapels, including one within a cave, duns and standing stones are a constant reminder of times past throughout the Knapdale area. Kilmory Chapel on the edge of Loch Sween, is thought to be where the Knights Templar, as described by the book 'The Temple and the Lodge' lived, worshiped and died. Gravestones at the chapel may be those marking the graves of some Knights Templar. At the top of Loch Calisport is Saint Columba's Cave. Saint Columba is thought to have used this cave as a safe sanctuary on his crusade from Ireland in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century.

### The Dalriada Project

*'Working for a sustainable future by reviving the spirit of the past'* is the vision for this project. With a partnership list that includes local councils, Forest Enterprise, Scottish Natural Heritage, nature conservation charities and the Tourist Board, along with local groups and businesses, this project is very important to the local area. The project has been set up to

protect and enhance the Dalriada area in terms of its landscape and archaeological, cultural and natural heritage, whilst promoting sustainable tourism and access for all to these precious assets. The project runs an annual festival, encouraging visitors into the area. The festival includes demonstrations about how people would have lived in Dalriada in the fortified Duns, and how they would have worked with the landscape to live, clothe and feed themselves.

Linked to and supported by the Dalriada Project was a proposal to reintroduce the European Beaver into the Knapdale area. The Knapdale forests and lochs represent ideal habitat for this species, which has been absent from Scotland for over 400 years. Despite local support, and considerable progress made by Scottish Natural Heritage and Forest Enterprise, the project was not approved and has therefore not been pursued any further.

The Dariada Project is also focusing on the rich archaeological heritage of the area, protecting and ensuring sustainable access to the many standing stones, Bronze Age cupand-ring engravings, burial cairns and fortified Duns. The project is keen to provide imaginative interpretation for these ancient treasures, to ensure that visitors fully appreciate their relevance and contribution to the Knapdale area.
### **APPENDIX 4**

### FIELDWORK OUTPUTS THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

<u>Venue</u>	
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Summit o	
Viewscape:	
NSA –	
Trossachs	
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Objective Analysis	Visual Experience	Personal Responses
Modest Mountain Summit or High Hill summit in central western point of the NSA.	A massive panoramic vista from which delineation of only the NSA is artificial to the appreciation of its qualities.	The vistas from Ben Venue offer an inspiring and exciting glimpse of the grandeur and wildness of true upland Scotland. It draws the eve out of and away from the NSA itself, although
Relatively pronounced 'peak' to Ben Venue, consisting of the most prominent element of the	Scale vast, a sense of exposure pervades from the viewpoint, although this is soon alleviated a short distance from the summit itself.	the detail and intricacy of the landscape closer to hand is nevertheless highly attractive.
upper sections gradually lose gradient with decent in height.	Vistas take in a very complex as well as massive interplay of land-cover, terrain and water elements. Open summits and dense plantation juxtapose with open water lochs and broad-leaved coniferous woodland.	This view point is the site of a clear stepping stone from the familiar and safe pasture and settlement of the central Scotland belt, into the wild and rugged interior.
Terrain of the immediate viewpoint is of steep grassy slopes punctuated regularly by rocky outcrop and exposed strata, well worn footpaths and erosion in environs of Trig Point/Cairn.	Colours in the landscape are generally muted, although the influence of overcast weather conditions may be in part responsible at time of survey. There is however contrast in tone, with the loch surfaces and conferous	Elements of the northerly and westerly vistas are at first surprising and then exciting and challenging. The offer of real adventure is close at hand.
Craggy environment of immediate viewpoint changes dramatically across the viewshed into the heart of the NSA. Grass and rocky summit, through mixed bears and orges modeland	prantations presenting dark solid masses, whiles the open moot and and broad- leaved woodland offer a more textured appearance. Patches of rocky outcrop and the more distant views of mountain suggest a rugged appearance to the landscape.	The views offer great contrast between the intimacy of the Trossachs NSA itself and the wildness beyond. Together these elements make for a truly classic view.
of peat bog/moss on flatter sections and an abrupt transition to dense coniferous plantation. Within the plantation towards the environs of Loch	Vastness of the sky and extensive tracts of open water provide a degree of movement in the landscape, again heavily dependent on prevailing weather conditions.	But the reward of the views comes only after real effort, and the climb to the summit is considerable if not truly challenging or adventurous. Nevertheless, the first opening out of north and wasterly visites is at once summising acquing and truly read
notice that and the second many and the plantations lower, less steep slopes. Beyond the plantations merge with the deciduous woodlands of the Loch basins.	The viewpoint offers a very quiet environment although the wind in the grasses and rocks introduces a very natural sound element. On ascent and descent, noise from mountain streams and cascades is constant outside the plantations which flatten most sound excent birdsono.	The effort required serves to amplify the reward on completion. Ben Venue flatters to deceive, with its distinctive alpine profile (from the east) suggesting greater height and challenge than it really oresents.
Elements of the viewshed are vast and extend across the wider NSA, its framing to the west by the Ben Ledi massif, across Loch Achray and Loch Venachar, over Duke's Drive Plantations to Menteith Hills and beyond. Viewpoint affords extensive vistas across Loch Katrine and its islands and wooded inlets, to significantly higher and extensive mountains of the National Park and	Whilst the panorama offered at the viewpoint is of a full 360 <sup>°</sup> , the eye is drawn not exclusively to the immediate NSA , but to the north and west, into the heart of highland Scotland. Conversely, vistas on the ascent to the viewpoint are often closed in or constrained by plantation or relief of landform. A major experience of the ascent of Ben Venue from loch Achray is the opening out of the sudden vista at ridge between the Achray and Katrine basins.	From the summit of Ben Venue the NSA itself is pleasing to behold, complex in pattern and texture, water and land, but represents a small element of all on view. It is however a distinct step change between what has been before and what lies ahead – A gateway to the highlands, and at the same time a safe, manageable sample of what lies before a more determined traveller.
beyond. Horizons are generally distant. Burns and lively mountain streams punctuate the hillsides before being lost in plantation woods.	The views afford a clear appreciation of the transitional landscape of the Menteith Hills and Trossachs from the pastoral lowlands north of Sterling through the Calander area through the changing relief and waterscape of the NSA to the highlands of LLTNP.	The islands and densely wooded inlets of eastern Loch Katrine offer both interest and softness to the wilder aspect of the western parts of the NSA, with hidden corners suggesting secret places and shelter from the highland elements.
	The vista into the NSA from Ben Venue presents a very complex patchwork of open moorland and rocky outcrop, woodland and waterscape. Here there are complex mosaic combinations of broadleaf woodlands (in mid spring), coniferous blocks of plantation and scared areas of recently felled plantation.	

The Trossachs NSA – Viewscape: Black Water Marsh

Objective Analysis	Visual Experience	Personal Responses
The predominant feature within the Black Water Marsh area is	The marshland offers an open relief from the rather enclosed	A refreshing feeling of openness after the enclosed plantation is
the immediate expanse of flat marshland. This central low lying	plantation woodland that surrounds it. To travel from a dark and	immediately felt when the marsh land opens up. It is a real
flat marsh is framed by encroaching plantation woodland on	confined coniferous plantation into the open and large scale of	escape from the forest.
higher ground to each side. Occasional self set birch dots the	the marshland is a complete contrast.	
toreground.		The isolation of the marshland, and its contrast to its plantation
	The view is simpler than most in the NSA, with a subtle blend of	surroundings make it feel like a secret valley, tranquil and
The tussocky grassland, rush and sphagnum marsh continues	green and reds, with the latter as a result of older rush	undiscovered, despite its obvious use as grazing land.
for some distance, and is eventually met by distant hills. Being	vegetation and variation in the sphagnum colouration.	
at such a distance, their colours are of murky purple hues and		The waterlogged nature of the marsh prevents any venture
are frequently clouded over.	Contrast is also evident between the long view of the flat	forward, but it is appreciated from its edge.
	foreground and the stark change to higher peaks in the very far	
This marshland has an isolated farmstead and open grazing. It	distance.	The view is quite different from others in the area and its isolated
is considerably flatter than the majority of the Trossachs NSA.		farmstead and traditional grazing management of the marsh
	Weather is a significant influence, with the marshland looking	gives a 'time stood still' feeling. Agricultural influences are very
	bleak and murky in bad weather, yet remaining calm and still.	few in the Trossachs NSA, and the traditional and extremely low
	In fine weather it is imagined that the greens and reds will be an	key presence here does not detract from the overall feeling of
	attractive feature, and that bird and insect life will be prevalent,	naturalness in the wider area, yet it is in keeping that this unit is
	thus adding movement and interest.	on the edge of the eastern NSA boundary, beyond which grazing
		land is commonplace.
		The key qualities of this view are its secrecy, tranquility and
		surprising difference from the majority of the NSA, yet the distant
		peaks remind the viewer of the presence of the more typical
		landscape.

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Objective Analysis	Visual Experience	Personal Response
A view of Loch, woodland and low mountain, high hills.	Clear layered split of the viewshed. – Water, plantation, fell, to sky. A simple banding, but with irregular boundaries / transition	A dramatic vista after the enclosure of the woodlands and the bottleneck of the valley entrance following a steep climb from the
A long, softly convex ridgeline delineates a solid, regular aspect hillside against the sky.	from woodland to open fell.	hamlet of Brig' O' Turk.
-	A medium to large scale landscape, with extensive views north,	This opening out in relatively sudden and dramatic way, and its
Land cover is a blend of forestry (on the lower and mid slopes),	but out-with the NSA. The middle distance solid horizon	Isolation from the concentration of lochs, roads and settlement in
consisting of coniterous plantation, pockets of deciduous	presents a very solid and abrupt block on more distant views.	the Lochs Venechar/Katrine corridor attords the gien a sense of
woodiand, particularly by the loch shore, with grass and rocky outcrops punctuating otherwise regular angle of slope to distinct	The waterscape of the foreground offers an openness to an	secrecy and peacerumess.
horizon.	otherwise enclosed aspect. The composition of the view simple (banded).	The heavy broad-leaved, ancient woodland above the valley entrance seems to <i>quard</i> the secret alen.
Bold open horizon to north west, becoming encroached by tree		
cover to the slightly lower south- western extent of viewshed.	Texture is contrasting between the loch surface - ever changing,	The opening out of the vista draws the eye along the linear
	the coniferous and deciduous woodland and open fell and rock.	reservoir and waterscape to the open and dramatic fell of Meall
Upper extent of woodland very irregular and 'naturalised'. Small	The uniform, dark green of the dominant plantation woodland	Cala.
islands of grassland punctuate the lower mass of treescape.	contrasts with the softer and fresher greens of the broad-leaved	
	trees and the more muted greens and browns of the open	The viewscape offers drama and strength without being
Upper slopes predominantly grassland with mossy tracts around	grassland.	spectacular or overbearing. It suggests wilder things above and
rocky outcrops and small pockets of scree.	-	beyond, but affords no tempting glimpse. The mass of Meall
	Clear lines in landscape are evident at the waters edge and at	Gainmheich /Ben Anna plateau stands as a buttress against
Small wooded island in the reservoir almost impossible to read against the back-drop of wooded slope.	the skyline.	what greater things might lie beyond.
	The Glen did have a peaceful atmosphere, but the noise of	The viewscape offers therefore a real contrast between the
	watercourses and birdsong avoided silence or stillness.	intimacy of the shoreline woods and the openness and exposure of the fall ton and plateau above all within a relative compact
	The wider unit as a whole, inclusive of the western fellside and	spatial unit.
	open rock and grass/heather summit was large in scale, rounded	_
	in form but with areas of broken surface and rocky exposure,	Colour and texture, particularly of the newly emerging broadleaf
	witriout (generality) peirig precipitous. Lower and middie terisides displaved a general uniformity in slope andle	rollage standing in contriorung contrast to the slight mint of menace offered by the rocky exposure of the neighbouring upper
		slopes.
		The over-riding character of the glen is one of separation (but
		not isolation) and peacefulness.

Achray
Loch
/iewscape:
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Objective Analysis	Visual Experience	Personal Responses
Views taken from various viewing points around Loch Achray.	The loch remains the dominant feature form all viewpoints, and the eve is alwavs drawn back to it. The loch basin sides	The loch basin is idylitc and relaxing. Changes in light and weather are amplified by the loch, but the scene continues to
The loch itself remains the central theme. Immediate visual boundaries remain tight around the loch basin, which is densely vecetated with broadleaved woodland on the lower slopes.	progress in horizontal stripes of broadleaved woodland, mixed woodland and then coniferous woodland at the higher slopes, all generally at the small to medium scale. This is then contrasted	remain soft and unimposing. The scene is warmed by the vivid range of green shades.
gradually grading out to coniferous plantations above. The coniferous plantation above. The coniferous plantation forms the horizon line in the majority of views, thus creating a saw0toothed edge to the horizon.	with the distant bare mountains when the generally constrained views enable a more distant glimpse of far away mountains. With generally more immediate views dominating the scene, the	The wet woodlands are a cool and intimate experience where a feeling of tranquility and closeness to nature is appreciated. The woodland is full of birdsong and life, yet the more open loch
Loch shores give way to wet woodland of willow and alder, lush with moss and dense rushes, which grades into the broadleaved worddhand if the house closes which is dominated by birch but	occasional distant nill or mountain is not imposing and their size is never fully appreciated, however views of the distant hills do improve if a view is taken from a little further up the loch basin.	pasin is devoid of any opvious wildlife other than circling guils. Pasture land is limited to a couple of locations only and consequently agricultural ties to the landscape are lacking.
woodand if the lower success, which is accessible around has significant oak and ash. The loch is accessible around much of its edge.	Ben Venue is in the middle distance when views are taken to the west, which is a refreshing contrast to the rich green loch slopes. Only when assessing the scene in this direction is the eye drawn	Loch Achray is soft, calm, welcoming and very accessible. Its unimposing and relaxed beauty makes it an inviting place where hours can be idled away.
Occasional long distance views are caught in some locations, revealing very distant mountains. A minority of views around the loch reveal the odd glimpse of the Menteith Hills in the south east.	with interest to a greater distance. Bare rocks splashed with bilberry lead you through the scene to the distant summit. The landscape still remains comfortable and Ben Venue does not impose but offers an unthreatening challenge.	Tigh-Mor looks like a fairytale castle and adds some enchantment and intrigue, along with the historical Trossachs church.
Ben Venue is located to the west, and when in view becomes a prominent feature with its typical upland form and vegetation including bare rock, heather, bilberry and scattered trees.	There is a diversity of colour and texture in the loch basin, all associated with the variety of woodland in a range of green hues. The loch basin appears horizontally layered as a result.	Mirror reflections of the wooded slopes on the loch surface add further harmony to what is a simply beautiful scene. The lack of drama in the viewscape does not reduce its special value. In
Recent clear-felling of coniferous trees has left stark treeless patches with disturbed ground.	The loch itself varies significantly in varying weather, being incredibly reflective of the scene above it in calm, but loosing all	contrast, its initimacy, symmetry, cammess, safety of a peaceful central loch lifted by vibrant coloured but gentle slopes makes Loch Achray a place of relaxed and simplistic beauty.
Tigh-Mor is a distinctive building with a formal lawned frontage, conical towers and grey stone walls. A further hotel is situated on the south west shore and a small house is tucked into the providence of the boots.	such minor mages in mere is a signific change towards more unsettled weather. Circling gulls over the loch break the otherwise quietness, with the background hum of an occasional vehicle.	
tower stopes of the loch basin. The instortc trossactios church blends well into the loch side and is generally only visible from the southern shore.	Achray Water is in notable contrast to the usually calm loch, with its bubbling riffles and wide shallow meander attracting more wildlife.	
Japanese knotweed is present along the Pass of Trossachs road on the northern shore of the loch, which significantly detracts from the woodland, but is currently localised.	Woodland birdsong and bluebell carpets take you back into the broad-leaved woodland areas, which are much more intimate and secluded, with dappled light amongst the variety of green shades and mose mounds.	

<u>Drunkie</u>	
Loch	
Viewscape:	
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Objective Analysis	Visual Experience	Personal Responses
Loch Drunkie is central to the scene in its location within the view, but does not in any way dominate it. The loch is highly reflective and glass like, providing dark and rich colours.	One of the key features of this viewshed is the interlocking and layered jigsaw of slopes from the foreground right back to the distant hills, all of which proceed down to the central loch.	The landscape shapes and form are in complete harmony, with the loch being perfectly framed by a complexity of slopes and considerable colour.
Streams are evident flowing down the hillsides towards the loch, and fen areas are present in the low-lying flats that merge into the loch edge.	This layering, along with subtle linear features such as tumbledown stone walls, offers the eye a route through the landscane from the forearchind of round reassland and fen and	The scene is truly balanced by the loch reflection of the landscape above. The view feels calm, perfect, peaceful, gentle and intimate whilst also being exciting and inviting.
An interlocking network of hills slope from each side of the scene, covered by three main vegetation types: plantation woodland, open tussocky grassland and young woodland partheores of hirch with occasional rowan	Increased by the intermediate varied patchwork of slopes, and then on towards the distant bare fells. The loch itself appears to meander through the landscane	Human influence on the landscape, in terms of the loch being a reservoir, and the hints of previous land uses with walls, fencing and a tumbledown hut, does not detract from the attractiveness of the view or fores it immediately influence the viewer's feating
The plantation woodland comes right to the loch edge in some places and there is a greater variety of species present here than in other areas within the NSA, including sitka spruce, Norway spruce and larch, which gives a wider diversity of colour amongst the plantation blocks.	The foch tisell appears to mean our moust the randocade provides a vanishing point, almost river-like in form, and further provides a route into the scene. Loch Drunkie is calm, smooth and highly reflective, with a mirror image of the landscape clearly seen, which adds emphasis to the vanishing point with the strong angles of the slopes being represented symmetrically in the water.	of nature. The meandering loch and routes out of view, travelling behind the layers of slopes, draws the viewer forward with some intrigue and mystery and the glass like reflection hides what may be beneath the loch surface.
Open tussocky grassland includes areas of bracken and also heather. Young self set birch are dotted across these more open areas, which in time will become more enclosed as the woodland develops.	The variety and intensity of colour makes an important contribution, with the bracken litter being a distinctive orange, the variety of coniferous species offering a range of dark greens and the young birch saplings adding a bright green freshness. These colours are vividly reflected in the loch surface.	The variety of colour adds much of the interest and the sky is influential both as a feature to which the scene allows the eye to be drawn on its journey, and also in its role of changing light, which offers dramatic colour changes and further interest. Colours are complementary and blend perfectly.
Young birch woodland is emerging around the area. It is felt that the scene will develop as these trees mature. Distant hills are in the long view, and are draped in cloud.	The complexity of colour, lines and texture is warm and encouraging, and this combined with the visual journey into the landscape, which beckons the viewer further and tempts	The calmness of the scene is an important feature, and it evokes a feeling of complete detachment from a busy world. A serene oasis. Captivating and contemplating. A special place.
with post and wire fencing and a small ruined hut hint at past land uses.	responsion beyond that which is currently seen. There is a real feeling of intrigue about where the landscape will lead. The eve is lead around and through the entire view by its	Sound is important in its contribution to the feelings of serenity, especially the sound of birdsong and running water.
The sky contributes to the overall scene, adding further colour, patterns and light, and it too is reflected in the loch water.	composition; from the foreground right towards the far distance, and importantly the eye is also brought back into the nearer ground, and around its complexity of features. Not all features	There is a feeling of the fullness of life, with wildlife being evident and adding movement. Jays dart into the plantations to feed, and a lone fly fisherman pulls the occasional fish from the water.
It is imagined that there would be great diversity in the scene between seasons, particularly with regard to changing colours.	are seen on the first glimpse, and as the eye travels around, new features are seen. In this sense it is felt that the view conforms to all the basic rules of a landscape painting.	The odd walker or car travelling tourist disappears into the distance around a bend. Changes in light can rapidly alter the range of colours on the hills. Yet despite this movement time feels as if it is standing still.
		The essence of the scene at Loch Drunkie is its picture perfect composition of a meandering loch framed by a patchwork of slopes, it's welcoming intrigue, its colour and reflections, harmony and meditative qualities.

The Trossachs NSA – Viewscape: Loch Katrine

Obioctive Analycie	Visual Everience	Dereonal Deeneneee
ODJECTIVE ATTRIJAIS	Visuai Experience	
The Loch is a dominating feature of the scene, closely followed by the peaks of the loch's western backdrop. Its' large expanse	Th loch's expanse gives is a real prominence in the scene, and its choppy moving waters and lapping wayes generate a feeling	The landscape feels more dramatic than that experienced at the smaller lochs, and contrasts are more pronounced. There are
and continuation considerably out of the NSA boundary means	of being next to the sea. The loch surface gives a strong	the beginnings of feelings of expanse and wilderness, with the
that views from around the shore only take in small parts of the loch.	norizontal line in the landscape.	rugged peaks, large moving water-body and openness of the view. Recollections of being by the coast are triggered by the
	Loch Katrine is in contrast to the other two lochs within the NSA;	expanse of water, movement and rocky shores.
Views from the southern end of the loch close to the pier include	the smaller Loch Achray and Loch Drunkle, in that it's greater	Cound is an immortant footure of this vioushed with waves
a number of small wooded islands, winch obscure a folig distance view. Views taken from the eastern shore are much	alse allows for more moverment. This displaces the focus more diass like reflections to a greater influence of movement.	build is an important reactie of this viewsheu, with waves hitting shores and rocks being a constant reassurance, or
more panoramic, with the western shore in the immediate	panoramic expanse and contrasts between mountain and water,	conversely adding to an awareness of exposure. The wind is
distance but with much longer views to each side, panning up	rather than bringing the two together in reflections.	also noticeable, sometimes giving a slight unnerving feel.
ure reriguit of the water-body, antibugh the ends of the rout are etill not visible	The view of the mountainous area to the west includes the	The strong angles cloud tinned neaks and dramatic changes in
	Durple brown pink and reds of the upland vegetation, which	colour as the clouds roll away is inspiring and refreshing a small
The view over to the west is mountainous, with bare rock,	rapidly change as they are caught by the sun or shaded by	taste of upland Scotland whilst being viewed from the warmth
bracken and heather. Immediate hills are backed by hints of a	cloud. Transitions between the vegetation are subtle and	and safety of a more intimate and welcoming landscape.
greater expanse of mountains in the far distance, and Ben	natural in form. These areas appear unmanaged, and the	
Venue is visible. A very small amount of plantation and broad-	pockets of plantation are a minor feature against the loch and	The haven of the sheltered bays, small islands and lush and
leaved woodland is apparent on the lower slopes.	mountain.	enchanting woodland is easily accessed from the honey-pot pier
	-	area. The track quickly takes you into a woodland that is
Promontories of short rabbit grazed grassland occasionally	In contrast the wooded western shore is lush and soft, with the	intimate and magical. The splashes of colour from delicate
project from the shore, with rocky outcrops and heather fringes.	eye being drawn to the detail rather than the whole expanse.	woodland flowers, texture and intricacies of tern and moss
I nese are easily accessible and make excellent viewpoints.	Woodland flowers and tiny waterfalls are noticed and appreciated.	tringed streams and waterrails draws the viewer to an appreciation of the small scale detail.
The eastern shore is heavily wooded, predominantly birch and		
oak, with willows increasing close to the loch edge. Typical	The view back to within the NSA, towards the southern point of	It is the contrasts seen within the views that is an important
woodland ground flora and considerable bryophyte carpets are	Loch Katrine is a distinct contrast to that taken towards the north	feature as well as the landscape itself. The contrast between
present. Both fallen deadwood and live trees are covered in	west, where the loch unfolds but and end point is not reached	the dramatic peaks and intimate woodlands, the strong visual
lichen.	before the horizon. The southern view is dotted with wooded	divide between the peaks and the loch in terms of colour, shape
	isles and the rolling slopes are heavily laden with shades of	and form, and the contrast between the more immediate view
I he pier area provides tourist facilities.	woodland green.	into the NSA towards the bright green wooded slopes and dotted isles of the southern shore and the distance and the expanse of
	The pier is a honeypot location, providing tourist facilities and	the view out of the NSA towards the north west as the loch
	interpretation material. This makes one aware of the holiday	opens out, are key qualities of the Loch Katrine area.
	emphasis on the location, and although this detracts slightly from	
	the surrounding natural beauty it is confined in area and is likely	
	to be welcomed by those visiting.	



### The Trossachs NSA

### Notes on historical / cultural associations and other background information

- 'The Trossachs' comes from the Gaelic 'bristled country', referring to its vegetation.
- The original boundary of the area known as The Trossachs extended from Ben A'an in the north, Ben Venue in the south, Loch Katrine to the west and Loch Achray to the east. The NSA boundary extends this area further southeast to include much of Queen Elizabeth Forest Park and the ridge of the Menteith Hills. Today the area widely known as The Trossachs extends still further beyond the NSA boundary.
- Historical and cultural interest adds to the natural beauty, rural scenery and wildlife, animating and offering a romantic introduction to The Trossachs for many of today's visitors.
- Countless writers, poets and artists have been drawn to its loch shores, including William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Samuel Coleridge, James Hogg and John Ruskin. But it was the publishing of Sir Walter Scott's romantic poem 'Lady of the Lake' in 1810 and 'Rob Roy' in 1817 that the scenic charms of the area came to popularity and established The Trossachs as a major tourist attraction.
- In his poem 'Lady of the Lake', which refers to Loch Katrine, Scott wrote:

So wondrous wild, the whole might seem The scenery of a fairy dream.

And specifically about Loch Katrine he wrote:

Where, gleaming with the setting sun, One burnished sheet of living gold, Loch Katrine lay beneath him roll'd In all her length far winding lay, With promontory, creek and bay, And islands that, empurpled bright, Floated amid a livelier light, And mountains, that like giants stand, To sentinel enchanted land.

- In his novel 'Rob Roy', Scott wrote of the tales of Rob Roy MacGregor and the 'children of the mist', referring to his followers the Clan MacGregor who lived amidst the wild hills. Rob Roy was born in Glen Gyle at the western end of Loch Katrine and is buried near by. The famous Duke's Pass is named after Rob Roy's arch rival, the Duke of Montrose.
- Bordering the NSA to the north, Glen Finglas was possibly one of the most popular of the royal hunting forests, with many Kings and Scottish Earls hunting there between the early 1300's to the 1700's. Many veteran trees still remain.
- Queen Victoria visited the area on many occasions, and loved it so much she had a holiday house built overlooking Loch Katrine. She is known to have stayed in what is now the Tigh Mor Trossachs hotel, a private, high quality hotel for members of the Holiday Property Bond, with its distinctive turrets and splendid location overlooking Loch Achray.
- The very routes once followed by Rob Roy's cattle drovers and the horse-drawn carriages of 19<sup>th</sup> Century tourists, have become the main arteries, which now carry modern traffic over Duke's Pass. The Trossachs Trail is a signposted car tour that takes drivers north from

Aberfoyle and over the Dukes Pass to take in the spectacular views of an area commonly regarded as 'the highlands in miniature'.

• Since Sir Walter Scott's time, Loch Katrine has changed as a result of it being dammed in 1859 at its eastern end to provide a clean water supply to Glasgow. The loch's popularity now owes much to the presence of the last steam driven passenger vessel operating in the UK, fittingly named the Steam Ship SS Sir Walter Scot, that sails up and down Loch Katrine.

### **APPENDIX 5**

### FIELDWORK OUTPUTS UPPER TWEEDDALE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

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Objective	Visual	Emotional
The dominant landform is the rolling mountains with interlocking ridges with occasional peaks creating long sweeping skylines. Below is the shallow v-shaped,	There is a strong contrast with the wooded valleys and geometric patterns of the agricultural fields and shelterbelts with the open, wild moorland hills.	The experience from the viewpoint is exhilarating and a place to enjoy spectacular panoramic views which include two thirds of the NSA. It provides a real "top of
wooded valley of the River Tweed with sweeping, even slopes and some occasional concave slopes. The river itself however is generally inconspicuous.	The landscape scale is large on the hills with expansive 360° views and is open and exposed. However the scale within the valley is small and more intimate. There is	the world" feeling, looking down on a smaller landscape. Upper Tweeddale appears as a model farm landscape – a tranquil, settled and peaceful valley. It appears
Land use comprises grass and heather moorland with frequent plantations and scree on the mountainsides. There is a regular geometric field pattern with occasional steadings and cottages invariably with tree clumps.	great diversity within the landscape with the complex landscape in the valley and the simple rolling openness of the surrounding hills.	welcoming, inviting, sheltered and calm. The hilltops beckon to viewpoints contrasting with the intimacy of the valley. The encircling non-threatening hills are inviting and protective of the valley. Trees make the landscape
The main features of the view are the strong linear pattern of shelterbelts and stone dykes. Meldon Burn is narrow and sinuous in a steep sided moorland valley. Sweeping, rolling hills and skyline, which continues into	The colour of the view is predominately green with the light green patchwork of the fields stitched with the dark green of shelterbelts in the valley and linking to the browns and greens of the moorland.	more inviting and give it additional interest and variety.
the distance.	The strongest visual lines are the geometric field patterns formed by the stone dykes and the line of the Meldon Burn.	
	The general impression is still and quiet though there the hilltops are exposed and windy. There is the noise of sheep and other animals. Although the main road traverses the view it is not that evident except for occasional traffic noise.	

Objective	Visual	Emotional
The landform is of a U-shaped, flat-bottomed river valley	The main visual relationship is the contrast of the flat-	The valley feels safe calm, peaceful and welcoming. It is
with steeper slopes to the east and gentler, more even	bottomed valley with the surrounding open hills. The	an idyllic pastoral scene which is relaxing to the eye.
slopes to the west. The valley is surrounded by large,	plantations spilling over the hills link the valley with the	
smooth, rounded hills creating flowing skylines.	upland via tree clumps and small woodlands. The valley	It is an enclosed landscape with managed, well-tended
	has an organised, regular, planned landscape contrasting	farmland and more intimate woodland areas. This
The valley is predominately pastoral mainly mixed	with the semi-natural open moorland. The green valley	engenders a feeling of safety and security.
woodlands and conifer plantations with broadleaved	contrasts with the brown and heather of the hills.	
clumps. The land cover of the hills is largely heather and		The hills although bare and rolling are non-threatening
grass moorland with some extensive conifer plantations.	The scale of the valley is small and enclosed with	and appear as the guardians of the valley providing
There is locally bare rock and scree on the hillsides.	intimate pockets of sheltered woodland and river. The	protection and enclosure.
	surrounding hills by contrast are large scale, open and	
There is interesting river geomorphology with incised	exposed.	
meanders cutting through glacial deposits however the		
river does not dominate the scene.	The valley is diverse though not so much because of	
	different features but by similar features in a varied	
There are strong geometric field patterns with large	layout, while the hills are simple open moorland.	
regular shaped fields bounded by straight stone dykes.		
Woodland planting is associated with settlements and	The valley colours comprise a spectrum of greens from	
farmsteads.	the light green of the fields to the dark green of the	
	conifer plantations. This contrasts with the browns and	
There is a regular string of cottages and large houses	greys of the hills with patches of golden-brown where	
along the road line with more scattered steadings closer	heather is absent.	
to the river. The buildings are generally whitewashed,		
slate-roofed houses.	The form and line of the view is dominated by the	
	geometric valley created by the straight walls. The road	
Specific features include straight stone dykes and the	forms a strong vertical line enhanced by the walls,	
sinuous narrow river. There is a section of braided	cottages and woodlands. There are also strong	
stream with the adjacent fields raised on a river terrace.	boundaries along the plantations with distinct straight	
	edges, whereas other woodland clumps are irregular and	
	"edgeless" and merge and scatter into the hillsides.	
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	The impression is that the valley is inhabited and active	
	though not overly busy. There is farming activity with	
	tractors, tarm animals and a cockerel. It is calm and	
	peacetul but not tranquil.	

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Objective	Viend	Emotional
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Massive, rounded smooth hills with long undulating	Its visual appearance is of a smooth regular homogenous	This view is wilder and less inhabited than other areas of
ridges plunging into steep glens. The hills include the	landscape.	the NSA although as it is only a few miles from Peebles it
rounded humps of Stobs Law and Hundles Hope.		could not be termed remote.
	The scale is very large with bulky, massive hills and big	
The land cover is mainly open heather and grass	skies. In the NSA description these hills are said to be "of	The view was attractive and colourful at the time of
moorland with occasional plantations on the lower slopes	great stature". The landscape is open and exposed with	viewing however in bad weather it would appear to be a
of the valley.	the glens being more sheltered and secluded.	more brooding and challenging landscape. It has not the
		same inviting, welcoming intimate hills of the rest of NSA,
The land use is open moorland with interlocking ridges.	This is a simple landscape with little diversity.	which invite exploration but is more forbidding except for
There is evidence of muirburn in the square shape of the	The colour and texture is seasonally variable and subject	the determined walker who would choose the massif as
heather patches. There is no obvious recreational use or	to heather management regimes. At present it is	the greater challenge of the area.
farming activity.	composed of light green bracken with the gold of the	
	grass and brown heather with purple tinges. The texture	The hilltops are exhilarating dramatic with bold
The area is largely uninhabited with no settlement	is generally smooth.	topography.
patterns.		
	The slopes are rolling and dynamic with no obvious	
There are no specific features but a simple scene of open	patterns or lines.	
moorland and hills with occasional burns.		

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Obiective	Visual	Emotional
The landform consists of a wide, flat-bottomed river	The irregular pattern of the woodland linked by lines of	The impression of the valley is safe, sheltered, intimate
valley with gentle even slopes which get steeper to the	trees and river is a particularly strong relationship in the	and enclosed. It is a man-created, well-managed and
east. Interlocking hills and ridges with rocky outcrop and	scene. The backdrop of wooded hills with open moorland	harmonious landscape. The woodland is integrated with
a quarry to the north form the skyline.	in the distance is also a strong theme. The succession of	the landform. The surrounding high hills are further away
	the complex wooded foreground and the wooded hills in	than from other viewpoints and so do not give such a
The land cover is predominately pastoral with extensive	the middle ground leading the bare hills in the	sense of enclosure as from other sites. It is the gentle
woodland comprising coniferous, mixed and broadleaved	background is more apparent and exaggerated here than	hills and woodlands that dominate the scene. It is an
plantations and riparian trees. The sinuous line of the	in other parts of Upper Tweeddale.	interesting and busy landscape, which keeps the eye
river is edged by riparian scrub, gorse, alder and willow.		moving.
	In the valley the scale is medium with big fields which are	
The valley is dominated by agricultural and forestry land	enclosed and sheltered. The surrounding hills are of a	The River Tweed is particularly important here giving a
use with quarrying to one side. There is also evidence of	large scale.	"sense of place" and identity. The central focal point of
countryside recreation with picnic sites walking routes		the stone bridge and winding river is the epitome of
and fishing.	The diversity within the valley is complex with the	Upper Tweeddale.
	patterns of the woodland and fields in contrast with the	
The settlement pattern consists of inconspicuous	simple openness of the rolling hills in the background.	
scattered farmsteads with occasional houses all away		
from the river.	The colours of the valley are predominately shades of	
	areen - ranging from light green in the fields to the dark	
The stone, four-arched bridge traversing the River Tweed	green of the woodlands. The riparian vegetation is also	
is a focal point of the view. The stone quarry is also	darker areen in colour. Some of the unimproved	
strong feature The white-harled steadings surrounded hy	meadows on the slones are narched at this time of vear	
sublig teature. The write-trailed steadings surrounded by	incadows on the stopes are parented at this time of year	
woodiand are also particularly characteristic.	and are golden prown in colour. The silvery, shiny	
	reflection of the water adds to the colours of the scene	
	and water movement is evident under the bridge.	
	The sinuous line of river is the dominant form and line of	
	the come There are also the irreaular chance and lines	
	ure scene. There are also ure integular strapes and mites	
	or the woods and the straight horizontal lines of the stone	
	dykes.	
	Generally the area is quiet, tranguil and calm with some	
	agricultural activity and farm animals with the woodland	
	deadening the sound of activity. However the main road	
	along the northern edge (A72) is busy and noisy.	

Objective	Visual	Emotional
This area consists of a flat-bottomed shallow v-shaped	There is a strong relationship between the broadleaved	The feeling is peaceful, safe and pastoral though not as
valley with even gentle slopes. High rounded hills	trees on the valley floor and the plantations on the upper	enclosed as in other areas. It is a pleasing rural landscape
terminate the view in the background at each end north	slopes (upper two thirds) have the effect of emphasising	but the with the more intensive farming it is less attractive
and south. To the east and west the hills are more	the slope. The wooded slope of Rachan Hill makes it	and has not got the intimacy of the main dale. It is
gentle and even with lower slopes.	more prominent and emphasises its presence in the	interesting and varied though not remarkable.
:	landform. The valley is closed off on both ends by steep	- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
The pastoral river valley of the Biggar Water has	sided rounded hills, which look bigger in contrast to the	The viewpoint itself is an old fort and settlement that gives
occasional tree groups, shelterbelts and small woods on	lowland valley though they are not actually as big as	a feeling of antiquity to the scene. The valley gives the
the valley floor with large regular blocks of conifer	others in the area, this adds to the feeling of enclosure.	impression that, although rural and relatively remote, it has
plantations from half way up the slopes. There is rough	The transition to intensive farming by Biggar Water	been occupied for a long time, which gives it added
grass in the moorland and heather on the higher hills.	contrasts with the semi-natural unimproved land which	interest.
	is receding to wet scrubland (rush) close to Dreva	
The land use is pastoral farming and forestry.	Muirburn.	The John Buchan museum is situated in Broughton village,
-		a novelist who used the Upper Tweed as the setting so
Broughton village has a linear pattern that follows the	I he valley is of medium scale though some of the fields	some of his novels.
road and is surrounded by trees making it relatively	are quite large. The area is relatively enclosed and	
inconspicuous in the landscape. The village is situated	sheltered with the open exposed hills at either end.	
at the bridging point of the river at the confluence of the		
Broughton Burn and Biggar Water.	This is a diverse relatively busy landscape with some	
	traffic and movement and agricultural activity.	
There are strong patterns of woodland and regular		
geometric field patterns. There is an occasional large	There are a wide variety of greens from dark green to	
house in the wooded setting. The old railway line is a	yellow. The high hills are brown and grey with noticeable	
noticeable linear feature as are the drystone walls. The	cloud shadow.	
line of houses and traffic noise draws attention to the		
road but it is not easily visible. The red sandstone Kirk at Brouchton is also a notable feature in the landscane	The geometric pattern of fields, the burns, fences and	
טוסמטוויטו וא מאט מ ווטומטופ וכמומום ווו ווופ ומוומטמטקים.		
	The road, which cuts though the middle of the view,	
	although not dominant, creates noise and movement to	
	the area. However it is more peaceful and transfaure to the control of the control is color and	
	towards motifils water. In general the scene is calm and postoral	
	pasiolai.	

# Upper Tweeddale NSA – 5. Broughton village, Biggar Water and Holms Water from Dreva Craig

Objective	Visual	Emotional
The upper Tweed River joins Biggar Water in this wide	The contrast with the intensively managed valley bottom	The scene is a settled, managed and inhabited
nat valiey bottom. Once the two nyers have joined it follows a route along the eastern hill foot. The	with the wild filling is a surong visual relation ship. Towards the northern end of the vallev the trees fit in more	tranucape. The sherered variey lacks the pastoral tranouillity of other parts of the NSA because of
surrounding hills have generally even slopes of variable	naturally with the landform whilst in the middle of the	agricultural intensification.
steepness creating long flowing even skylines of ridges,	valley there are plantation blocks of rigid shape. There is	
which become interlocking hills at the southern end. The	also a contrast between the intimate enclosure of the	It is a dynamic mixture of wild hill top massif, steep rocky
valley is terminated at the southern end of the towering peak of Worm Hill. The ridge includes the summits of	woodland with the open fields and hillsides.	I slopes, wooded hills and agricultural valley. The large area of woodland to the south of the valley is particularly
Drumelzier Law and Logan Head. The lower slopes have	The scale in the valley is medium while the surrounding	attractive and greatly enhances the enjoyment of the
glacial moraine deposits. The promontory of Dreva Craig	hill range is of a large scale. The scene is diverse with	scene.
and Rachan Hill divide the Tweed from Holms Water.	locally complex areas especially around Rachan Hill.	The two hill fort remains plus other evidence of ancient
The valley bottom is predominately mixed farming	There are a variety of greens in the valley with the	settlement such as standing stones and towers give the
(improved pasture and arable) with a geometric pattern of	blue/grey of the river. The hills are golden brown with	feeling of history to the scene and imbue a timeless
large fields and hedgerows with occasional shelterbelts.	patches of grey. The cloud shadow is very noticeable	quality particularly on the upper slopes of the valley.
On the hills are extensive conifer and mixed plantations	giving changing movement to the scene. Seasonal	However within the valley itself the modern agricultural
culminating in Rachan Hill at the southern end. At the	variation of the colours would result from the heather and	activities and large, regular field shapes demonstrate the
northern end there are mixed plantations flowing down	broadleaved trees.	change to modern farming methods more evident.
The slopes some of which include trees planted in the	The river and discussed reduced follow the hill fact an the	
Dawyon Alburetuin. There are more geometric plantations shapes further in the slope, which appear	west side of the valley while the road follows the hill foot	
pianications strapes tututed up the stope, without appear inconditions in the landscape A guarty is visible at the	west side of the valiey withe the road forms the film root on the west side These linear features from an edge to	
nicongrada in une randocape. A quanty is visible at une porthern end Drava Crain is an extensive area of	the valley bottom with the main earlier lieflore	
hourieriteriu. Dieva Oraig is an exterisive area of brocken and rough grooolond. The appendimentations are	וודפ עמוופץ טטונטווו שונוו נוופ ווומווו מטווכטונטומו וופוטא ההניימים	
pracken and rough grassiand. The open upper slopes are	Detween.	
grassiand and neather mooriand. Associated with the	ومالمه مرام مرام بالمنام مراب بالمرام ومرامه ومرامه	
livel ale aleas of setti-flatural sciub and woodiarid.	Desides agricultural activity the scene is of a califi, peaceful and pastoral valley. There are fewer animals in	
The settlements consist of large expanded steadings	this section with a greater emphasis on arable.	
generally of grey stone and slate buildings amidst		
modern large-scale prominent agricultural sheds. The		
occasional cottages and houses include the small hamlet		
of Drumelzier.		
Specific features include the woodland blocks, the river		
and the farmsteads. There are also the remains of Tinnis		
Castle opposite Dreva Uraig. Both of these remains are situated on rock promontories and tonether form a		
nutural dateway to this part of the Tweeddale.		

### Upper Tweeddale NSA – 6. Upper Tweeddale from Dreva Craig

Upper Tweed	
7. Mossfennan,	
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Å	
Tweeddale NS/	

Objective	Visual	Emotional
The landform is a flat valley floor with v-shaped steep	The main contrast is of the steep bare, natural, mountain	The impression here is that it is less intensively managed
edge of a large mountain massif and a long sweeping skvline.	slope and the regular geometric patterns of the agricultural fields in the vallev.	than other areas and has a slightly abandoned feel.
		It is a dynamic changing landscape with evidence of
The massif is covered with moorland vegetation i.e. grass	The scale in the valley is medium while the mountain	historic settlement e.g. sheep pens although they are not
and heather with one large conifer plantation. The valley	massif is large. The valley is enclosed by steep edges of	obvious. There is also railway infrastructure. These
is pastoral with stone walls, fences and extensive	hills and trees. There is not so much diversity here as in	historic remnants show how the valley has changed and
broadleaved and mixed trees on the slopes. There are	other parts of the NSA. However there is a variety of	evolved over time. It also gives the hills a feeling of
occasional clumps of pine and spruce in the valley floor	colours in the scene with greens in the valley and brown,	antiquity and timelessness.
		There is not such a welcoming feel to the vallev as it is
The land use is pastoral agricultural with extensive	The road is tucked into the hillside and hidden by	largely inaccessible. However the deep glens in the
grazing within the valley and shooting and forestry on the	woodland and so is not very apparent in the scene. The	massif invite exploration.
massif.	horizontal sharp hill foot is distinctive (the river is also on	
	this line but is not readily visible). The woodland	
The settlements consist of occasional houses along the	obscures much of the landform. There is a geometric	
road. There is evidence of many ancient settlements,	pattern of stone dykes and fences.	
cairns and towers. There are also remnants of railway		
infrastructure including disused arches of bridges.	Away from the main road the valley is quiet and peaceful	
	with relatively remote glens leading into the massif. The	
Specific features include tree clumps and woodland and	road is very busy and noisy but only on one side of the	
sheer precipitous scarps of the massif edge. The River	valley so it is not overly intrusive. There are some sheep	
Tweed is largely inconspicuous on the far side of the	and other limited agricultural activity.	
valley.		
Both the river and disused railway follow the hill foot on		
the east side of the valley while the road follows the hill		
foot on the west side with the main agricultural fields		
between.		

Objective	Visual	Emotional
The gently v-shaped valley is narrow but flat-bottomed in	There are enclosing hills to the west and the woodlands	The scene is tranquil, sheltered and settled. It is small
this scene. The even slopes are largely obscured by	close the valley to the northeast. There is also more	scale and intimate. There is a natural draw to the river,
woodland and get steeper towards the surrounding	immediate enclosure by the lower hills (knowes) below	which threads its way through the centre of the valley.
ridges. The river Tweed is very evident here and follows	the higher hills. There is a strong contrast with the heavily	The appearance overall is inviting and interesting with the
a winding course with some canalised sections.	wooded valley with distant bare hills enclosing the dale.	added interest of the church, castle and surrounding
		woodland. It is managed and secure, historic and
The land cover is improved pasture with large coniferous	Small/medium scale smaller than other areas. Large	established.
plantations and mixed woodland. There are a number of	scale hills in background. The scene is diverse and	
large broadleaved trees in the valley with some on the	locally complex especially around the church and	There is not a feeling of seclusion and this is further
riverbank. The designed landscape of Stobo Castle is	woodlands.	lessened by the road however the feeling is still of
included in this section, which includes mature conifer		pastoral and peaceful river valley.
and broadleaved trees in a pastoral setting. The land use	Predominately green pastoral landscape with dark green	
is agriculture and forestry.	plantations. Browner hills in the distance with some	The outward view to high skyline of ridges and hills adds
	purple. The river is brown close to but appears silvery	another dimension to the peaceful river valley. The
The settlement pattern consists of clusters of steadings	grey from the distance. The movement of the water adds	ambience of the river is affected by "canalisation" in
and occasional cottages. There are small groupings of	to the scene	some parts of the river which has straightened the banks
cottages and houses around the Kirk at Stobo and		and added depth to the river resulting in the absence of
Dawyk Mill. Stobo Castle has a number of lodges and	The river road and railway make up the form and line in	babbling sounds, riffles and shingle islands.
buildings associated with it.	the view and contrast to the winding line of the river,	
	though in some places the river has been straightened	
Stobo Castle and Kirk are specific landmarks in the	probably canalised due to the railway construction or	
scene. Other noticeable features include the woodlands	flood prevention.	
and stone cottages with slate roots.		
	It is generally peaceful by the river though the road is	
	fast and straight and noisy. Other movements include	
	farm animals and field birds	

Upper Tweeddale NSA – 8. Easter Dawyk Mill (Middle Tweed)

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Emotional	The overall impression of this section of the river is of	ng hidden gorge tucked away from the rest of the more	<ol> <li>pastoral valley. The river is refreshing and imbues a</li> </ol>	sense of peace and relaxation though the road detracts	the from quietness and is intrusive in the scene.		Glimpses of the hills and the wider valley beyond the	e are gorge make the distant views inviting for walkers and	e give added interest to the scene.	and	e The river in this section has riffles and weirs in it, which	add particular interest and pleasant noises to the scene	and contrast with the deep, still pools by the edges of the	river.	l of	5 The austere Neidpath Castle on its dominating rocky	s promontory gives a sense of history and mystery to the	gorge.			alls				er	S.
Visual	River and woodland dominate the scene with the	woodland clinging to the gorge slopes and overhangir	river. The eye is drawn to the bridges and distant hills		Whilst the gorge is of a large scale the impression of t	area is enclosed and intimate, secluded and hidden.		There is diversity as the woodland is varied and there	patches of grassland and a small island as well as the	river itself. The river surface varies with riffles, weirs a	shingle banks. Some of the banks are open and some	overhang with trees.		It is seasonally colourful with wildflowers such as the	purple swathes of rosebay willow herb and the cream	meadowsweet. There is the yellow green of the grass	and the mosaic of greens of the woodland, which line	the gorge. The river itself is brown with colourful	reflections.		The winding river through the gorge, lines of stone wa	and the railway line makes the line and form of the	scene. The road is only visible when cars go past.	· · · ·	There is constant movement and sound within the rive	itself. Regular traffic sound and birdsong in the woods
Objective	The landform from this viewpoint is a steep sided narrow	gorge with extensive woodland coverage on the steep	sided slopes. There are limited areas of flat flood plain on	the gorge bottom. The River Tweed is at its widest within	the NSA.		There is semi-natural grassland on the small areas of	floodplain with alder, birch and willow on the edge of	river. The woodland is mixed plantation with many	introduced species (probably Victorian). The land use is	fishing, walking and forestry.		There are occasional houses by the roadside. Neidpath	Castle is on the promontory by the gorge. Drystone walls	run along the road and forest edge.		The river dominates the scene with the bridge and castle	at focal points. Outward views to the west reveal smooth	ridges of moorland hills, whilst in other directions there is	a close skyline of plantations.						

## <u> Upper Tweeddale NSA – 9. Tweeddale Gorge near Neidpath (on Railway Bridge)</u>



### Upper Tweeddale Landscape Character Assessment

### Landscape Type 3 – Plateau Outliers

An upland plateau landscape characterised by hills and ridges covered by a mosaic of coarse grassland, heather and forestry, clearly separated from adjoining types by major river valleys.

Key Characteristics

- Discrete hill masses separated from main plateau by major river valleys.
- Greater height difference between summits and valley floors.
- Mosaic of land cover types: heather moor, grassland and plantation woodland.
- Low density settlement, mainly confined to sheltered valleys.

(Pages 57 - 60)

BH – Broughton Heights ELI – Eddleston /Lyne Inter fluva

### Landscape Type 4 – Southern Uplands Type with Scattered Forest

An upland landscape characterised by large-scale, rolling heather and grassland covered hills.

Key Characteristics

- Large-scale rolling landform with higher dome or cone-shaped summits.
- Significant areas of peatland and heather moorland.
- Mosaic of grassland, bracken and rushes on lower ground.
- Locally-prominent scattered large coniferous plantations

(Pages 61 – 65)

Landscape Character Areas - Distinctive Features

### BG – Broadlaw Group

- High summits with glacially-sculpted features rising steeply to 840m. Megget, Talla and Fruid reservoirs and St Mary's prominent to the south of Broad Law;
- Significant "wild land" atmosphere created by remoteness of high summits:
- Extensive coniferous plantations in the north at Traquair, Elibank, Cardona and Yair Hill forests and fringing the upper Tweed river valley in the west.

### Landscape Type 22 – Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor

A landscape characterised by flat valley bottom pastures, strongly enclosed by steep valley sides merging with heather and forest covered uplands.

Key characteristics

- Glaciated valley with moderately to strongly sloping sides and flat floor modified by river bluffs and glacial moraine.
- Improved pastures with occasional small woodlands and tree lines on valley floor, and rough unimproved grazing, heather moorland or coniferous forest on valley sides.
- Scattered stone built villages with farmsteads and dwellings dispersed along river terraces, lower valley sides and tributary valleys.
- A simple, distinctive landscape strongly enclosed by uplands with intermittent long views along valley corridor.

Landscape Character Areas - Distinctive Features

UT – Upper Tweed

- Narrow valley floor, characterised by small permanent pasture fields divided by drystone dykes;
- Coniferous forestry prominent on valley sides and adjacent uplands

MT – Manor Water

- Locally prominent scree and rock outcrops.

BW – Biggar Water

- Broad flat floored valley with smooth gently to moderately sloping sides and narrow straightened river channel;
- Large pasture and scattered arable fields divided by fences, drainage channels, drystone dykes and widely dispersed shelterbelts;
- Simple, uniform, open character with distant views along valley.

Ly – Lyne Water

- Predominantly small scale, narrow flat bottomed valley, widening at junction of Tarth Water, with moderately sloping sides;
- Medium sized permanent pasture fields, divided by drystone dykes and mature deciduous tree and hedgerows, contrast with heather and grass moorland on upper valley sides;
- Scattered farmsteads on valley floor edge and immediate hill slopes;
- Steep gullies and tributary valleys often wooded or with gorse and scrub;
- Dominant coniferous plantation on upper valley sides of Tarth Water.

(Pages 149 - 153)

### Landscape Type 25 – Upland Valley with Woodland

An enclosed valley landscape with significant woodland cover.

Key Characteristics

- Meandering river valley, strongly enclosed by uplands.
- Flat valley floor, broad and open in places, narrow and more intimate in others.
- Prominent terraces (haugh lands) caused by fluvial and glacial action.
- Strong influence of woodland, with extensive coniferous forest plantations prominent on valley sides, and mature hedgerow tree lines, broadleaf, and mixed policy woodlands on valley floor.
- Traditional dwellings, farmsteads and hamlets clustered at the foot of valley side slopes.
- Mill towns prominent on valley floor and sides.
- Tower houses and mansions common along river banks.

Landscape Character Areas – Distinctive features

MT – Middle Tweed

- Significant urban settlement in Peebles and Innerleithen;
- Forestry plantations prominent on valley sides

### Upper Tweeddale History, Culture and Literary Association

### History

Upper Tweeddale's historic past is largely associated with its position on the border of Scotland and England. Forts and Castles have been built at various times to protect the area such as the **Lyne Roman fort** at the foot of the Meldons, built in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, and the Iron Age fort at **Dreva Craig**, constructed around the knoll of the hill in the first millennium. Both of the Black and White Meldons are crowned by Iron Age hill forts, which defended agricultural settlements, more than 2,000 years ago. There are also standing stones, sheep pens and tower houses still evident today showing the areas continual habitation.

**Neidpath Castle** is of 13<sup>th</sup> century origin and is one of the grandest Tweed Valley Tower Houses. Former home of the Fraser Hay and Douglas families it has been much restored in recent years. On the slope between the castle and river can be seen the terraces on which formal gardens were once laid out. Famous visitors to the castle included Mary, Queen of Scots and James I and James VI. The castle was a stronghold for Charles II and the walls still bear damage caused when it was besieged by Cromwell's troops.

**The seven-arch railway bridge** was opened in 1864 to bring an extension of the Biggar, Broughton and Symington line into Peebles from the west. To reach the town from the bridge, a half-mile tunnel was cut below South Park Wood. Never a commercial success, the line lost its passenger traffic in 1950 and was closed down 12 years later. Remains of railway infrastructure are evident throughout the valley.

The Tweed is one of Scotland's most famous angling rivers particularly for **salmon fishing**. In places the fishing is either strictly preserved or very expensive. The best months for salmon fishing are usually September, October and November; the start of the season depends on an autumn spate raising the river level enough for the salmon to come upstream from the sea.

### Literary Associations

This area was the stamping ground of the border reivers, those horse thieves, cattle thieves and murderers, who featured so prominently in the world-famous border ballads. This historic backdrop has inspired writers and poets most noticeably **Sir Walter Scott and James Hogg**, the Ettrick Shepherd, nearly 200 years ago.

More recently **John Buchan**, a British author and statesman who became the 1st Baron Tweedsmuir, used Upper Tweeddale as the setting in some of his books. Buchan wrote over 50 books, especially fast-moving adventure stories such as the Thirty-nine steps (1915). His biographical works include Montrose (1928) and Sir Walter Scott (1932). Family holidays at his mothers parents house at Broughton in Tweeddale were a powerful influence in his life. There is now the John Buchan centre housed in the former church building in Broughton village, where he himself often attended services. There is now the John Buchan Way running from Peebles to Broughton, which was opened in 2003.

### **APPENDIX 6**

### **RECOMMENDED FIELDSHEETS FOR USE IN FIELDWORK**

	Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas Field sheet 1 - Objective Analysis of the Landscape
Name of NSA	
Name of Viewpoint	/ Route
Make an <b>objective</b> of appropriate. Descri	description of what you can see. Use the LCA summary and add to where ibe form, cover, habitats, settlement, features and wildlife objectively.
Landform	(e.g. topographical features such as mountains, ridges, scarps, hills, drumlins, dunes, beaches, cliffs, gorges, valleys)
Land cover (including water)	(e.g. bare rock, alpine and montane areas, open sea, heather moorland, grass moorland, open water, running water, mosaics, patchworks, ponds and pools, estuaries, sandflats, mudflats, saltmarsh, burns, waterfalls, peatlands)
Land use	(e.g. arable farmland, pastoral farmland, open grazing, rectilinear and other field patterns, forestry plantations, Caledonian pinewood, semi-natural woodlands, broadleaved woodland, policy woodlands)
Settlement pattern	(e.g. uninhabited, sparsely populated, town, villages, scattered dwellings, crofts, steadings, castles, towers, kirks, vernacular buildings, distinctive building materials, building types and styles, settlement pattern especially related to natural features)
Specific features and wildlife	(e.g. distinctive, characteristic or unusual point and linear features such as hedges, stone dykes, walls, shelterbelts, avenues. Wildlife that makes a marked contribution to the scenery such as sea bird colonies, machair grassland flowers)
List any other distinc combinations / contr	ctive physical characteristics of the landscape that you can see, noting important asts.
Continue overleaf if nece	ssary

Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas		
Name of NSA		
Name of Viewp	oint / Route	
Undertake a <b>visual analysis</b> of the characteristics of the landscape, adding more detail and focusing on links / relationships / combinations / juxtapositions / contrasts e.g. between landform and settlement; landform and land use; landform and land cover. (e.g. steep sided mountains with distinctive spectacular profiles, rising from irregular hills and more uniform open moorland and loch).		
	Continue overleaf if necessary	
	Visual Experience	
Describe the fo	llowing characteristics of the landscape. Record whether different areas of or features in	
the scene have	different characteristics e.g. hills may be large scale open, valleys small scale enclosed	
Scale	(e.g. vasi, large, medium, small, intimate)	
Openness	(e.g. exposed, open, varied, sheltered, secluded, hidden)	
Diversity	(e.g. complex, diverse, simple, homogenous)	
Colour and	(e.g. garish, colourful, muted, monochrome, dominant colour(s), rugged, rough, textured,	
Texture	smooth)	
Form and line	(e.g. rivers, roads, vertical plantations, walls, slopes, angles)	
Movement, weather and sound	(e.g. busy, noisy, constant/occasional movement/noise, calm, still, silent, quiet. How will changes in weather affect your visual experience?)	
Other notable visual characteristics of the landscape		

Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas	
Name of NSA	
Name of Viewpoint / Route	
A subjective description of your personal response to, and feelings about the scene. Note any contrasting feelings relating to different parts of the scene, if applicable. (e.g. exhilarating, inspiring, exciting, awesome, challenging, surprising, spectacular, dramatic, turbulent, unsettling, uncomfortable, wild, remote, isolated, undiscovered, secret, mysterious, tranquil, peaceful, hidden, idyllic, contrasting, harmonious, unified, refreshing, reassuring, comforting). Imagine how the scene may change at different times of the year, or in different weather conditions.	
NOTE PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN – Number / Direction / Stitched / Single etc	