



Marc Crothall MBE (Scottish Tourism Alliance)

Marc is 62 years young, and many say they never believe he's that age when they meet him! From a very young age he was off on his travels and has lived in 7 countries around world. He started his working life in tourism, leisure, and hospitality industry at the age of 17.

Marc's first proper job in the industry was a food and beverage kitchen assistant at the Metropole Hotel in Brighton before moving taking up a trainee management opportunity with Gilbeys' hotels in South Africa in 1981. He has since gone on to hold a variety of front-line senior management and executive positions across different sectors of the tourism, hospitality, and leisure industry in various parts of the globe stretching from the Western Cape of South Africa to the Highlands of Scotland.

Marc came to Glasgow in 1990 where he met his Glaswegian wife, Adele. He has five children 33-17yrs plus a 1yr old grandson Angus all born in Scotland. Despite being a nomad in his early years and not having a "braw" Scottish accent, with his mothers' ancestral roots tracing back to Roslin in Mid-Lothian he calls Scotland home.

In May 2012 Marc was appointed as the first CEO of [The Scottish Tourism Alliance \(STA\)](#) acknowledged as Scotland's overarching trade body for the tourism and hospitality sector.

In November 2022 he was appointed to co-chair the Tourism and Hospitality Industry Leadership Group (THILG) which act as the strategic guardian, think tank Scotland's national tourism strategy, Scotland Outlook2030. He co-chairs the THILG together Scotland's Minister for Business Richard Lochhead MSP.

In 2020 Marc was awarded the "Fellowship" by the Scottish Hotel industry for his outstanding contribution to the industry and in June 2022 was awarded an MBE in the Queens Platinum Jubilee Birthday Honours for services to the Tourism Industry in Scotland. More recently in October 2023 he also received the Industry Contribution award.

Marc is a massive rugby fan supporting Glasgow Warriors and Scotland- He's a big foodie too and loves trying new things – he enjoys a good cut of Angus steak, all types of seafood – but has been known to eat sea grubs, crocodile, and snake too. He loves the great outdoors and going for long walks at the weekend to recharge for the week ahead with his two best pals his wife Adele and his 3year old Cockapoo Loki.

Carron Tobin (SCOTO)

Carron Tobin is SCOTO's Exec Director and a leading light in community led tourism across Scotland. She devised SCOTO's Press Pause initiative from an initial pilot with the North Highland Initiative and has now delivered over 40 workshops across Scotland. She is based in Callander where she also runs her own consultancy Rural Dimensions Ltd. Carron is an active member of the Scottish Tourism and Hospitality Industry Leadership Group where she is mission lead for Community Led Tourism, one of five strategic missions within Scotland Outlook 2030 - the national tourism strategy. Carron has worked with several communities in the North Highlands and is delighted to be part of Venture North's 2025 Tourism Gathering in Brora.

Douglas Gibson (North Highland Initiative)

Living in Gairloch, Wester Ross, for 37 years now, Douglas Gibson has a passion for community development. Following 12 years of being self – employed in the tool hire trade near Glasgow, Douglas has worked in the voluntary sector now for over 30 years. This has been as a volunteer, committee member, and employee for a number of Community Groups that include Childcare, Local Radio, Events & festivals and Tourism – which has included setting up and running “Visit Wester Ross”, established now for well over 20 years. He has worked with North Highland Initiative since 2012. In between times he has also been a news reporter – IT consultant – coalman – barman – and was employed at the Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve until attempting to retire just over two years ago. It didn't work out that way!

Chris Taylor (Visit Scotland)

VisitScotland's purpose is to help drive a vibrant and dynamic visitor economy for Scotland, growing its value, and helping to create better places for people to live, work and visit. Chris leads a team, across the Highlands and Islands, who support investment in the industry, and work with stakeholders on strategic approaches to grow regional tourism economies and support a transition towards more sustainable tourism. Before joining VisitScotland, Chris worked in economic and community development in the North of Scotland for many years. He lives on the Black Isle, just north of Inverness, and enjoys spending as much time as possible in the outdoors, exploring Scotland.

Cara Donald (Flow Country Partnership):

Cara works for Nature Scot based in the Golspie office, though the area she covers ranges across the North Highlands and Northern Isles. For the last 4 years her role has been heavily involved in working towards the inscription of the Flow Country as a World Heritage Site as well as assessing Agri Environment Climate Scheme applications and being involved with the local community partnerships and the Highland Tourism Partnership. She works within a team of people from various organisations such as Highland Council, North Highland Initiative, RSPB and UHI which now work under the flag of the Flow Country Partnership. Prior to this role, Cara worked as a ranger for nearly 10 years across Scotland including Aviemore, Stirlingshire, Fife and Highland regions where she was involved in environmental education, biodiversity projects and heritage lottery funded projects.

Dr Nick Lindsay and Aileen Ogilvie (Clyne Heritage Society)

Dr Nick Lindsay has had a varied career, beginning in land surveying, progressing through academic, engineering and research geology, then to business, road engineering and archaeology. Nick was the founding secretary of Clyne Heritage Society in 1998 and has been the chair since 2001 instigating and managing many local projects including the Clynekirkton Project (regeneration of local historic disused graveyard), the four community archaeological excavations and assisted in the organisation of others, such as the nationally acclaimed Brora Salt Pans excavation.

Aileen Ogilvie is the Learning & Community Engagement Officer for Clyne Heritage Society based at Brora Heritage Centre. With over 20 years experience in the arts, culture and heritage sector working Aileen has delivered several large-scale community engagement projects across Scotland.

Clyne Heritage Society formed in 1998 from a group of people in the parish of Clyne who were interested in preserving the areas heritage. Over the past 27 years the heritage society have delivered a wide range of projects covering many of the historical themes in the area – this includes an annual week-long archaeology dig, programme of speakers, heritage walks and activities for families during the holidays. In 2016 they took over running Brora Heritage Centre from Highlife Highland and in 2024 they transitioned from a volunteer run organisation to employing a team of professional heritage and development staff to support them with a move to a brand new community Museum on the edge of the A9.