

# The campaign for a Thousand Huts

*Overwhelming interest from many quarters, not least Reforesting Scotland's membership, has indicated tremendous support for a resurgence of hut-building in Scotland. In response, RS is launching its campaign for a Thousand Huts, as Ninian Stuart explains.*

**R**eforesting Scotland's new campaign for a Thousand Huts will celebrate and encourage hut building in Scotland. Coordinated by land rights campaigner Andy Wightman alongside RS members and directors, a Thousand Huts hopes to inspire people with the simple beauty and usefulness of huts,



Illustration by Alasdair Baird

and seed the idea of a thousand more at this time of transition. It will hopefully highlight the value of huts built in and from Scottish woods, and the need to overcome the main obstacles to building more of them, addressing both planning law and lack of opportunities to own or rent land in rural Scotland.

The campaign will see RS collaborating with its members, local community groups and key organisations such as Forestry Commission Scotland, the Scottish Ecological Design Association, Community Woodland Association and Mountain Bothies Association to encourage and facilitate more local hut building using timber from Scottish woods.

If our campaign is successful, we believe that a thousand huts will flourish in Scotland...

- allowing more people to reconnect with the natural world
- inspiring ordinary people to learn the craft of building
- providing refuge from speed and noise
- creating simple and beautiful

places to dwell in the forest

- supporting the aspiration for simplicity and self-reliance
- giving space for thought and freedom from thought
- bringing a deeper acquaintance with silence and darkness.

## Ten things you can do:

1. **Discover huts.** Open your eyes and heart to huts. Whether in a wood or town, see what people have built: garden huts, beach huts, hidden huts, fancy huts and old ramshackle huts. Take photos or sketches and email us anything special. We're keen to enjoy and share the diversity of Scotland's huts and be inspired by huts beyond our borders.

2. **Build a hut.** Something you will never regret. It is one of the most constructive things you can do, especially using local wood. If you're not very practical, find a skilled person to advise you. You may contact some of those whose stories we tell in this edition, or join a course.

3. **Spend time in a hut.** Go there regularly to slow down and get away from noise, clutter and busyness. A simple place to focus on what really matters. If you can't find a real hut, you may need to make do with a hut-in-your-mind. Or rent one for a few days.

4. **Discover a hut site.** We know of hutters' sites and communities at Carbeth near Glasgow, Clouch in Gourock, Soonhope and Eddlestone near Peebles, Lunga Estate in Argyll and Rascarrel Bay and Carrick on the Galloway coast. These are the remnants of a much wider Scottish hutting tradition. Many are still threatened. All need our support. Please let us know if you know of others.

5. **Create a hut site.** If you are (or know of) someone who owns land and may be interested in making land available, we are keen to hear from you. And we will put you in touch with other interested

farmers and landowners who are considering this.

6. **Tell a great hut story.** We're keen to learn and tell the story of Scotland's huts and hutters. From the Carbeth clearances to the building of great huts and even great hut-building disasters. Please let us know if you have stories to tell or if you get a sniff of a story that one of our roving reporters can follow up.

7. **Lay foundations for future huts.** A Thousand Huts urgently seeks help from dynamic social entrepreneurs, skilled builders and ardent micro-living campaigners to help build our dream. Let us know if you can help here.

8. **Attend** the launch of our Thousand Huts campaign on Wednesday 15 June in Edinburgh as part of a celebration of forest culture during the International Year of Forests.

9. **Take part** in Reforesting Scotland's hut-building summer school in partnership with Falkland Centre for Stewardship on 15 – 19 August 2011. See [www.centreforstewardship.org.uk](http://www.centreforstewardship.org.uk) for more information.

10. **Join our hut circle.** If you are keen to contribute to the campaign, receive occasional briefings and be amongst the first to hear of what's happening in the campaign for a Thousand Huts, email to [huts@reforestingscotland.org](mailto:huts@reforestingscotland.org)

And three things to remember (if you forget everything else!):

- Spend time in a hut
- Build a hut from local wood
- Join the movement for a Thousand Huts.

*Ninian Stuart is co-founder of Falkland Centre for Stewardship and is a Director of Reforesting Scotland. Email [ninian@centreforstewardship.org.uk](mailto:ninian@centreforstewardship.org.uk)*