

Participant Information Sheet

Version 1 (January 2024)

Precious Persistence: The Ecological Legacy of Shetland Botanical Writing for our Modern Understanding and Experience of Rare Plants in the Face of Climate Change

The project

‘Precious Persistence’ seeks to understand how historical writings about Shetland wild plants are shaping our modern understanding of rare plant ecology and how we experience rare plants today.

We are collecting information on Shetland plants from a variety of sources including books, archives, botanical databases, herbaria, and the words of stakeholders and community members to explore the changing relationships between people and nature. We are interested in how this informs conservation activities and affects how we feel about rare and vulnerable plant species especially in the face of climate change.

What will you do in the project?

We are inviting you to participate in the first phase of our project. We would like to collect your stories about your experience of Shetland plants, especially rare plants. We will also be carrying out interviews with stakeholders working with nature, conservation, and local history.

In the next phase of our project, we will use this information to help us understand and try to overcome the chronic issue of shifting baseline syndrome. This is when knowledge is lost between generations leading to an incomplete understanding of how nature is changing.

We would like to make stories available as part of a digital resource, and to share stories creatively with a wider audience. We will be inviting further participation and engagement with our project as it develops.

This research forms part of a postgraduate project being carried out at with the Institute for Northern Studies and the Centre for Mountain Studies at the University of the Highlands and Islands in partnership with the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

What would taking part involve?

We plan to collect stories in a variety of ways. You can submit them online, email them to us or post them to us (contact details on p.3). If you would like to participate but need to send your story in a different way, please contact us to talk about the format that would work best for you. If you are under 18, you can ask a parent or guardian to submit a story on your behalf.

If you are taking part in an interview, we can provide you with a list of questions in advance. The interview would be with a postgraduate researcher and could be audio or video recorded depending on whether it is in person or online. We like to take pictures during our project for social media, our homepage, academic talks, project outputs and outreach

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events. We understand that not everyone is keen on appearing in pictures. Let us know your preferences and we can tailor our use of media accordingly.

In addition, we would like you to complete a short questionnaire to investigate nature-connectedness. We would also like to collect some basic demographic information.

You will have the opportunity to either contribute your information and/or story anonymously to the project or to be acknowledged as a participant or as an author of a specific story. You will be able to provide permissions for different forms of data use on the participant consent form.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

We believe the benefits of this project will be to deepen our collective understanding of the importance of Shetland cultural heritage around plants and the natural environment. This could be used as a new way to have conversations about climate change. We hope that you will find value in adding your words to this project. The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is a partner in this project and will be using our research findings and project outputs to help deliver their Scottish Plant Conservation Programme.

Are there any risks in taking part?

If interviews are being carried out in person, given the current situation of managing COVID-19, we will need to adhere to regulations and national guidelines as necessary. We can do virtual interviews if you are not able to meet in person.

We recognise that talking about personal experiences can cause positive and negative emotions. Participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you take part, you can choose what experiences to share with us. If you find yourself in need of emotional support, Samaritans is a UK charity that provides free emotional support any time of day or night: call Samaritans on 116 123.

Who is funding this study?

Rebecca Cornwell is funded by the Scottish Graduate School for the Arts and Humanities.

What is going to happen with the information you share?

We will use the information for research purposes and to develop further outputs from this project. This will include academic publications, talks and creative outputs. Our research findings will be communicated within the University of the Highlands and Islands and externally including to our partners at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and funders at the Scottish Graduate School for the Arts and Humanities and to wider audiences in Scotland and beyond.

For the purpose of academic publication and project reporting, anonymised quotes and excerpts of interviews and stories might be used in written form. Where interview participants provide specific consent to take part in audio/video recordings that may be used in project outputs, then this information will not be anonymous. However, participants

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will always have the option not to participate in this way and the ways in which the data will be used will be made clear prior to each interview.

A selection of pictures will be publicly accessible because we would like to share the project with a broader audience. Again, specific consent will be requested from participants to use pictures for this purpose.

You are free to withdraw from this study without giving any reason for a period of 6 months after which point data collected will be used for the next phase of this project. You can withdraw by contacting Professor Donna Heddle (see details below).

What happens now?

We hope this information sheet was helpful for you to understand what the project is about and what the implications of participation are. However, we would be very happy to answer any further questions regarding the project, or the approaches involved, or anything related to the project. Please feel invited to get in touch with us (contact information below).

Best wishes,
Rebecca Cornwell and Donna Heddle

Contact details:

Academic Partner Contact: Professor Donna Heddle

This project was granted ethical approval by the University of Highlands and Islands Research Ethics Committee on 25/1/24 (Application ID ETH2324-0398).

If you have any questions/concerns, during or after the research project please contact: Professor Donna Heddle (donna.heddle@uhi.ac.uk), or Rebecca Cornwell (23018253@uhi.ac.uk)

<https://www.perth.uhi.ac.uk/subject-areas/centre-for-mountain-studies/phd-students/rebecca-cornwell/precious-persistence-project/>

Postal address:
Rebecca Cornwell
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UHI Perth,
Crieff Road,
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Scan the QR code to go to our project:



Funded by:

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Data protection

Lawful basis for processing personal data:

The lawful basis for processing personal data is:

- Use is necessary for the performance a task in the public interest (with a basis in law) or under official authority vested in us (public task). In this case the undertaking of education or research by the University or its students in keeping with the University's public task. This public task including the planning, delivery, and communication of research. Research includes conducting the research and the taking all required steps to ensure the safety, validity and academic integrity of the research. It may also include re-use of the research data for further research, storage for later inspection, auditing and archiving.
- You have given consent for the use.

Your data will or may be shared with the following recipients or categories of recipients:

- The University of the Highlands and Islands and its Academic Partner Organisations, including
- Relevant UHI exam boards comprising UHI and external representatives.
- All individuals to whom UHI considers access should be granted for academic integrity, safety and safeguarding, marking, audit, records management, library, archiving, and quality assurance purposes (and to ensure all data is handled, and research conducted, in keeping with UHI's policies and procedures). The parties may include UHI staff, contractors or selected external individuals. Such access will only be used as necessary.
- Data may be handled by UHI, or academic partner, ICT or records management staff who are required to undertake actions to keep the data safe, maintain data integrity, or ensure the data is handled and secured in keeping with UHI's data policies and procedures. The parties may include UHI staff, contractors or selected external individuals. Such access will only be used as necessary. For any questions about data sharing please contact the research supervisor or principal investigator listed in this document.
- JISC Online Survey.

Retention

Your data will be retained for the following length of time: 10 years

This retention period is in respect of the research data as collected. Anonymized data may be kept for longer and the retention period does not apply to any materials published as a result of this project.