

ROGER CROFTS RECEIVES ICELANDIC AWARD FOR HIS ENVIRONMENTAL WORK

On 7 October 2014 the President of Iceland, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, presented Roger Crofts, naturalist, with the Knight's Cross of the Icelandic Order of the Falcon.

The Citation

For more than two decades Roger Crofts has had fruitful cooperation with Icelandic scientists and public institutions dealing with vegetation and environmental issues in Iceland. He has enthusiastically studied the Icelandic environment, observed the work of academics, NGOs and the government, and spoken on their at meetings and lectured at conferences both nationally and internationally.

Roger Crofts has provided advice to the Environment and Natural Resource Ministry, the Soil Conservation Service, the Nature Conservation (later Environment) Agency and numerous other organisations and individuals in this country. Among the issues that Roger Crofts has focussed on is the protection Pjórsárver. He has visited the area on a number of occasions, reviewed the situation in detail and obtained information from scientists and local people of the uniqueness of the area. He has spoken and written on the importance of Pjórsárver for international protection standards, argued for its extension and improved protection and proposed that the area be placed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Roger Crofts has written numerous articles on environmental issues in Iceland in newspapers and magazines, always focusing on the vegetation and nature conservation interests of the country. In 2011 he finished writing the book *Healing the Land*, which is a comprehensive history and analysis of soil conservation land reclamation in Iceland.

Roger Crofts is a physical geographer by training. After several years of work in research and teaching, he worked for the Scottish Government. He was given the task, in collaboration with Magnus Magnusson and Lindsay Manson, of establishing a new institution for conservation, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), which began operating in 1992. Roger Crofts led the agency for the first 10 years, and Magnus Magnusson was Chairman of the Board from the outset to 1999. Soon after the establishment of SNH, cooperation with Iceland concerning the environment, and Roger Crofts has nourished and strengthened our partnership to this day.

Roger Crofts has, since he retired as Chief Executive of SNH, worked as an independent adviser on conservation with governments, international organisations, businesses and charitable organisations. He has produced unique work in promoting conservation and publicising the need to respect the land and the environment.

Roger Crofts contribution to this work has gained much respect in his homeland. He has been honoured in various ways, including award of a CBE (Commander of the British Empire). With his close ties to Iceland, he has done an invaluable job for our country. His support and contribution has been characterised by a combination of sublime ideal and great knowledge of nature and the environment.

Signed by

Vigdís Finnbagadóttir, President of Iceland 1980-96

Helgi Björnsson, Research Professor, Institute of Earth Sciences, University of Iceland

Sveinn Runólfsson, Director Soil Conservation Service of Iceland

Þóra Ellen Þórhallsdóttir, Professor Life and Environmental Sciences, University of Iceland

Andrés Arnalds, Assistant Director, Soil Conservation Service of Iceland

Guðríður Þorvaraðsdóttir, Head of Protected Areas, Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources, Government of Iceland