

## **SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE – FROM THE INSIDE**

### **The book**

This book is for anyone interested in Scotland's natural heritage, its diverse natural history and landscape and the centuries of human interaction raising many issues still unresolved at present. It is also for anyone interested in how government works, the role of a government agency in contentious issues and how a public sector chief executive carries out their role. The potential audience is therefore wide: current and former staff of SNH/NatureScot, staff in partner bodies particularly the environmental NGOs, as well as those involved in the machinery of government as civil and public servants or as advisors and commentators.

Roger Crofts tells his story from the inside with honesty about the challenges, opportunities and failures. He places the establishment of SNH in the context of the division between nature conservation and countryside management within government, and assesses the factors leading to organisational change as essential background to his story. His in depth reflections on the mantra of 'working in partnership' with government and with many other bodies are as relevant today as they were over three decades ago.

### **The author**

Roger Crofts had the unique position of working within government to develop proposals and legislation for Scottish Natural Heritage and then to establish the new body and lead it as its Chief Executive for its first decade. He is an unashamed geographer, specialising in assessing nature and how it is better managed from his early research and in later life on geoheritage conservation. More than that, he has inside knowledge of how government works as a civil servant, including responsibility for government bodies dealing with development and the natural environment. Since then, he has written and lectured widely on caring for the environment without fear or favour. Roger has been a trustee and non-executive director of many organisations, contributing especially on strategy, policy and resource management. His work has been recognised by the award of many honours in the academic and environmental worlds in Scotland, the UK, Iceland and globally. [www.rogercrofts.net](http://www.rogercrofts.net)

### **Quotes**

'I have known Roger Crofts since the early 1990s, and worked very closely with him from 1991 to 1999 when he was Chief Executive of Scottish Natural Heritage, of which I was chairman. I was constantly impressed by his prodigious capacity for hard work, his meticulous attention to detail, his administrative skills, his shrewd judgement, and his drive for excellence throughout the organisation.

His expert knowledge of the geography and geology of Scotland, and his love of the outdoors, were an inspiration to us all. He always prepared himself (and me!) very carefully ahead of meetings, where his observations were always helpful, constructive and very much to the point.

As a person, Roger is an affectionate and steadfast friend, and an enjoyable and energetic companion. He does not always suffer fools gladly, but usually manages to disguise the fact. He has dedicated his life to public service in one form or another. He also has an enviable talent for summing up long discussions neatly, lucidly and succinctly – and impromptu.'

**Magnus Magnusson, KBE**

**2002**

‘I had the privilege of working with Roger Crofts at S.N.H. between 1999 and his retirement in 2002. I can think of no better person to compile this authoritative history of the organisation and to have the energy, enthusiasm, and tenacity to see it through to publication.’

**Dr John Markland CBE**

**Chairman Scottish Natural Heritage 1999-2006**

‘This book is not a celebration of SNH’s achievements; someone else will have to write that. It is about Roger’s insights into setting up a management system that made these achievements possible. It is about being laser-focussed on the ultimate vision and ensuring that the system is fit for achieving that purpose. It is about encouraging individuals and bringing them together as a team to take forward the objectives of the organisation. I’m sure senior executives of other government – and indeed non-governmental – bodies, maybe even some corporate bosses, could learn much from the ideas that Roger discusses. With an eye to the news as I write this, I might tactfully suggest that a few Government Ministers might also benefit from Roger’s insights as they struggle to bring together dysfunctional departments! I hope it might also encourage current Scottish Ministers to reinvigorate their support for the rebranded NatureScot that now takes forward the work of SNH.’

**Michael Scott, OBE**

**Deputy Chairman, Scottish Natural Heritage 1999-2005**

‘This book is an invaluable record of the creation of Scottish Natural Heritage (now NatureScot) and of the people and institutions involved in the birth of a new approach to nature conservation in Scotland. Very few people “who were there” have the combined insight and overview of the stresses and tensions involved. Indeed, Roger is perhaps the only person who could write this book, and I am delighted that after some considerable persuasion from Des Thompson and I, that he has done so.

It is a fascinating read and is historically important in the context of modern nature conservation. It is, however, much more than that. It shows how governments work, how important people and their personalities are in shaping organisations and how taking a long-term view is important in tackling the key issues and pressures nature now faces across Scotland.

I am acutely aware in my role as Chair of NatureScot that we are able to help nature now so effectively thanks to the efforts of Roger and the others involved in the creation of, and in the early years, of the organisation.’

**Professor Colin Galbraith, FRSE**

**Chair of NatureScot 2023-**

‘The establishment of Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) in 1992 was momentous for the conservation and enhancement of nature in Scotland. I was part of the organisation from inception, seeing it evolve in response to political and environmental challenges and opportunities. This book provides a vividly insightful commentary on the journey made by SNH. It is instructive and essential reading for politicians, public servants, environmentalists and students, each of whom should be uniquely better informed about how an ‘independent’ public body operates. Professor Crofts is unstinting and unsparing in his excellent narrative.’

**Professor Des Thompson, FRSE FCIEEM**  
**former Principal Adviser on Science and Biodiversity with SNH and successor**  
**NatureScot, and currently Leverhulme Emeritus Fellow with the University of the**  
**Highlands and Islands, and adviser to the United Nations on climate change.**

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