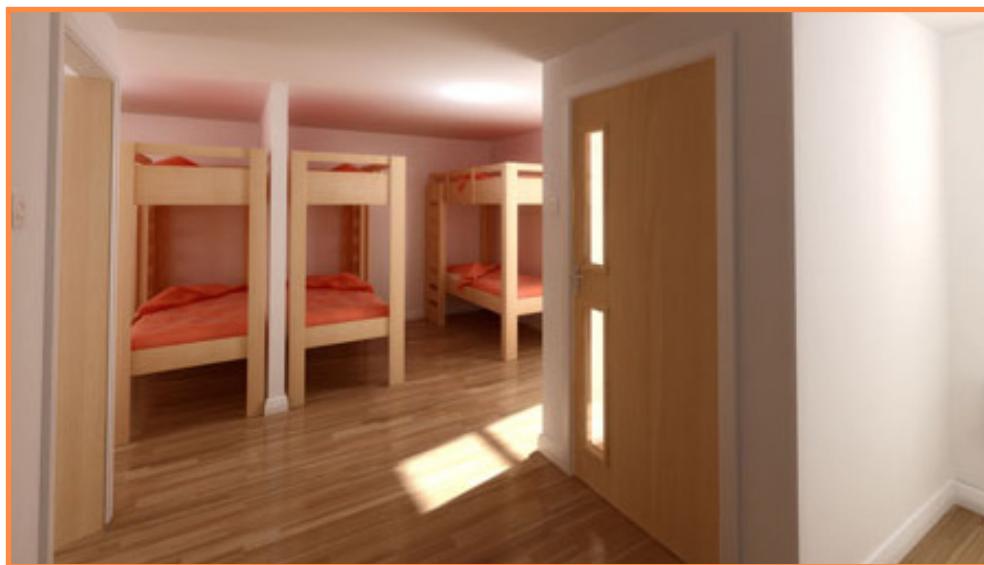




## Investing in Centre Facilities for Customers



A great deal of work is on-going right now to improve some accommodation and wet areas at Belmont and Dounans Centres.

By April 2012 teachers and group leaders will be able to see some of the biggest changes to SOEC facilities for some time and we hope you agree that they will project our Centres into the 21st Century.

We are very grateful to the Social Investment Fund Scotland (SIF) for the fabulous award of £500,000. It is fantastic to be able to invest in our Centres. It is

also a great endorsement of our work.

To win the award, we had to show how our combination of staff commitment, intelligent use of motivating activities, and safe, secure and inspiring Centres, can directly deliver benefits to pupils and other young people.

See inside for more details.



### Late Availability

2012 is looking very busy for SOEC however we do have some late availability in March and have special discounts available.

Please contact Diana on: [info@soec.org.uk](mailto:info@soec.org.uk) or 01899 221115 to discuss.

### New Year, New Look!

#### Inside this issue....

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Jamie Miller,  
Dounans Centre Manager



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We hope you enjoy this newsletter and find it informative. If you have any ideas on what you would like to see in future newsletters then please contact:

[gillgoulden@soec.org.uk](mailto:gillgoulden@soec.org.uk)

Happy New Year, from all the staff at SOEC.

# Refurbishment Update

Scottish  
Outdoor  
Education  
Centres



## Board Members Required

SOEC is currently looking to augment its current Board membership. If you have a strong interest in outdoor learning and could attend between two and six short meetings a year please contact [davespence@soec.org.uk](mailto:davespence@soec.org.uk).



Regular visitors will know that when Dounans, Belmont and Broomlee were built over 70 years ago, few concessions were made to things like energy efficiency and customer comfort.

has gone before. No building lasts forever and we now have a much needed opportunity to think about design, materials and sustainability, for future refurbishment and upgrade of Centres.

old infrastructure, we will be able to concentrate on the other things you want; providing safe, exciting and intelligent outdoor learning and positive away-from-home experiences for children and young people.

They did use excellent materials though, such as the old growth red cedar. Now, thanks to support from SIF, and a creative design and development team at Decorated Sheds, we are able to upgrade these buildings and make them fit for the 21st Century.

We hope that you're as excited about our refurbishment as we are. We believe that this type of investment can overcome problems of old buildings, but wisely give them a new lease of life, and provide customers with enhanced levels of comfort.

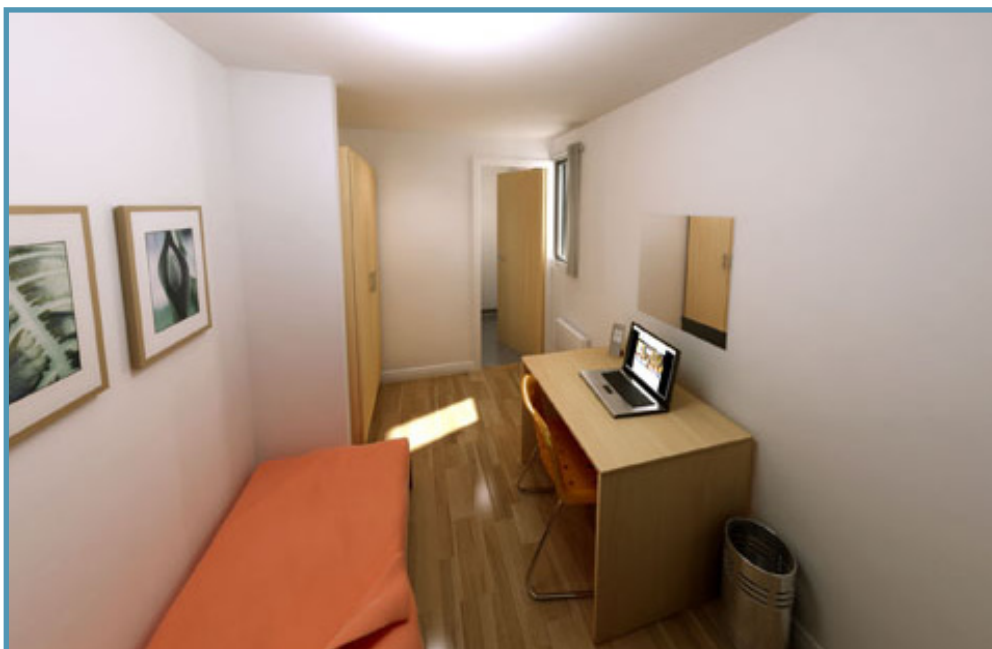
We would really value your comments. More pictures are available on our website: [www.soec.org.uk](http://www.soec.org.uk).

At Belmont, a whole accommodation block is being refurbished. This builds on the other refurbishment carried out in recent years but adds totally new dimensions in design and materials so that teachers and pupils will experience new levels of comfort.

As we overcome the challenges of

Please let us know what you think of our refurbishment projects by e-mailing us at [info@soec.org.uk](mailto:info@soec.org.uk) or commenting on our Facebook page.

At Dounans, one building will have a new extension attached providing four new wet areas – a chance to take the wet areas out of the main building, with improved levels of comfort resulting from better heating and water control.



The SIF award has enabled us to refurbish at a step-change from what

# Partnerships

## SOEC - Approved Provider of Fife's Natural Connections Programme

It has been a pleasure working with Tony Credland and the Natural Connections Team at Fife Council.

In collaboration with them, we have designed a new programme for primary schools, combining all six elements of the award:

- Discovering Nature
- Working Together
- Adventure Skills
- Finding Your Way
- Journeying
- Helping the Environment



*Little Fawn Falls at Dounans*

If you're looking for an innovative approach to outdoor learning with an environmental slant, talk to us about what we can offer.

**We hold free teacher taster days and weekends so we can show you our facilities and sample our programmes - please contact us for more details.**



Scottish  
Outdoor  
Education  
Centres



## Update from Dounans

### Jamie Miller

Role: Centre Manager, Dounans



Jamie joined the SOEC Management Team in April last year and was immediately immersed not only in a busy season but also in the management of major refurbishment at Dounans. Having worked in youth development for 20 years Jamie is highly experienced for the challenges of outdoor centre management.

He has led many challenging expeditions taking young people from the UK to Mt Kenya and Mt Kilimanjaro (from both Kenya and Tanzania) to far away places such as Iceland and the Indian Himalaya. He's also undertaken expeditions with people from the townships of South Africa.

Expeditions bring their own challenges but the emphasis of Jamie's adventures was always on realising benefits, particularly personal development and life enhancement of the young people involved. Indeed, Jamie was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in recognition of this work and for collecting other scientific data.

Jamie has worked as a psychologist, researcher and University lecturer. He's convinced of the importance and potential of outdoor learning in enabling young people to learn and grow and to raise ambition and aspirations. As such, he is able to strengthen programme development at SOEC to ensure robust theoretical underpinning of programmes as well as satisfying and lasting changes for participants.

Work aside, Jamie is a keen mechanic. You'll find him putting to good use his newly acquired welding qualification, or with his Land Rover, where he spends as much time under it as driving it. Wherever you find him, you can be sure that Jamie is looking to welcome you to Dounans Centre in 2012.

## Exhibition Programme

**SCVO  
The Gathering 2012  
SECC, Glasgow**

29th February & 1st March 2012



**If you are attending and would like to arrange a meeting, please contact: [gillgoulden@soec.org.uk](mailto:gillgoulden@soec.org.uk)**

# International Visitor Programmes

## Scottish Outdoor Education Centres



SOEC has enjoyed a long-standing relationship with young people from French companies who for many years have visited Loaningdale Centre over the summer.

However the world is changing and this is no longer an option as we hope to sell Loaningdale in the near future, enabling us to consolidate on our 3 big Centres: Broomlee, Belmont and Dounans.

Despite the need to change venue, our customers wanted to stay with SOEC and we were committed to improving their experience with us. Our Programme Leaders, Liz and Jenny, spent quite some time listening to their interests and needs and from this emerged a totally revamped holiday programme.



Scottish Crannog Centre, Loch Tay



This innovative new programme integrates outdoor experiences with cultural and historical themes. The holiday includes several expeditions including, for example, an exploration to the Ben Lawers areas including a canoe trip on Loch Tay to the Crannogs.

These ideas can be used for a wide range of different outcomes and we would welcome opportunities to explore with teachers and group leaders how they might be used in Scottish schools.

If you're interested in international exchanges, or perhaps looking for programmes with a focus on interdisciplinary learning, talk to us about how we can use them to meet your needs.

## Further Grant Awards

Belmont's Centre Manager, Brian O'Rourke and the staff team were delighted when the Centre received grant support through Perth and Kinross Direct this autumn. This grant funding enabled the purchase of four new canoes and a trailer; essential equipment for the new Adventure Weeks to be rolled out this year.

Following the success of Activity Clubs, where local young people aged 8-12 experience the many activities at the Centre during their school holidays, new programmes, such as Adventure weeks have been developed. These Adventure weeks will enable young people to focus more on either hill/mountain activities or water activities such as canoeing.

In this way, SOEC seeks to encourage a sense of

familiarity, commitment and continuity in outdoor activities and stimulate interest for progression to e.g. awards such as the Basic Expedition Leader Award (BELA) or the Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) Award.



# Be amazed at what you can do!

## All Groups great and small

One of the great strengths of SOEC is the highly trained and motivated tutor staff team who are able to judge the level of challenge in an activity to skillfully meet the abilities of the group. They also have enormous flexibility.

Sometimes they're working with a small group of just 6-8 young people perhaps with specific emotional or physical needs. The next day, they can be working with 100's of young people at a time.

One of the highlights of last year for example was the Government supported Young Carers Festival, hosted for the third year running at Broomlee Centre.

The annual 2-day gathering, organised by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers, brought together more than 500 young people from across Scotland. The Festival not only gives young people a much needed break from their caring responsibilities, it also provides fun experiences and new activities as well as music and dance.

The stunning surprise this year was the appearance of McFly – a well-kept secret that blew the kids away.



# Scottish Outdoor Education Centres



*The McFly boys in the big Marquee, Broomlee*

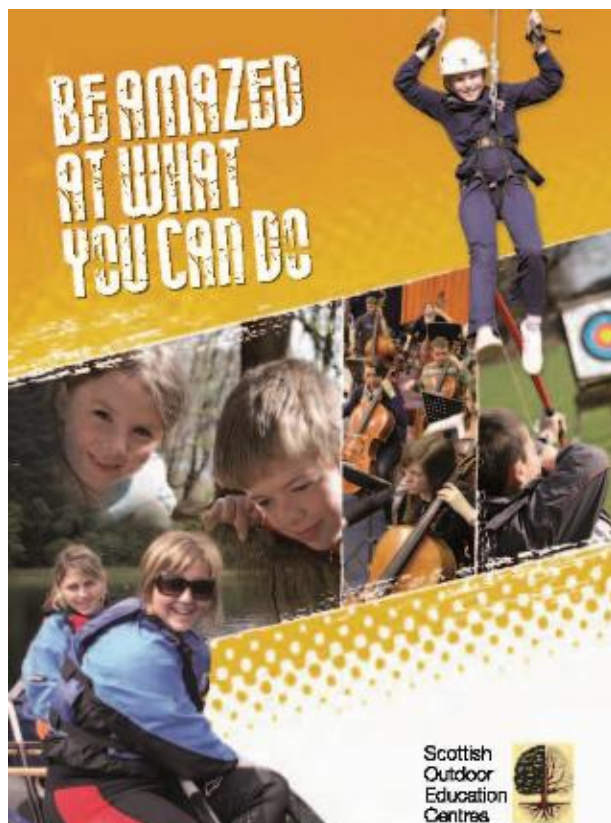
This Festival is clearly of huge importance to young carers and we would like to endorse and support the great work undertaken by The Princess Royal Trust in putting the programme together.

## Volunteers and trainees for 2012

We are delighted to welcome Molly, Peter, Awhi, Niamh and Talia, this years' Latitude Volunteers from New Zealand along with Stuart and Khai, our Community Jobs Scotland funded outdoor trainees.

All have embarked on their three month training programme and new careers in outdoor learning.

We wish them all the best of luck.



Download our brochure from our website or request one by calling us on 01899 221115



## Residential Projects

It was a great day when two new monochromatic celebrities took up residence in the Capital. Tian Tian and Yang Guang who arrived from China in December are thrilling thousands of visitors in their state of the art enclosure.

We know that a visit to see these wonderful bears and other exciting animals is a huge attraction and educational opportunity but it can be a bit of a trek from the further reaches of Scotland.

How about making the most of a trip by incorporating a trip to the zoo or other major visitor attractions with a residential stay? This can be a really cost effective way of linking travel, the away from home experience, and combining the educational opportunities of an attraction with an outdoor learning programme.

You might wish to explore the ecological connections and differences between the exotic animal from around the world with the SOEC environmental programme. Or what about a trip to Dundee's Discovery Point and Science Centre Sensations with an SOEC programme emphasising confidence, exploration, and effective contributors?



For older pupils, what about a trip to the Edinburgh's Seats of Power, the Castle and the Parliament. This could be linked to an activity programme developing confidence, team work, communications and other qualities and skills of leadership, and delivering outcomes with respect to responsible citizenship.

The staff team at SOEC are full of great ideas, and have a strong track record of working in partnership with teachers and group leaders to develop and deliver innovative learning experiences.

Wherever you are in Scotland and no matter at what stage your idea, please talk to us at SOEC and find out how we can turn great ideas into fantastic learning experiences.

You may be pleasantly surprised by the costs of creating your own pilot project. Please contact us if you have an idea you think would make a best practice learning experience that other schools would be interested in too, we would like to make yours idea work.



*Discovery Point, Dundee is close to our Belmont Centre*

**Loaningdale House  
Carwood Road  
BIGGAR  
ML12 6LX**

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**Facebook**

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