



What did you do at the Lighthouse ?

I worked as a data and field assistant at the Lighthouse for just under a year in total, initially starting out as a volunteer. My main role was to help Barbara with the long term dolphin photo identification project. Out on the water I would help scan the firth for dolphins, record behaviour, assist with the deployment and recovery of hydrophones and measure and record aspects of the environment. Back in the office, I was responsible for organising the survey and hydrophone data accurately and updating the dolphin photo-ID catalogue. I'd also help Tim to maintain the survey equipment and building from time to time.

What are you doing now ?

I worked for RSPB for a few years, first of all in communications then working on a community engagement project, teaching schoolchildren all about red kites which I loved. Following this I worked at Marine Scotland as an offshore chemical assessor. I kept thinking about people engagement so I went off to do my teacher training degree. I've been teaching Secondary Biology for the last several years and currently teach Biology at Speyside High School. However, I've realised I was missing being outdoors, and recently completed training to become a forest school leader, and am now planning a series of outdoor woodland wellbeing sessions. Environmental education is my calling and I've never forgotten how inspired I was at the Lighthouse.

What was your best experience at the Lighthouse ?

There are so many things to say here! It was such a unique experience. It gave me a chance to be part of a world renowned study, right on my own doorstep which I'll forever be grateful for. It enabled me to live in the vibrant wee town of Cromarty and to work in a lighthouse with creative and passionate people – we were a tight team but everyone was welcomed in and you never really knew who from where in the world was going to turn up for tea. A particular highlight was travelling down Scotland's east coast to deploy hydrophones. We finished up in the Firth of Forth on the lookout for Orca which had been recently spotted there. The whole trip was just really exciting!



Claire Buchanan
Research Assistant • 2006 - 2007

