

THE Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is part of a national family of protected landscapes. AONBs have the same level of protection as National Parks. The primary purpose of the designation is to ensure the conservation and enhancement of Natural Beauty.

The relationship between people and place is critical to the future health of the AONB designation. Living landscapes need sustainable vibrant communities, where the relationship between people and place results in a balance between the social and economic needs of communities and the protection of the environment.

The management of the AONB is overseen by the IW AONB Partnership which is comprised of organisations and individuals with a direct management role or interest in the future of the AONB, and is jointly funded by Natural England and the Isle of Wight Council. Together they endeavour to deliver the aims and objectives of the Isle of Wight AONB Management Plan, in an effort to secure the conservation and enhancement of the Island's finest landscapes for future generations. ■



Winter mist at Nunwell. © AONB Unit. Photographer John Brownscombe

Chairman's Welcome

Towards the end of summer I always find myself looking forward to the autumn and winter months. This is partly because the Island becomes less busy, but mostly because it becomes more atmospheric. There are a number of reasons for this. The changing colours of the fields after harvest, together with the gradually changing tones of our woods and hedgerows, bring a greater depth to the landscape, particularly after a dry summer when the countryside becomes tired and listless. The weather too, plays an important part in re-invigorating the atmosphere of the countryside during the autumn and winter seasons. Still, sunny days that start off with a crisp frost and end with a wonderful sunset and rapidly dropping temperature are magical and to be savoured. The low sun creates shadows that emphasise every landscape feature, and there is something special about the warmth of the sun at this time of year. Conversely, stormy days are

equally atmospheric. One moment a heavy shower and a good soaking and the next minute sunshine reflecting off the sea and contrasting with the dark brooding clouds. The sea is important in this context in the way that it floods the landscape with reflected light and provides drama, particularly with big waves and pounding surf. I know that not everyone relishes getting wet but even on rainy days it is good to get out and even nicer getting back to the warmth and shelter of your home, knowing that it is always good to get the fresh air and allowing yourself a feeling of virtue. The Isle of Wight AONB, with all its variety, plays a central part to Island life but not just in the summer months, so whether a local or a discerning visitor don't miss an opportunity to get out there and experience it this autumn and winter!

During the summer months the AONB team get out to many shows and events. This year they carried out a survey finding out peoples '50 AONB favourites'. The results are not at all surprising with Tennyson Down coming top of the list, with people who value its peace,

tranquillity and views. Second on the list was Freshwater Bay because it was valued for rock pools and snorkelling. Whilst none of the first fifty were a surprise, it was interesting to see the many reasons they were chosen and demonstrates what a wide-ranging resource the AONB is and how it can be enjoyed in so many ways. You can find the list on the back page of the newsletter.

Also included in this newsletter is a page dedicated to progress with the Biodiversity Action Plan. This is all about doing the best for our wildlife, which represents a fundamental part of the AONB. As ever I hope you enjoy this issue.

Tony Tutton *Chairman,
Isle of Wight AONB Partnership Steering
Committee* ■



The Isle of Wight AONB Partnership is a member of the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Zummet vor Nippers!!!

Chines of the AONB

CHINES are unique features of the Isle of Wight landscape, each with their own fascinating history, geology and wildlife. They are real “windows in time”, providing evidence of dinosaurs, swampy deltas and ancient civilisations. Their use by people as access points to and from the sea, have given rise to countless stories about shipwrecks, dramatic rescues and smuggling.

The word chine originates from the Saxon word “cinan” which means yawn or gap, and the Old English word “cinu” which means a fissure or ravine. The south, east and west of the Island has many small rivers, which abruptly meet the sea through deep ravines and waterfalls cut into the cliffs forming chines. There are no chines in the north of the Island, because the rivers flowing into the Solent travel longer distances from their source to the sea. This means they do not cut into the rocks, and instead form gently sloping valleys.

Chines are formed by the rapid erosion of soft clays and sands caused by water flowing out towards the sea. Their formation probably began some time after the end of the Ice Age, some 10,000 years ago. The sea level at this time was some 30 metres lower than it is now, allowing deep trenches to be cut through the landscape by water escaping to the sea.

Alum Bay - The rocks here are from the Palaeogene era, which form the north of

the Island. The name probably comes from large quantities of alum mined here as early as the 16th century.

Barnes - In 1200 BC this site was home to a Middle Bronze Age coastal community. Both the chine and settlement have now been lost to erosion, although the cemetery with stones or totems marking the graves, could still be traced as recently as 1927.

Blackgang - The original chine valley has been lost due to intensive coastal erosion, caused by south-westerly storms and unstable geology. All that now remains of the chine, is a small stream cascading over the cliff face. The word means “dark path or track” from the Old English “bloec” and “gang”.

Brook - Chines were crucial “gateways to the sea” for rescues, and the Brook lifeboat station opened in 1860. The boat was launched and recovered from a horse-drawn carriage, not easy at night with a gale blowing!

Chilton - A flat axe was found here, possibly originating from early copper mines in Ireland. In the Anglo Saxon charter of AD826, it was known as “bican doene” the Bitch’s mouth.

Compton - Truncated by cliff recession, this is now only a small notch with a little stream falling over cliffs. The Domesday Book calls it “Cantune”, meaning “the farmstead or estate in a valley”.

Cowleaze - Now largely dry, many specimens of a small primitive ornithopod called Hysilophodon, which lived on the Island in early Cretaceous times 115 million years ago, have been found near the chine.

Grange - Vectisware pottery, exclusive to the Island and manufactured until Roman times, has been found here. The earliest evidence of human activity was the 1928 discovery of a spear tip of the Old Stone Age.

Ladder - Onshore winds here blow up sand from the cliff face. These form small hummocks on the cliff top, which are subsequently colonised by sand sedge plants. These unusual dunes are visible from the coastal path.

Luccombe - A grim stone carving recovered from the shore, suggests the local Celtic population submitted to the gruesome cult of the severed head. A small mediaeval community also flourished here, and an unusual find was a Nordic whetstone from the Eidsborg region of Norway.

Marsh - This has become an inland tributary, and joins with Grange chine. It also has the dubious reputation of being the Island’s most littered in a coastal survey.

Shepherd’s Chine - Possibly used as a landing place for late Iron Age and Roman craft. Finds include the remains of great jars known as amphorae, together with a variety of jugs and tableware. It was known as “Eadgylses mupan” (Edgill’s landing place) during the 9th century.

Shippards - The cliffs here are capped by gravel deposits; these once formed the beds of ancient rivers flowing to the coastline further away and lower than today.

Walpan - A fragment of a large beaker, probably used around 2000 BC was found here, decorated with the marks of small sharp fingernails. In Old English from “walu” a ridge or embankment, and “penn” a pen or fold for animals.

Whale - The boilers of the SS *Cormorant*, which in 1886 ran aground in fog below the chine, can still be seen as a mass of dark rocks in clear seas slightly to the east of the chine. The name’s origin is unlikely to refer to a stranded whale, and is more likely to be from a local family called Wavell, owners of Atherfield Farm between 1557 and 1636.

Widdick - The word is associated with “Withicke” and “Withicks” meaning lots or portions of ground. Early names were “Whyfyldre” in 1550 and “Whytewill” in 1559, probably named from a “white spring”.

Note: This information was compiled using the booklet “Island Chines” published by the former Isle of Wight AONB Project and all references to place name origins can be found in “The Place-Names of the Isle of Wight” by A D Mills. ■

Answers to Crossword puzzle in Issue 12:

Across - 4) Carisbrooke Castle 8) Eleanor 9) Newtown 10) Reserve 13) Afton Farm 14) Seven 15) Alum Bay 16) Chillerton
Down - 1) Hanover Point 2) Jimi Hendrix 3) Hoy 5) Appuldurcombe 6) Tennyson 7) Fort Victoria 11) Yarmouth 12) Ventnor

Wordsearch

Can you find the names of these unique Isle of Wight features in our Wordsearch

ALUM BAY
BARNES
BLACKGANG
BROOK

CHILTON
COMPTON
COWLEAZE
GRANGE

LADDER
LUCCOMBE
MARSH
SHEPHERDS

SHIPPARDS
WALPEN
WHALE
WIDDICK

V	W	U	C	B	S	T	Y	Z	X	D	E	K	C	I	D	D	I	W	L
K	A	L	U	M	B	A	Y	S	R	H	F	B	L	M	O	Q	Y	T	S
V	A	H	E	F	G	O	P	Q	R	S	E	N	R	A	B	X	K	U	T
U	F	G	S	H	S	W	X	B	C	D	F	O	L	M	N	D	Y	W	V
K	N	L	H	M	Q	S	V	B	G	I	J	L	R	T	W	X	A	C	F
C	E	D	I	T	X	C	O	M	P	T	O	N	Z	Y	R	L	J	C	L
E	P	G	P	F	L	N	P	S	U	R	X	U	D	F	E	K	B	H	A
K	L	Z	P	R	C	K	J	E	B	F	A	E	H	L	D	J	P	I	O
Y	A	C	A	D	R	O	Q	T	L	S	U	Y	X	B	D	E	I	L	L
X	W	I	R	R	T	R	W	D	E	A	Q	R	W	Y	A	Z	K	T	J
I	M	P	D	N	E	C	F	L	P	S	H	U	T	C	L	D	F	O	E
G	Z	Y	S	T	U	Q	R	S	E	A	D	W	E	L	F	Q	R	N	Z
N	B	C	E	I	K	L	O	N	M	A	O	P	R	Y	X	B	Q	A	B
A	C	G	R	A	N	G	E	S	R	T	Z	U	K	L	J	R	P	M	N
G	P	Q	T	S	Y	H	I	K	F	D	A	E	Z	Y	X	O	Q	K	H
K	Y	E	Z	B	D	F	Q	P	Z	Y	P	R	F	L	P	O	K	U	S
A	A	S	D	R	E	H	P	E	H	S	P	D	B	Z	F	K	X	H	R
C	Q	P	I	X	Z	A	C	F	I	K	T	Y	R	B	E	M	N	Z	A
L	Y	Q	R	A	C	F	G	H	L	U	C	C	O	M	B	E	Y	Q	M
B	Y	X	J	L	T	R	V	Z	U	S	B	Q	T	F	E	B	D	V	Z

Island wildlife and countryside - an aspect of life which is highly valued by residents and visitors alike - is the focus for many organisations, as well as local groups and individuals. Each has their particular emphasis but joint working is also very important. One way in which this is being achieved is through the Isle of Wight Biodiversity Action Plan.

It has been developed over a number of years, under the guidance of a Steering Group. It is co-ordinated by the



Countryside Section of the Isle of Wight Council and has representatives from Country Land and Business Association, Island 2000 Trust, NFU, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, National Trust, RSPB, Department for Food

Environment and Rural Affairs, Dinosaur Isle, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Isle of Wight AONB and Natural England.

Members of the group will be contributing items to Finest Landscapes under the 'Go Wild on Wight' banner to explore aspects of the Island's wildlife and countryside. In this issue we consider Climate Change and what it might mean for biodiversity on an Island scale.

Exploring the possible effects of climate change on Island wildlife and landscapes

The last cuckoo?

Most of us notice the first cuckoo of spring. It foretells pleasant summer days to come. Few of us notice birds departing. Swifts leave by the end of August, then swallows and lastly, house martins. In recent years, swallows have stayed later and are common well into October. House martins are frequent in November. The answer is simple - their food source of insects keeps them here. Cold weather deters flying insects, so their extended stay must be due to warmer weather.



House martins were seen at Bembridge last January. Image: Jackie Cooper (SENPA)

Heavy winter snowfall is much less common these days. Two warblers that formerly migrated to Africa with swallows, now regularly over-winter on the Island. These are blackcaps and chiffchaffs and can be seen in scrub and gardens surviving winter. Their benefit is that they avoid a long and hazardous migration during which many perish.

So, is climate change OK? It may seem so for these birds but they are only part of the story.

The springtime delight of our bluebell woods, unique to Britain, is under threat. Dappled light reaching the forest floor has, for millennia, been just perfect. This is a finely balanced goldilocks-effect; too much shade and bluebells won't grow so abundantly. Records indicate that spring is arriving earlier, with swifter growth of shady leaf canopy that over time may destroy this wonderful spectacle. Unlike birds, plants cannot choose to migrate to a more suitable climate.

If the Gulf Stream that warms Britain fails, which is also a climate change possibility, our seas will turn cold and our climate will become like Scandinavia

If generations succeeding us are to enjoy the wildlife and scenery that we value, every one of us must reduce energy use to help safeguard our planet.

Les Street, RSPB

Soil, biodiversity and climate change

In his final book, 'The Formation of Vegetable Mould, through the action of worms, with Observations on their Habits', Charles Darwin explored the importance of organic matter and the activity of worms in the health of the soil. It is this 'vegetable mould', which makes soil much more than just finely ground rock.

Since Darwin's time, it has been found that soil is part of the subtle system that regulates the earth's atmosphere. According to a recent government report, soil organic matter is the biggest pool of carbon in the UK, so looking after it, and increasing it, may help us reduce the impact of climate change.

The challenge for farming is to conserve soil, while cultivating it to produce food. It's the organic matter which makes it fertile and workable, and so increases crop yields and farm profits.



Market gardening on greensand soil © Natural England. Photographer Joe Low

The government's most recent agri-environment schemes, Environmental Stewardship and the English Woodland Grant Scheme, can help in this process. I'd like to think Charles Darwin's spirit would approve.

**Rowan Adams,
Isle of Wight Land Care Project
Manager**

Climate Change in Geological Time

Greenhouse Earth: no polar ice caps, sea levels 300 metres higher than today, surface water temperatures 20 to 30°C, and just the highest mountain peaks of Scotland remain above the waves.

Not a Hollywood plot but reality - the reality of the Cretaceous world 100 to 65 million years ago. To visit that world all you need to do is stand and admire the chalk cliffs of Culver or Freshwater Bay.

Our magnificent white chalk cliffs started as ooze at the bottom of the sea. It was formed from the accumulation of countless microscopic remains of planktonic organisms at the bottom of the sea. The warm highly productive surface waters fed a rain of debris to the sea floor, where, way beyond the reach of daylight, lived a wide range of animals.



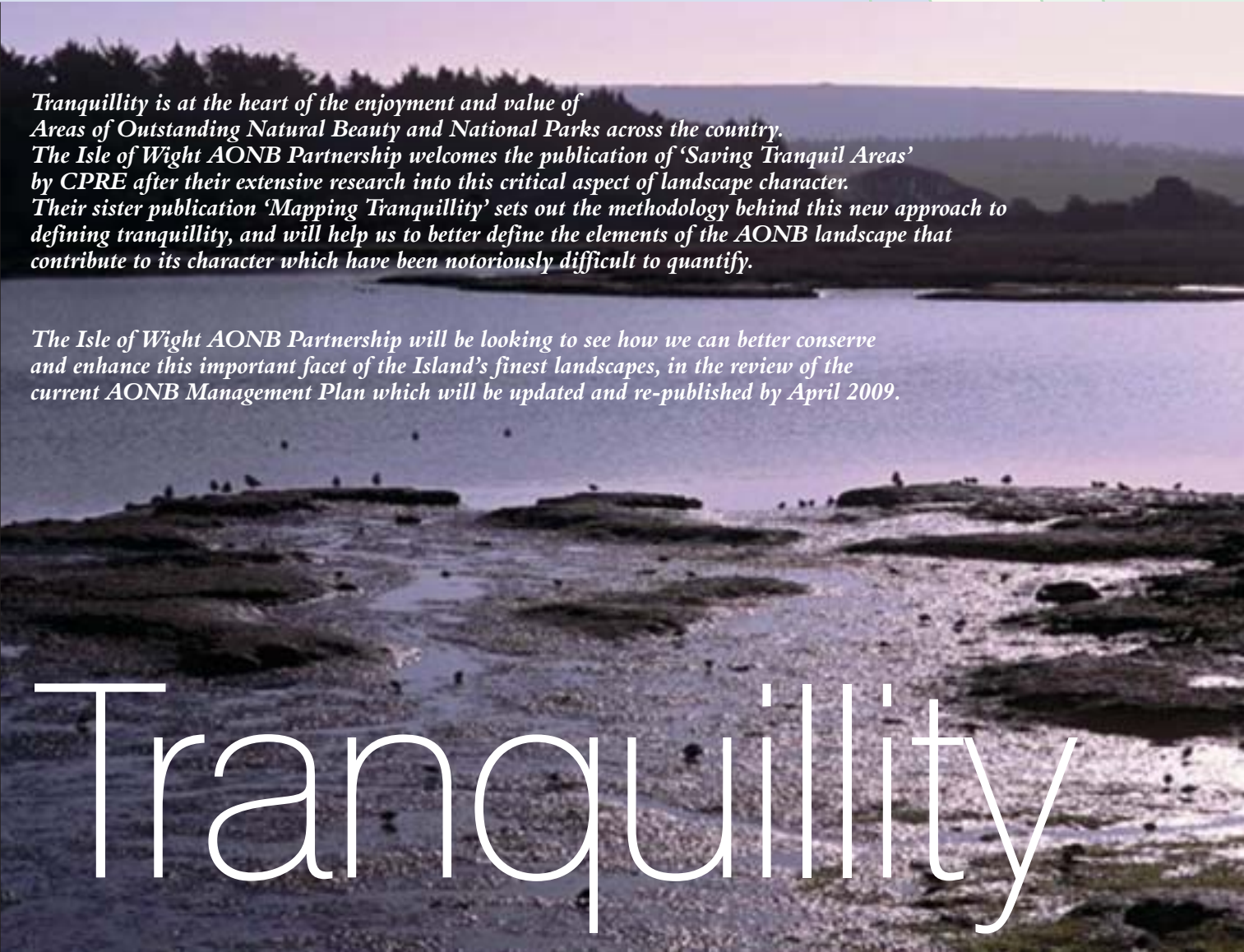
Cliffs at Yaverland © Natural England. Photographer Joe Low

The Island's beaches are made of pebbles of flint that has come from the erosion of the chalk cliffs. If you are very lucky you may find a fossilised sea urchin, but even after a brief look you will probably find a piece of flint with a hole running through it, which could be the remains of a sponge that lived in the depths of the Chalk sea.

Today the Chalk forms the highest ground on the Island. The downland 'backbone' is part of a continuous mass of chalk that links the Island's landscape through the counties of southern England all the way to the coast of Yorkshire. So next time you drive along the Downs Road give a moment's thought to the power of Greenhouse Earth to mould the landscape. Pick up a flint pebble and touch part of the Cretaceous sea

Martin Munt, Dinosaur Isle

Any comments? Visit our website at www.wildonwight.co.uk ■



Tranquillity is at the heart of the enjoyment and value of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks across the country. The Isle of Wight AONB Partnership welcomes the publication of 'Saving Tranquil Areas' by CPRE after their extensive research into this critical aspect of landscape character. Their sister publication 'Mapping Tranquillity' sets out the methodology behind this new approach to defining tranquillity, and will help us to better define the elements of the AONB landscape that contribute to its character which have been notoriously difficult to quantify.

The Isle of Wight AONB Partnership will be looking to see how we can better conserve and enhance this important facet of the Island's finest landscapes, in the review of the current AONB Management Plan which will be updated and re-published by April 2009.

Tranquillity

Tranquil creeks © Natural England. Photographer Joe Low

Louise Cook, Campaigns Outreach Officer, Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)

IF YOU ASK PEOPLE why they enjoy living in, or visiting, areas like the Isle of Wight AONB, a frequent response is the word "tranquillity". We all need tranquillity for our mental, physical and spiritual health, and there is nothing better than the peace and calm of natural surroundings to lift our spirits.

Tranquillity is one of the countryside's greatest gifts to us all. Tranquil areas please all our senses; we feel soft earth beneath our

feet, hear birdsong or the waves lapping against the seashore, enjoy the solitude and forget our troubles. But in a heavily built up country like England the chance to experience tranquillity is all too rare.

Tranquillity isn't easy to define or pinpoint on a map, because it arises from a combination of physical features and human experience. But while tranquillity is hard to measure, it's very important that we do measure it. Once we agree on how to do this,

then we can make decisions about land use and land management that protect it – and track how good a job we're doing.

The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) has developed a way of measuring and mapping tranquillity. This method combines surveys of public opinion with rigorous modelling techniques to combine a range of factors and build up a map. This method was first developed in a pilot study in 2004 by researchers at the Universities of Northumberland and Newcastle upon Tyne, focusing on areas in Durham and Northumberland, with a follow up study in the Chilterns a year later.

The work was then extended to the rest of the country using five districts in England as consultation areas. More than 1,300 countryside visitors were asked questions such as: "What is tranquillity? What adds to it? What lessens it?"

This survey produced a list of 44 factors which add to or detract from the experience of tranquillity, each weighted according to the results.

What tranquillity is: – the Top 10 Survey responses

1. Seeing a natural landscape
2. Hearing birdsong
3. Hearing peace and quiet
4. Seeing natural looking woodland
5. Seeing the stars at night
6. Seeing streams
7. Seeing the sea
8. Hearing natural sounds
9. Hearing wildlife
10. Hearing running water

What tranquillity is not: – the top 10 survey responses

1. Hearing constant noise from cars, lorries and/or motorbikes
2. Seeing lots of people
3. Seeing urban development
4. Seeing overhead light pollution
5. Hearing lots of people
6. Seeing low flying aircraft
7. Hearing low flying aircraft
8. Seeing power lines
9. Seeing towns and cities
10. Seeing roads

To create a tranquillity map, the researchers quantified these factors for each 500 metre by 500 metre square of England using a Geographical Information System (GIS). They took into account the topography of the landscape, for example in mapping the way traffic noise dissipates over distance and in working out the distance from which electricity pylons can be seen. The public survey had used photographs of man-made structures to find out how far away a building, pylon or wind turbine needs to be to not affect someone's experience of tranquillity.

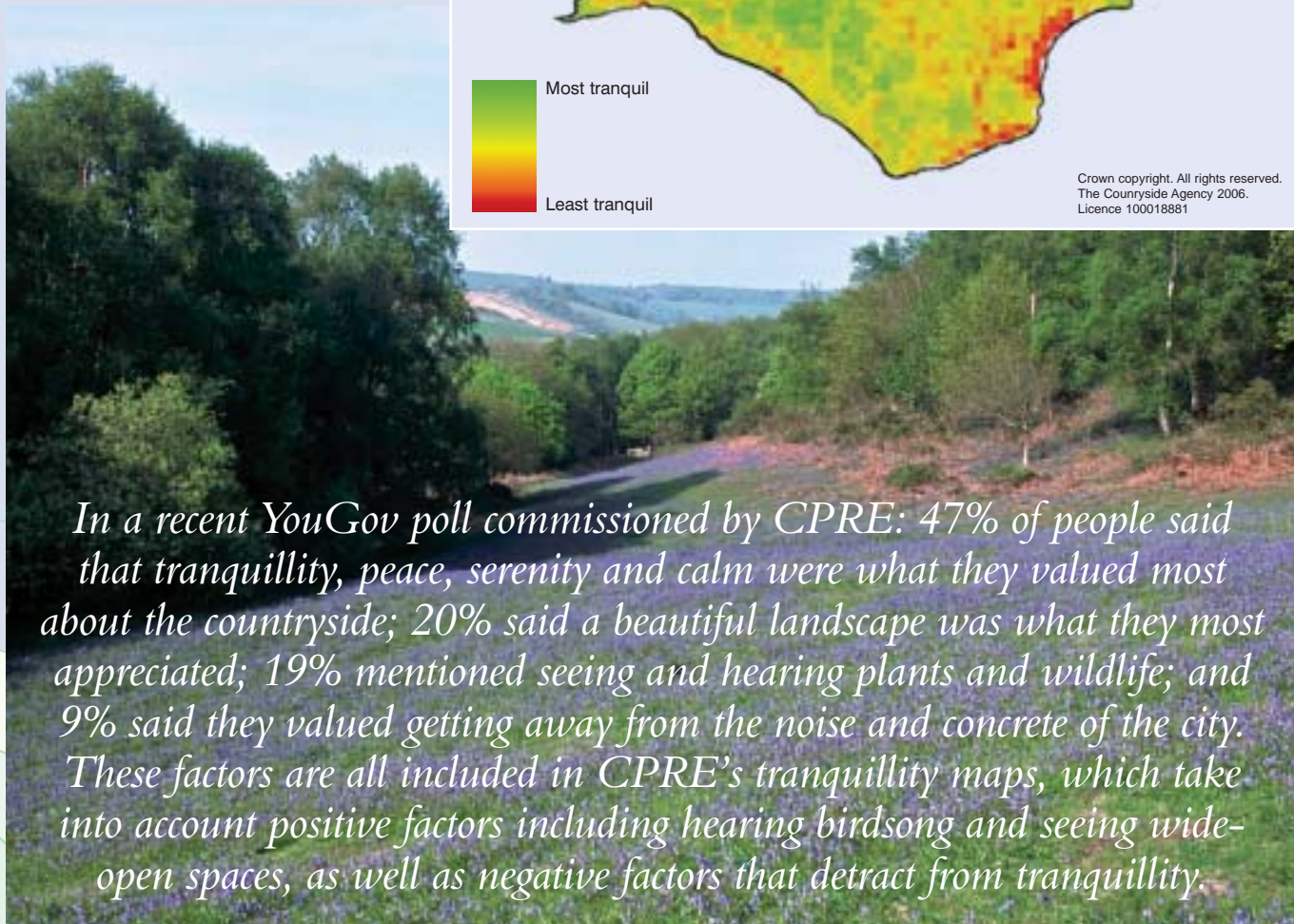
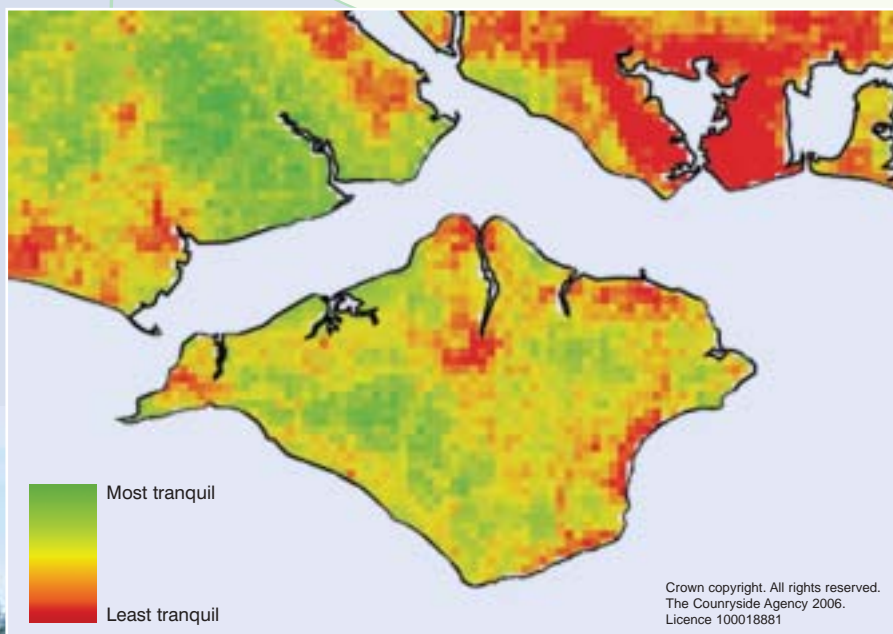
The end result is a map of England with each square given a tranquillity score made up of the positive and negative scores for each factor. This score gives a measure of how likely the environment in that square is to make people feel tranquil, averaged over time. These scores were then colour coded to give a visual image – green for more tranquil and red for less tranquil.

This method of tranquillity mapping will provide a powerful tool for anyone who makes decisions on land use by enabling them to set measurable targets for the protection and enhancement of tranquillity. And with the ever-present threats for new housing developments in rural areas and the increasing traffic on our roads and in our skies, the protection of tranquillity has never been more vital.

More information on CPRE's tranquillity campaign and the tranquillity maps can be found on www.cpre.org.uk ■



Beach at sunset © Natural England. Photographer Joe Low



Quiet woodland © Natural England. Photographer Joe Low

In a recent YouGov poll commissioned by CPRE: 47% of people said that tranquillity, peace, serenity and calm were what they valued most about the countryside; 20% said a beautiful landscape was what they most appreciated; 19% mentioned seeing and hearing plants and wildlife; and 9% said they valued getting away from the noise and concrete of the city. These factors are all included in CPRE's tranquillity maps, which take into account positive factors including hearing birdsong and seeing wide-open spaces, as well as negative factors that detract from tranquillity.

A New National Partner Natural England

The logo for Natural England, featuring the words "NATURAL" and "ENGLAND" stacked vertically in a bold, sans-serif font. The text is white and set against a solid yellow rectangular background.

A new Government body with the responsibility to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced and managed for present and future generations came into being on 2nd October 2006.

Natural England has been formed by bringing together English Nature, the landscape, access and recreation elements of the Countryside Agency and the environmental land management functions of the Rural Development Service.

Natural England will work for people, places and nature, to enhance biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas; promoting access, recreation and public well-being, and contributing to the way natural resources are

managed so that they can be enjoyed now and in the future.

Natural England is working towards the delivery of four strategic outcomes -

- A healthy natural environment: England's natural environment will be conserved and enhanced.
- Enjoyment of the natural environment: more people enjoying, understanding and acting to improve the natural environment, more often.
- Sustainable use of the natural environment: the use and management of the natural environment is more sustainable.
- A secure environmental future: decisions which collectively secure the future of the natural environment.

Natural England has the national responsibility for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks. They are a key partner and core funder of the Isle of Wight AONB Partnership, and we look forward to working with old and new colleagues alike to conserve and enhance the Island's finest landscapes. ■

Rural Social and Community Programme

In recognition of the important issues affecting people in the Isle of Wight AONB and other rural areas, the AONB Partnership is pleased to be part of the steering committee for the Rural Social and Community Programme for the Isle of Wight.

The Rural Social and Community Programme is a two year funded programme worth £214,000, which was awarded to the Isle of Wight Rural Community Council from the Department of Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). It includes funding for the Rural Housing Enabler, Community Development Officer, work to develop Social Enterprise and the Optio voluntary car service.

A new small grant stream has been launched to help individuals and organisations to access services, jobs and leisure activities on the Isle of Wight.

The 'Access to Services Grant' is run by the Isle of Wight Rural Community Council through the programme and is only available to people on the Island.

Up to £1,000 is available, depending on the size of the project, which must be based in, or for the benefit of, rural areas. Projects should demonstrate that they will increase accessibility to services, jobs or leisure activities. The funding is for revenue costs only and must be spent by the end of the financial year.



Barrington Row (Winkle Street) © Natural England. Photographer Joe Low

Organisations may apply directly themselves or through the Rural Team at the Isle of Wight Rural Community Council. Projects will be selected through an application process within agreed criteria.

For details of the criteria and an application form, contact the Rural Community Council on: 01983 524058 or email: mail@iwrcc.org.uk ■

STOP PRESS •• STOP PRESS •• STOP PRESS

Planning Matters - The AONB Unit has made comment on and will be attending the Examinations in Public of both the SE Plan and the Island Plan. For further information on our comment, please contact the AONB Unit.

Natural England, The Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Committee, Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and Rural Community Council are members of the IW AONB Partnership and we would like to thank them for their contribution to our work.

Words taken from the writings of
Charles Richards, Newchurch,
December 14th 1863.

HARK - The Newchurch Carol



1. Hark! Hark what news the Angels bring,
Glad tidings of a new born King;
Who is the saviour of mankind,
In whom we may salvation find.

2. This is the day, the blessed morn,
The saviour of mankind was born,
Born of a maid, a virgin pure,
Born without sin, from guilt secure.

3. Arise my soul, and thro' my voice,
In hymns of praise, early rejoice,
This fame extol and magnify,
From whose errands Angels fly.

4. If Angels sing at Jesus' birth,
Sure we have greater cause for mirth,
For why it was for our sake,
Christ did the human nature take.

An Island Carol?

Readers may recall that in a previous issue of *Finest Landscapes*, we made a request for information regarding a carol 'The Wold Hark' that we believed was possibly unique to the Isle of Wight and sung in churches on the Island at Christmas.

Brian Reeves from Wootton kindly sent us the accompanying carol which comes from the writings of Charles Richards of Newchurch, December 1863. This carol was sung at Newchurch in the past and was affectionately called by the Newchurch Male Voice Choir 'the Newchurch Carol'.

We believe that "Hark" could be one of many variants of a 'West Gallery' carol, as each community often had it's own variation of one carol.

Information on West Gallery carols can be found on www.wgma.org.uk

If you have any further information on this or any other local songs and carols, please contact us at the AONB Unit unit@wightaonb.org.uk or on 01983 823855. ■

Crafty Christmas Market

If you are looking for that special Christmas gift that is just a little bit different, then you should pop along to the Island Food and Craft Association's (IFCA) magical **Christmas Market**, being held at **St. Thomas' Square in Newport on Saturday 16th December starting at 9am.**

There will be an enchanting variety of festive fun going on throughout the day, with an opportunity to pick up that uniquely authentic, locally crafted gift that you have been wracking your brain for and if you have been really good this year, you may even be lucky enough to get a visit from Father Christmas.

IFCA has been set up to represent the plethora of talented local craftspeople and food producers that exist all across the Island. Associated with IFCA you will likely be aware of the increasingly popular Farmers' Markets being run in Newport (St Thomas' Square) on a Friday 9.00am - 3.00pm and Ryde (Town Square, Anglesey Street) on Saturday mornings, now the group are looking to develop a similar showcase for Island craft producers with the introduction of the Craft Market.

The Isle of Wight AONB Partnership are pleased to be supporting the Island Food and Craft Association through the Isle of Wight AONB Sustainable Development Fund. ■



© IW AONB Unit photographer John Brownscombe.

"Pokeassen about" into Christmasses past

When researching information on Isle of Wight Christmas Traditions, we found these interesting extracts on www.bbc.co.uk/h2g2 forum.

"...AG Cole records, in 1948, how the tradition in Yarmouth on the Island was for the local butcher, dressed in a spotlessly clean blue apron, to lead a well-fatted ox round the streets. The ox would be carefully groomed and adorned with ribbons and holly attracting a procession of the families who would be fed from the animal. AG Cole continues 'Discussions took place on the savoury meat the ox would supply, and how the various cuts would be allocated. As a child, it always seemed to me extremely callous to mention these matters within hearing of the unfortunate animal'...."

"The Isle of Wight has strong links with the tradition of Christmas trees. First of all, it is believed that the instigator of the tradition, Saint Boniface, was on the island during the 690s. It is also known that Osborne House on the island was one of the first places in the United Kingdom to have a Christmas tree, as Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and their children spent the time before Christmas on the island, although Christmas itself was spent in Windsor."

'Pokeassen about' is defined in W H Long's 'Dictionary of the Isle of Wight Dialect' as "To go prying about; also, to fritter away time to no purpose."

(I would like to add on behalf of the AONB team that we don't have the time for 'frittering' but we will admit to trying to find out everything we can about everything to do with the Isle of Wight AONB and what makes it so unique!). ■

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – the Gower Peninsula, Wales – to be designated. As part of the national celebrations we thought it would be fun to compile a record of “50 favourite things about the Isle of Wight AONB”.

Asking the question “What is your AONB favourite?” we talked to many people at some of the Island’s local shows, additionally we received several responses through the post and whilst nearly everyone found it hard to name just one favourite we managed to shortlist 50 things.

I think you will agree that the results reflect the diversity of the Island’s beauty and its appeal to all ages.

50 AONB Favourites

1. Tennyson Down for peace and quiet, views, the monument and the Tennyson Trail.
2. Rock-pooling and snorkelling at Freshwater Bay
3. Blackgang Chine
4. Compton Bay and beach – fossils and safe for kids
5. Newtown Estuary – tremendous, peaceful and full of wildlife
6. Steephill Cove and the walk from Ventnor
7. The Needles
8. The stunning view from Blackgang viewpoint
9. Culver Down and cliffs
10. The Sense of enclosure, coolness and endless shades of green in the Undercliff
11. St Catherine’s Down with its bluebells, the Peppercot and Hoy Monument
12. Afton Down – the view and shooting stars
13. Yarmouth and the Western Yar
14. Robin Hill
15. St Boniface Down
16. Horse riding along St Georges Down
17. Swimming and sunsets at Totland Bay
18. Watching the wildlife, particularly red squirrels
19. Bembridge Forelands
20. Arreton Manor and mist rolling in from Arreton valley and Down.
21. That we are a ‘Dinosaur Isle’
22. Hamstead
23. Countryside walks, green lanes and cycle tracks
24. Headon Warren
25. Watching the sunset
26. West High Down
27. Alum Bay
28. Borthwood
29. Brighstone and view of Brighstone Down in winter
30. Brook Down barrows
31. Carisbrooke Castle
32. Chale cliff view
33. The Walk down to St Catherine’s lighthouse
34. Castlehaven
35. The Longstone
36. Niton Beach and windy corner
37. Winkle Street
38. Yaverland
39. Appuldurcombe and Worsley monument
40. Ashey Down
41. Atherfield
42. Bowcombe valley
43. Cranmore
44. Havenstreet station
45. Michael Morey’s hump
46. Mottistone
47. Osborne House
48. Quarr Abbey
49. Rew Down
50. Whitecliff Bay

Tennyson Down and Monument © Natural England. Photographer Joe Low



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