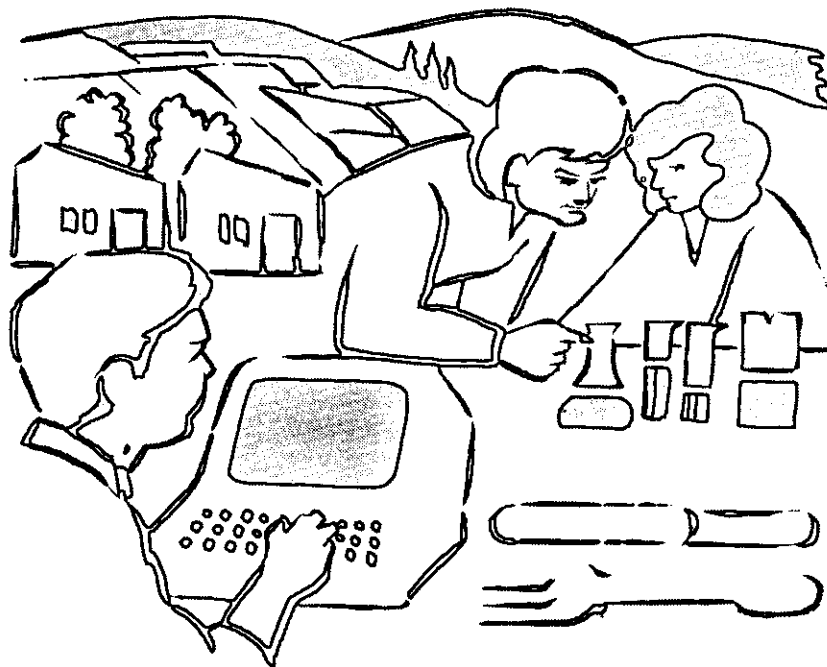




*raining for rural  
cotland*



***SUMMARY REPORT***

**THE ROYAL HIGHLAND AND AGRICULTURAL  
SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND**



**AND**



**THE ARKLETON TRUST**

***RURAL TRAINING NEEDS IN SCOTLAND***

***LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT***

***SUMMARY REPORT***

**Based on the Full Report, "Rural Training Needs in Scotland"**

**by**

**Bryden, J.M.**

**Davies, M.**

**Johnstone, M.**

**Macaulay, A.**

**Summarised by**

**Parkes, A.**

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ATB</b>	<b>Agricultural Training Board</b>
<b>CCS</b>	<b>Countryside Commission for Scotland</b>
<b>COSLA</b>	<b>Convention of Scottish Local Authorities</b>
<b>HCTB</b>	<b>Hotel and Catering Training Board</b>
<b>HIDB</b>	<b>Highlands and Islands Development Board</b>
<b>LCP</b>	<b>Local Collaborative Project</b>
<b>MARIS</b>	<b>Materials and Resources On-Line Information Service</b>
<b>RHASS</b>	<b>Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland</b>
<b>RURTEL</b>	<b>Rural Teleconferencing System run by The Arkleton Trust</b>
<b>SAC</b>	<b>Scottish Agricultural Colleges</b>
<b>SCOTBIC</b>	<b>Scottish Business in the Community</b>
<b>SDA</b>	<b>Scottish Development Agency</b>
<b>STB</b>	<b>Scottish Tourist Board</b>
<b>TAP</b>	<b>Training Access Points</b>
<b>TC</b>	<b>Training Council</b>

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	page
<b>1. SUMMARY</b>	
<b>1.1 The need to examine rural training provision</b>	1
<b>1.2 Findings and recommendations</b>	1
<i>1.2.1 Training delivery</i>	1
<i>1.2.2 Training subject needs</i>	2
<i>1.2.3 Training advice</i>	2
<b>1.3 The need for joint action</b>	2
<b>2. INTRODUCTION</b>	3
<b>3. METHODOLOGY</b>	4
<b>4. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
<b>4.1 Attitudes, take up and needs</b>	5
<b>4.2 Problems with local delivery of training</b>	6
<i>4.2.1 Special groups</i>	6
<b>4.3 Recommendations to achieve local delivery</b>	7
<i>4.3.1 Distance learning</i>	8
<i>4.3.2 Special needs of disabled and handicapped</i>	8
<b>4.4 Training subjects</b>	
<i>4.4.1 Subject needs of rural employed and non-employed</i>	8
<i>4.4.2 Subject needs of rural development agents</i>	9
<b>4.5 Advice on training</b>	10
<i>4.5.1 Databases: their role in providing training information</i>	11
<b>5. CONCLUDING REMARKS</b>	12

# 1. SUMMARY - Rural Training Needs in Scotland

## 1.1 The need to examine rural training provision

The funding organisations initiated this Local Development Project to examine the training of people in rural areas of Scotland, including the training of rural development agency staff.

The provision of training is still largely directed towards the traditional needs of rural occupations, and may not enable the Scottish rural labour market to adapt fully to changing economic conditions. The decline of employment in traditional industries (agriculture, forestry and fishing), coupled with an increase in the importance of manufacturing and services, means the quality and adaptation of the rural labour force, and their ability to acquire new skills, become more crucial factors in determining the growth of the rural economy.

Research to assess training needs adopted a two-fold approach:

1. Surveys of rural employers, employees and non-employed; and of staff from rural development agencies.
2. Seminar/workshop discussions with rural development agencies, local authorities and training providers.

## 1.2 Findings and recommendations [recommendations are given in bold]

Although rural people put a high value on training, training uptake fell short of their needs. Uptake could be increased in three ways:

1. By improving *delivery of training*
2. By overcoming *gaps in training material*
3. By improving *training advice*.

### 1.2.1 Training delivery

Rural people may not have the funds or time to travel long distances to receive training. However, it is also costly to provide local training for relatively small or scattered rural groups, who may have specialised needs. Severely penalised groups include those without funds (e.g. non-employed), without private transport, with time constraints (e.g. self-employed, those in small businesses), women (who may need extra support, e.g. creches) and the disabled or handicapped.

The project makes two main recommendations to improve delivery:

1. **Increase the flexibility of national training programmes. The TC should consider the time, distance and funding problems of rural areas when designing its national programmes.**
2. **All agencies concerned with training and development in rural Scotland should develop specific policies for rural training. These should take full account of the needs of different economic sectors, geographical areas, and special groups. They should pay particular attention to delivery. These**

**policies should be co-ordinated to ensure maximum effectiveness and minimum duplication, and to improve information to potential users.**

The project also recommends that **distance learning should be further investigated as an important training tool in rural areas, and that the special needs of rural disabled people deserve further attention.**

### ***1.2.2 Training subject needs***

- 1. Rural employed and non-employed. Training in general business skills, management and technical skills are required. Subject deficiencies highlighted were: diversification of activities by farm households, tourism/leisure activities, computer/information technology, business services, and social/community work.**
- 2. Rural development agents. Training is required for rural development agents, focussing on familiarisation with rural problems and approaches, sectors of the rural economy, business management, counselling and advisory skills and the identification of training needs. Rural development agencies should jointly undertake such training at a Scottish level.**

**Agencies should also provide updating and training on the work of other agencies with rural responsibilities. Updating on changes in the rural economy, rural policies and other agencies' work could be developed and maintained through seminars, newsletters and computer conferencing.**

### ***1.2.3 Training advice***

Lack of advice on training material and delivery methods often hinders training uptake. Existing sources of training information are inadequate, and over a third of employers wanted help in identifying training needs. Information and advice on Youth Training is severely deficient in remote rural areas.

**One-stop shops manned by local staff from different agencies should be piloted to provide co-ordinated and comprehensive advice on training material and delivery. Databases accessed through a system like RURTEL have potential value in providing additional training information and enabling advice to be given.**

## **1.3 The need for joint action**

The project has already raised awareness of training needs through the collaborative action of numerous agencies involved in discussions. Continued collaboration is important to implement the recommendations.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

The funding organisations initiated this Local Development Project to examine the training needs of people in rural areas of Scotland, including the training of rural development agency staff. It was felt that the provision of training was still largely directed towards the traditional needs of rural occupations, and was not enabling the Scottish rural labour market to adapt fully to changing economic conditions.

There have been job losses in traditional rural industries (agriculture, forestry and fishing) over the past 20 years, coupled with an increase in the importance of manufacturing and services, especially the latter. These changes have implications for rural training needs: as the distribution of natural resources is no longer such a dominating influence on rural employment, the quality and skills of the labour force become more critical. Training is needed for:

1. Establishment and growth of new industries, which will depend partly on the local availability of suitably skilled labour.
2. Support for traditional industries under economic pressure, particularly farming, by encouraging diversification into areas such as tourism and leisure or small manufacturing businesses.
3. Support for service sector industries suffering from a trend towards centralisation (public services, distribution and formerly-protected local business services - accounting, banking etc). Training, particularly in the application of new technologies, may encourage some decentralization by sharpening local services' competitive edge, prevent the loss of local services to extend competition, and encourage new service industries to relocate in rural areas.

The extent to which the rural population as a whole can exploit changing economic conditions will depend on training to cover:

1. The range of skills across different economic sectors. Rural industries are to some extent mutually dependent: in particular, the level and quality of supporting services is crucial for the success of other industries.
2. The range of skills in any one sector. Training will enable local people to fill higher paid management posts as well as lower paid, low skill positions.

The aim of the project was to research the training gaps and needs in the Scottish rural labour market, and to suggest how these gaps and needs might be filled. The project focused on four groups: employers, employees, non-employed (registered and unregistered unemployed), and rural development and training agents.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The Arkleton Trust (Research) Ltd was responsible for the research, which involved surveys of employers, employees and non-employed in rural Scotland, together with interviews with staff from rural development and training agencies (see Table 1). The aims of the surveys were to ascertain the current types and levels of training as well as the future requirements of the four employment groups. A background literature survey of relevant research on rural labour markets and LCPs relating to rural areas was also undertaken. The findings of the surveys were augmented by discussions and collaborative meetings with other development agencies, local authorities and training providers; notably at five Regional Seminars and a final Workshop in March 1988 to which all Seminar participants were invited as well as other organisations interested in rural development and training.

**TABLE 1:** Surveys of rural labour force.

Employers	277	Telephone interviews
	50	Telephone follow-up interviews
Employees and	194	Face to face interviews
Non-employed	142	Postal surveys of those in remoter areas
	31	Telephone follow-up interviews
Development and	35	Face to face interviews with agents
Training agents	29	Face to face with interviews with senior staff from agencies.

The surveys and interviews were carried out during the period September 1987 to January 1988, and analysis and reporting were completed by May 1988.



## 4. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 Attitudes, take up and needs

Given the importance of training for the Scottish rural population, it was encouraging to find generally positive attitudes towards training. However, the percentage of each employment group (agents, employers, employees and non-employed) that was currently undergoing training was consistently lower than the percentage that was in favour of training, suggesting a mismatch between the amount of training that people would in principle like, and what they get in practice (Table 2). When the four groups were asked to specify future training requirements, the percentage of agents and employees needing training in the next three years was again higher than the percentage currently undertaking training. However, the percentages of employers and self-employed employers saying their staff needed training were lower than the percentages currently undertaking training, a cause for concern.

**TABLE 2:** Attitudes towards training, current uptake and future requirements for different employment groups.

	% With positive attitude towards training	% Currently training	% Requiring training
Agents	94	54	89
Employers for their employees <sup>1</sup>	89	41	36
Employees for themselves <sup>2</sup>	65	34	48
Non-employed	55	23	44
Self-employed employers <sup>1</sup> (for their employees)	88	34	24

<sup>1</sup> from employers' survey

<sup>2</sup> from employees' survey

The Study also examined the training requirements for managers, as expressed by employers, by sector. The greatest discrepancies between future requirements and current uptake were in accommodation and catering and in farming, whilst the potential growth sectors of value-added manufacturing and business services also showed an imbalance between current uptake and future needs (Table 3).

**TABLE 3:** Current training uptake and future needs of managers, by sector.

	% Currently training	% Requiring training
High tech	71	79
Fish farming	73	73
Value-added manufacturing	44	63
Farming	29	57
Business services	44	54
Accommodation and catering	23	53
Other services	59	50
Other manufacturing	35	35

The Study found several reasons why rural people may not be training as much as they feel that they need or would like. Many of the reasons are related to problems with delivery of, or access to, training, rather than to the unavailability of training in particular subject areas *per se*, although there were some deficiencies in the latter respect too.

## 4.2 Problems with local delivery of training

A basic difficulty with training rural populations lies in the need to reach relatively small or scattered groups of people. If the training is brought to the group, commercially non-viable numbers may necessitate a subsidy, as participants may be unable to form large enough groups to pay their own way. This need for a subsidy may arise through: lack of communication with other isolated individuals with similar needs; because their needs are very specialised; or sometimes because a variety of work commitments (e.g. with crofters engaged in employment outwith crofting) hinders finding a suitable course time for all candidates. Alternatively, if trainees have to travel to training centres they may incur high costs of transport, accommodation and support facilities (e.g. creches for working mothers) and time away from work. A fish farmer from Shetland told us,

"The young boys just starting out don't like going off to courses down South ... for that matter we don't like losing them for days and days when they do go on courses."

An island architect said,

"The firm wanted to try the CAD system on our computer ... but we got put off by the bother and expense of trying to get training organised for a couple of us in Aberdeen ... so we left it."

### 4.2.1 Special groups

The difficulties of access to training in a rural environment are particularly severe for certain groups, notably the following:

1. Those with funding problems, especially the non-employed who are not registered (training uptake was lower for them than for registered unemployed).
2. Those without private transport. A textile mill employee in Lochmaben said, "Some good night classes were put on in the town but there isn't any public transport at night so we couldn't go ... I don't think they got enough numbers to run them for more than a few weeks."
3. Those with time constraints including shift workers, self-employed and people in small businesses, and seasonal workers. The survey data showed that training uptake was lower for the self-employed than for the employees; and for small businesses than for larger ones.
4. Women - women returners may need confidence-boosting and extra guidance. Women with families may need creche facilities. The survey found that levels of training experience amongst women were consistently lower than for men, with the exception of rural development agents.
5. Disabled and handicapped - particularly those who are a long way from training centres.

### 4.3 Recommendations to achieve local delivery

From the surveys it is clear that local delivery is preferred by employers and employees, and especially by the non-employed who face the greatest mobility problems. To what extent do the agencies currently provide local delivery?

Training is supplied by three main types of agency: national general training agencies, notably the TC, sectoral development and training agencies, e.g. the ATB, SAC and HCTB, and general development agencies: SDA, HIDB and Local Authorities.

**The funding rules for national training agencies, set as they are for urban conditions, show definite and systematic discrimination against individuals in rural areas. An unemployed respondent from the Borders complained,**

**"I don't have a phone, and have to go 20 miles by bus to the Job Centre, just to find out if there are any training or job opportunities. If I don't go in and check myself then I miss chances ... and after a while they [TC] put you on some training that you don't like and say you have to do it because you've been unemployed so long."**

**The project recommends that the RHASS, with other sponsors, asks the Scottish Office for help in making a joint representation to the TC, requesting them to consider the delivery needs of rural areas when designing national programmes by allowing for time, distance and funding problems.**

Some sectoral development and training agencies have regional networks of staff: the ATB in particular has very strong local links, and its method of local delivery using local trainers and its assessment of local needs was approved by other training providers. Other sectoral agencies, for example the STB, have no rural staff, although the STB has recently appointed a training officer to develop training activities in general.

The extent to which sectoral agencies can serve their rural clients' training needs depends largely on policies defined by Act of Parliament and/or funding bodies. For example, the HCTB is heavily reliant on TC support to deliver local training and therefore constrained by TC rules. The ATB and SAC are attempting to broaden their training remit to embrace non-agricultural activities whilst having to rely more on funds from the agricultural industry, itself under financial pressure.

Local authorities' main involvement with training are as TC managing agents for schemes like the Community Programme and through their responsibility for FE Colleges. Like other general development agencies, such as the HIDB and SDA, they can also provide additional resources, "gap filling" where national funding arrangements would be inadequate. However, this is often on an *ad hoc* basis, and more consistent arrangements are needed. It is also constrained by tight budgets.

There are clearly problems in creating optimum local training provision by this multiplicity of training and funding agencies. Two steps are necessary. **First, the project recommends that each agency involved in rural training in Scotland creates or clarifies a policy for rural training, with regard to sectoral and geographical coverage, ways of overcoming access problems (distance, time, funding), and ways of meeting the needs of special groups (see 4.2.1).**

**Secondly, the Scottish Office with representatives from COSLA, TC, Colleges, Training Boards, SDA, HIDB, STB, CCS, RHASS, Rural Forum and SCOTBIC should co-ordinate the rural policies of the training agencies to form a national strategy for rural training provision. Co-ordination is needed to identify gaps in national programmes, and to avoid wasteful**

**duplication of resources by agencies with overlapping responsibilities (although some competition may be useful, offering more choice).**

The project considered two more specific aspects of the problem of bringing training to rural groups: distance learning, and the special needs of disabled and handicapped people.

#### ***4.3.1 Distance learning***

Distance learning could offer an important supplement to the traditional methods of face to face delivery for isolated rural populations. The study found very limited experience of distance learning, but the Arkleton Trust has piloted distance learning courses using computer conferencing in the Highlands and Islands, and would be willing to develop this further with training providers, initially by holding a workshop discussion.

#### ***4.3.2 Special needs of disabled and handicapped***

Further work is needed to investigate the specific subject and delivery needs of this group and their carers, and the Arkleton Trust is following this up with the Strathclyde Forum on the Disabled.

### **4.4 Training subjects**

#### ***4.4.1 Subject needs of rural employed and non-employed***

Employers emphasised the need for computer/new technology, sales/marketing, management and finance training for their managers, with more emphasis on the last two skills than currently practised. Technical and health and safety training featured highest on employers' lists for supervisors and operators. Book-keeping or accounts featured highest for the self-employed, while for the non-employed most subjects related to work. Employees' own views of their training needs were in broad agreement with those of their employers, as were agents' views of the training needs of rural people.

The Regional Seminars added enterprise and co-operation skills to the list of general business, management and technical skill requirements, and enterprise skills were also identified by the training providers interviewed.

The research highlighted specific subject deficiencies in several areas, identified in the surveys and Seminar/Workshop discussions:

- Diversification of activities by farm households
- Tourism and leisure-related activities, including those on farms and estates
- Computer/information technology training, especially for older age groups and the non-employed.
- Business services training.
- Social/community work, and acquiring professional qualifications in this field

#### **4.4.2 Subject needs of rural development agents**

Agents were aware of the need to be trained in topics that reflect the expressed training requirements of rural people. Management, computers, operation of small businesses, technical skills and rural development issues in general were the main topics required, as well as the need for tuition in training and communication skills.

The two main weaknesses in rural development agents' training relate to the need to focus on the special requirements of rural, as opposed to urban, populations; and the need to be aware of the activities of other agencies with rural responsibilities. A rural development agent told us,

"It's difficult for us to offer advice and information on training, when we don't know ourselves what the agency next door is doing."

**The project recommends that training on the special requirements of rural populations should be undertaken jointly by rural development agencies at a Scottish level, so that agents working on different aspects of rural problems become involved at the start with those from other agencies. An independent organisation such as the Arkleton Trust, supervised by a joint committee of the agencies, could develop course material, which might be delivered through the Planning Exchange. Training should cover:**

- **familiarisation with rural problems and approaches**
- **familiarisation with particular rural sectors**
- **business management skills**
- **counselling and advisory skills**
- **identification of training needs**

**The project also recommends that agencies should provide opportunities for their staff to receive training on the work of other agencies. Training should cover:**

- **roles and functions of agencies**
- **grant and loan schemes**
- **training courses, providers and delivery methods**
- **developments in training methods**

**Agents will need to be kept up-to-date with changes in the rural economy, rural policies, the law and the work of other agencies. This could be achieved by:**

- **computer conferencing linked to databases**
- **newsletters**
- **regular regional rural seminars**

**It is suggested that the RHASS and Rural Forum (Scotland) discuss updating techniques with the Arkleton Trust and the Planning Exchange.**

#### 4.5 Advice on training

The project found that lack of advice on what sort of training would be appropriate and on how to access training were both important stumbling blocks preventing uptake of training. A small-scale knitwear producer in Shetland said,

"I know I need training to run my business better, but no-one has ever discussed this with me."

When follow-up cases were asked if they had sought information on satisfying their training needs, the standard response was "I wouldn't know where to start looking". Forty per cent of employers had had no contact (for business advice or training purposes) with any development or training agencies. Thirty-one per cent of employers did not use any sources of training information (trade magazines, journals, agencies, trade associations, professional bodies, press ads, directories etc). The Regional Seminars and follow-up interviews with non-employed, employees and some employers indicated considerable dissatisfaction with existing sources of information.

Youth Training Scheme participants in remote rural areas are particularly disadvantaged - partly because of the restricted range of courses available, but also because of limited opportunities to access information and guidance about the choices available.

Over a third of employers surveyed said that they would like help identifying their training needs, and this request was particularly strong in employment growth sectors: fish farming, business services, other services and high technology manufacturing (Table 4). The low percentage requesting help from agriculture probably reflects the high awareness of ATB and SAC training, whilst the low percentage needing advice in accommodation and catering may reflect the low awareness of training needs in this sector.

**TABLE 4:** Request for help in identifying training needs, by sector.

Sector	% of employers requesting help
Fish farming	55
Business services	44
Other services	41
High tech manufacturing	38
Other manufacturing	35
Valued added manufacturing	32
Accommodation and catering	32
Farming	20

Senior agency staff asked about agents' training identified a requirement for more information for agents, so that they could act as effective brokers for training. Too often, agents lack help in this. A senior officer in a Regional Council said,

"Advice and information on training is one of the duties our Community Education Workers are expected to provide, but it's up to them to find out the information for themselves."

Guidance and information on training could be provided through existing local networks such as: the ATB's local training groups, and local offices of the SDA, HIDB, Agricultural Colleges, Local Authorities and voluntary organisations such as Rural Forum and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations. **The project recommends that "one-stop shops" manned by local staff from a number of different agencies as appropriate, should be established to provide co-ordinated and comprehensive information centres for training material and delivery methods. The Arkleton Trust and the ATB, working with other agencies should pilot four or five "one-stop shops" in rural areas of Scotland. Personnel will need training in guidance and counselling skills, use of sources of information [including information technology and computer conferencing], funding and in marketing of their service. They would need to offer impartial advice and be covered by a monitoring service.**

**The one-stop shops would also be able to gather useful feedback on training needs in their areas.**

#### ***4.5.1 Databases: their role in providing training information***

Databases could be used to supplement the more critical personal advice given by one-stop shops' staff. Only a small proportion of rural people have used databases like MARIS and TAP so far, but accessibility could be increased through a computer conferencing system such as RURTEL, which would also permit direct discussion with training advisors, providers and agencies. The Arkleton Trust is discussing a pilot project with the Highland TAP, which is in touch with the relevant department of the TC.

## **5. CONCLUDING REMARKS .**

The local development project has already raised awareness of rural training needs through the collaborative action of numerous agencies involved in discussions and meetings during the first six months of the project. Continued collaboration will be important to implement the recommendations. These fall into three main groups, each with its own funding implications:

1. Improved delivery of training to rural populations through agencies' development of rural policies and a co-ordinated approach.
2. Overcoming gaps in training needed for rural workers, non-employed and development agents.
3. Improved advice on training opportunities and delivery methods.



Rural Training Needs in Scotland is a Local Development Project directed by the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, and implemented by the Arkleton Trust.

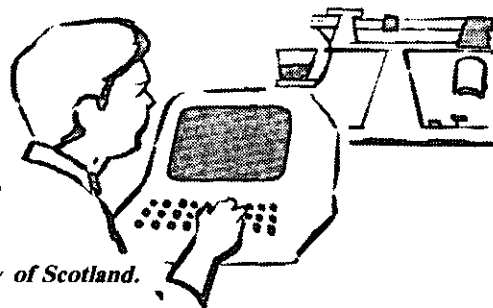
The following organisations provided funding towards the Project:

*Training Commission*

*Scottish Development Agency*

*Highlands & Islands Development Board*

*Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland.*



The Project was established because the funding agencies were concerned that training was not meeting the needs of businesses in the changing rural economy in Scotland. Also, the agencies were concerned that staff of rural development agencies might need training to be able to give effective advice in the changing economy.

Research was carried out during the period September 1987 to April 1988. A full report of the findings of the Project is available from the Arkleton Trust.

**For further information Contact:**

Dr John Bryden,  
Programme Director,  
The Arkleton Trust,  
Coulmakyle,  
NETHY BRIDGE,  
Inverness-shire PH25 3EA.  
Telephone: 047 982 688

