

Year of Natural  
Scotland 2013



Make 2013 **your** year to explore  
Scotland's nature and landscapes.



*Did you know?*

John Muir has  
mountains, beaches  
and even an asteroid  
named after  
him.

Houndpoint, East Lothian



Ben A'an, Trossachs National Park



The Cobbler, Argyll

**Celebrate John Muir and follow  
his footsteps into the great  
Scottish outdoors this autumn.**

John Muir was not just one of the world's  
great adventurers, but also an explorer,  
botanist, inventor, writer and visionary  
who dedicated his life to preserving the  
natural world.

But did you know that he was a Scot and  
that it was in Scotland he first fell in love  
with nature?

**Find out more at  
[www.snh.gov.uk/johnmuir](http://www.snh.gov.uk/johnmuir)**



**Scottish Natural Heritage**  
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba  
All of nature for all of Scotland  
Nàdar air fad airson Alba air fad



## IT'S GREAT OUTDOORS

Heroic Scottish fell runner  
Finlay Wild has become the  
first person ever to cross  
the Cuillin Ridge on the Isle  
of Skye in less than three  
hours. We caught up with  
him to share his story.



**FIONA  
RUSSELL**

**I**t takes the average hiker  
two days, a mountain  
guide, good climbing  
skills and a great deal of  
guts to traverse the Cuillin  
Ridge on the Isle of Skye.

Some experienced mountaineers might pull off  
the 12km feat, with 3000m of ascent and descent,  
in one day if the weather is on their side.

Yet this month, fell runner Finlay Wild crossed  
the ridge in less than three hours.

In doing so, the Fort William GP broke his  
own previous record of three hours, 14 minutes  
and 58 seconds.

He also took more than 17 minutes off the  
previous Cuillin record holder Es Tresidder's  
time, which was set in 2007.

Finlay, 29, said: "I am elated. I have had this  
traverse record in my sights for several years.  
"It feels great to have achieved it and to have  
gone under three hours is brilliant."

The infamous Cuillin Ridge is claimed to be  
Scotland's toughest Alpine-style climb. The Black

**"I'm elated.  
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Cuillin form a  
lofty and jagged  
series of  
mountain tops  
that characterise  
the high-rise  
landscape  
of Skye.

The route includes  
11 Munros, which are  
Scottish mountains  
with a summit of more  
than 3000ft.

The Cuillin speed  
attempts are  
measured from the  
southernmost  
summit of

Gars-bheinn to the northernmost peak of  
Sgurr nan Gillean.

And the rules dictate that all of the main  
climbing pitches, including four notoriously  
challenging climbs, must be completed.

The most difficult climbing sections include  
down-climbing into the Thearlaich Dubh Gap  
and the famously tough Inaccessible Pinnacle  
(In Pinn).

To achieve the solo traverse, runners travel  
unsupported while climbing and descending  
without use of ropes.

For Finlay, the record-breaking traverse has  
come a decade after his first experience on the  
Black Cuillin.

Back then, he hiked the route with his  
mountain guide dad Roger Wild.

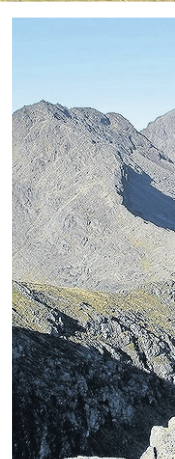
Finlay, a member of Lochaber Athletic Club,  
said: "On that first go, we finished in around eight  
hours, so we weren't slow.

"But ever since, the Cuillin has been something  
I have thought about."

As an experienced climber and an  
accomplished mountain runner, Finlay knew  
that a fast traverse was within his capabilities. He

### SKYE'S THE LIMIT

Finlay with the  
Cuillins behind  
him. He crossed  
the ridge in under  
three hours



has won the Ben Nevis Race four times and  
competed mountain running in the Italian  
Dolomites for Britain.

Finlay said: "The Cuillin Ridge doesn't scare  
me and while it can be dangerous, I have the  
expertise to do the climbs well.

"But there are still risks and you need  
the conditions to be on your side to make  
good progress."

Finlay admits that his previous attempt  
made him even more determined to score a  
good time on the traverse.

He said: "In June, I did a very fast time of three  
hours and 10 minutes but unfortunately I  
missed touching one of the summits.

"The traverse record is based on trust and I  
knew I hadn't quite completed the route, even if  
I was only metres from that summit cairn of  
Sgurr Mhic Choinnich.

"I think that it actually made me more  
determined to go back and do it again  
this month."

Many hours have been spent practising  
sections of the ridge.

Finlay said: "I have been very focused on this  
project this year and have repeatedly run and  
climbed sections.

"Every time you go up you learn new wee bits  
and it all adds up to make time savings.

"I know the whole traverse in parts very well

## PICTURE OF



**Leading Scottish landscape  
photographer Colin Prior  
tells us about a spectacular  
view from Cardwell Bay,  
Firth of Clyde**

**Follow in the footsteps of Scottish adventurer John Muir and explore the outdoors this autumn.**