

Chairman's Welcome

I have recently been in Spain for three months on sabbatical leave. Whilst there I visited many places and did much travelling. The wildlife in Spain was spectacular and I saw many types of bird and animal that I had not seen before, and the wild flowers that were probably at their best at the time of my visit.

As I travelled around I was very interested in the villages, towns and landscapes that I saw as well as the ways of life that people led. I couldn't help making comparisons with our own country. The area of Spain is approx twice as big although the population is only two thirds that of Great Britain and their countryside is clearly under a lot less pressure. I also noted that although the Spanish look after their very oldest buildings and sites (particularly those with statutory protection) there seems to be very little regard for traditional buildings which are neglected in preference for the construction of modern ones. There may well be social and economic reasons for this but I was also interested to see the huge investment in their rural road networks despite low rural populations. C class roads were being engineered to near motorway standard and with corresponding signs all of which had damaging effect on the wonderful landscapes.

Obviously other countries have different priorities to our own. It made me realise that here in Britain, despite pressures of a large population in a much smaller area, what a good job we do at looking after our landscapes and rich natural and cultural heritage. Our AONB is a great example where communities, farmers and different organisations work together to make the Isle of



View of Culver from Forelands (before recent cliff fall) © AONB Unit photographer John Brownscombe

Wight special. We should not take this for granted but continue to make it even better.

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!!!

History in the AONB

Carrie McDowel, AONB Assistant

From the Beaker people to the Romans, the Anglo Saxons to the Jutes, Pagans to Christians, all have left their mark on those areas of the Island which are now part of the AONB designation.

The earliest traces of human activity were farmers from the New Stone Age, followed in 1900BC by a wandering group known as the Beaker people, and their distinctive pottery has been found in areas of the Tennyson Heritage Coast. The Roman conquest had little impact on the peaceful agricultural life of the Islanders grazing their livestock on the downs, although the occupation led to half the Island's natural woodland being stripped to provide fuel for Roman furnaces.

Few Saxon buildings have survived, as stone was used only for Houses of God with only two Anglo-Saxon churches remaining at Freshwater and Arreton. Archaeologists have, however, discovered many Saxon burials and cremations in areas such as Bowcombe Down, yielding items dating back to the reign of King Aethelwulf. Their influence also remains in local place names such as Culver Cliff, named after 'culfre' the Saxon word for pigeon.

According to the writer Bede, the Germanic tribe known as the Jutes were ruling the Island in the 7th century, and the remains of a Jutish cemetery have been found on Shalcombe Down.

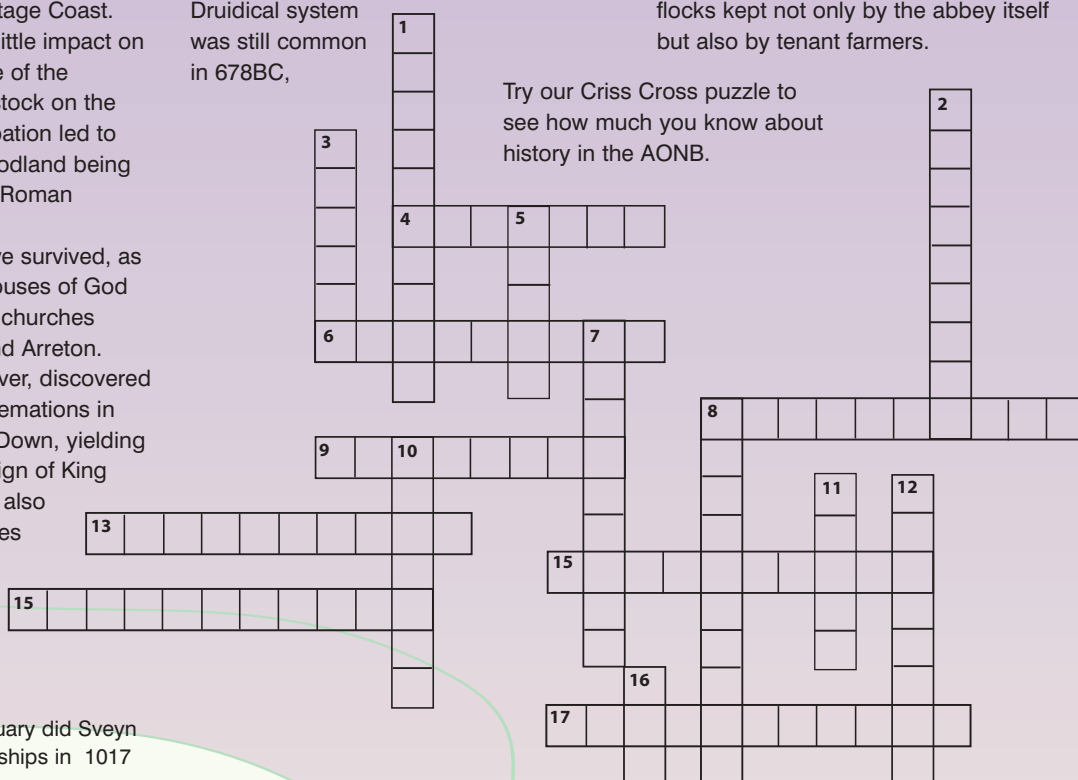
The Island has a very large number of ancient Pagan sites for its size, notably the Long Stone, which was significant for both the Druids and the Roman cult of Mithras. Ancient documents reveal the Druidical system was still common in 678BC,

and although a Saxon king attempted to force Christianity on the local population, the Island was the last place in Britain to become nominally Christian.

Many churches and abbeys were subsequently built, with Quarr Abbey estates producing wool on a large scale, as the neighbouring downs provided ideal pasturage for sheep, with large flocks kept not only by the abbey itself but also by tenant farmers.



Try our Criss Cross puzzle to see how much you know about history in the AONB.



Across

- 4) In which north coast estuary did Sveyn the Dane winter his longships in 1017 (7)
- 6) On which down have Saxon burial mounds been found (9)
- 8) From which high point of the Island would you have been able to see the sinking of the Mary Rose in 1545 (6,4)
- 9) Which monarch of Magna Carta fame stayed at Yarmouth, in both 1206 and 1214 (4,4)
- 13) Which large village near Calbourne was granted to the see of Winchester by King Ecgbert of Wessex in 826 (10)
- 14) Whose government built the Military Road in the 1860's (10)
- 15) Name the famous inventor born at All Saints, Freshwater in 1635 (6,5)
- 17) Which 19th century stationer lived at "Sea View" house in Chale (6,5)

Down

- 1) Which manor house near Kingston dates from the 17th century (10)
- 2) Name the most dangerous ledge off the Island's south coast where many old

- sailing ships were lost (6,3)
- 3) What product was made in the 18th and 19th centuries at Chale Terrace, Newtown and Grange Chine (6)
- 5) Which historic period was the original manor house at Appuldurcombe (5)
- 7) Name the era from which round barrows on the chalk downs originate (6,3)
- 8) What order were the original monks at Quarr Abbey in 1132 (10)
- 10) Where was the seat of the Oglander family for eight hundred years (7)
- 11) Name the South Wight village containing the site of a barracks used during the Napoleonic wars (5)
- 12) What is the name of the prehistoric terraces cut in the hillside of Chillerton Down (8)
- 16) Where is considered to be the only remaining fragment of the Island's mediaeval hunting forest (9)

Acknowledgements

information used to compile this page obtained from a booklet by the National Trust; "So you Think you Know the Isle of Wight" produced by the Francis Frith Collection for Ottakar's; "Place Names of the Isle of Wight" by A D Mills; Isle of Wight History Centre - www.invectis.co.uk; Green Island Tourism - www.greenislandtourism.org Historical images courtesy Frank Basford IW Council Archaeology Section - top Pilgrim ampulla, Brighstone/bottom Gold personal signet ring 16th/17th centuries, Shorwell



www.wildonwight.co.uk

We all appreciate the Island's landscape, scenery and wildlife, but have you ever wondered how our special sites are looked after? Or how you can help promote the Island's natural heritage? In this issue we feature the work of the National Trust on the downs above Ventnor; Wight Nature Fund's reserves at Alverstone Mead, Youngwoods Copse, Mill Copse and Pelham Woods; and the Histree Trail, an island-wide project.

Four-legged scrub bashers!

Holm oaks, introduced to Island gardens from the Mediterranean in the 1700s, have spread on to the downs above Ventnor. They thrive in our climate and have taken over the chalk grassland, causing the loss of butterflies and flowers. Feral goats were introduced to help tackle this problem 14 years ago and are now a familiar sight on Bonchurch Down. Scrub removal by hand or machinery is labour intensive and requires follow up work to prevent scrub regrowth. Goats will happily eat small trees and strip the bark off the more mature ones, and they have made a significant difference in controlling the spread of the holm oak and improving the extent of the quality chalk grassland.



The scheme will be extended into Coombe Bottom, above the old Ventnor Railway Station, thanks to a grant of £40,000 from the SITA Trust through the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme. Last winter an excavator was used to prepare the new fence line. The ground is left bare by this process but the soil is full of seed and soon starts greening over again. The fencing work began before Easter and will continue throughout the year. Once complete goats will graze the down and the change will be more gradual.

The long term vision for the chalk downs at Ventnor is of a landscape with a mixture of open chalk turf, and scattered areas of trees which may have a

rather Mediterranean feel to it. We will need to maintain the number of goats at the right level so there is enough tree cover and food for them, but without the trees taking over the grassland again. As with Bonchurch Down, cattle will graze the down with the goats so as to control the taller grasses.

David Mears, National Trust South Wight Warden. For more information contact the Estate Office on (01983) 741020 or visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/isleofwight

People for nature, nature for people

Wight Nature Fund, an Island based conservation group, manages four areas on the Island as nature reserves. All have public access and visitors are welcome.

Now is the time to visit Alverstone Mead Local Nature Reserve. The squirrels and their young are frequently seen around the hide, the cattle and their calves are in the Mead and the barn owls can be seen hunting over the Mead and Skinner's Meadow in the evenings. Warden John Ralph has been busy carrying out bat and moth surveys, and reports that the flora is especially good this year, with a lot of bogbean and ragged robin in the Mead, yellow rattle spreading in the Meadow and southern marsh orchids appearing for the first time.

Visitors are asked to park considerably in the village, leaving the few spaces in Burnt House Lane for less able visitors and the volunteers who give their time so generously. More help is always welcome and if you can spare a few hours, please ring the WNF number (01983) 400199.

Youngwoods Copse is nearby. Stroll quietly through the wood listening to the birdsong and you may well see squirrels too. Dave Green is the warden and would appreciate any help. He can be contacted on (01983) 863763.

Mill Copse at Yarmouth is always a pleasant place to walk, and is a short



detour from the estuary circular walk. It has a hide overlooking the Barnfield Stream, where there are always plenty of birds to be seen.

Pelham Woods Reserve in the St Lawrence Undercliff has a magical atmosphere all of its own and a climb to the cliff top path will lead to the Wildlife Trust's reserve St Lawrence Bank.

Mary Edmunds, Secretary, Wight Nature Fund For more information contact (01983) 882614

Discovering the Island's Historic Trees

The Histree Trail Project, funded by the Heritage Lottery, aims to celebrate the Islands' fantastic heritage of trees and how they relate to landscape history. So far, more than 100 trees of significant age with historical and local heritage links have been identified and recorded.



When the project began last November we didn't know how easy it would be to find these trees, but we've had a great response from the public and support from local organisations and we are making new and exciting discoveries all the time. These trees are as important to our heritage as our castles and monuments, but they are often little known. The information we are collecting will be used to produce a series of new walking/cycling trails accompanied by free self-guided leaflets.

The Histree Trail Project website is now online at www.histreetrail.com. It features an interactive Island map pinpointing the most magnificent trees recorded so far. There is a photo gallery where you can submit your own tree photos and illustrations, as well as news, events, and educational materials. In time, it will feature the trails in a downloadable format.

If you would like to contribute to the project please contact me at the Parks and Countryside section, Isle of Wight Council on (01983) 823893, email histreetrail@iow.gov.uk or visit the website www.histreetrail.com.

Tina Williamson, Histree Trail Project Office

AONB National Conference

John Brownscombe, Lead Officer

The ninth annual conference of the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty was held this year in Winchester at the West Downs Centre.

Along with our colleagues at Cranbourne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs; North Wessex Downs; South Downs; and Chichester Harbour, the Isle of Wight AONB were hosts for the conference.

The programme was set to show the diversity of work and delivery that AONB Partnerships are involved in as part of the conservation and enhancement of these nationally treasured landscapes. Over one hundred and sixty delegates from the national family of AONBs, Government Agencies and other organisations involved in landscape management and conservation attended the three-day event. On the first day delegates heard very passionate and interesting speeches on changing landscapes from Mr David Fursdon, President of the CLA (Country, Land & Business Association); Mr Simon Thurley, Chief Executive of English Heritage; and Dr David Potts, Chairman of the Cranbourne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB and specialist in wild game management.

These keynote speeches were followed by three speeches concentrating on work undertaken in some of the host AONBs. An overview of work to describe the historic environment at Arundel in the South Downs and an outline of climate change mitigation

and landscape conservation based on work in the North Wessex Downs were given by Hazel Riley of English Heritage and Fiona Newcombe the Director of North Wessex Downs respectively. As Lead Officer for the Isle of Wight AONB, I had the great pleasure to be able to tell the audience about our excellent 'AONB Discovery' cross curricular education project carried out in partnership with Brighstone Church of England Primary School. I was brilliantly assisted by some of Brighstone Primary School's year 4 students, Aaron, Ben, Florrie, Dabeoc and Christopher and Susie Pugh their teacher. For the first time, a National Conference audience heard directly from the next generation about how they view and value their AONB. The children had prepared an excellent PowerPoint presentation and with great confidence gave an overview of the project; what they had enjoyed the most and what they had learned from it. It was good to be able to share with colleagues, what for us has been one of the best and most rewarding individual projects that we have run so far.

As part of our involvement in the conference, we also ran a workshop on Climate Change and the AONB Management Plan Review process. This began with a presentation on the results of the recent South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) funded Protected Landscape climate change and landscape

management impact studies. Our December edition of *Finest Landscapes* will have more on this and other local initiatives looking at a critically important issue for the future of our landscape and its economic and social value. This overview was followed by two interesting workshop sessions where approaches in AONBs across England, Wales and Northern Ireland were discussed. It was clear that the issue of climate change and its implications for landscape character and management is being taken very seriously across the national family and that there is a great desire to include both mitigation and adaptation considerations in the next round of AONB Management Plans.

Finally the AONB Unit hosted two field trips to the Isle of Wight, with a total of fifty people joining us for the day, looking in more detail at some of the issues and initiatives that we have been involved in. We were very pleased with how these trips went, (the weather was kind to us on the day), and with the fantastic feedback that we had both on the day and since. Belinda Knight from SEEDA joined us and she has kindly provided her view of the day.

My personal thanks to the team at the AONB Unit for all the hard work and preparation for our involvement in this National Conference – its easy to overlook the great effort that goes in to planning for these events when everything runs as well as it did for us over the three days.



An exhibition of photographs of Ephemeral Art Work undertaken by Brighstone Primary School, Year 4 as part an 'AONB Discovery' refresher is on display at Dombola Lodge Tea Room from 1st - 29th August 2007.

Brighstone Primary School presentation at AONB National Conference, photo courtesy Stephanie Stanley

A Delegates View - Visit to the Island

Belinda Knight, SEEDA



A charm of goldfinches, a parliament of rooks - what would we call a group of AONB Officers? An Enthusiasm of AONB Officers and partner organisations from all over the UK visited the Island on two field trips from their annual conference.

John Brownscombe and the AONB Unit hosted the trips, the most popular of the conference, with 48 people being shepherded from Winchester station to the Lymington ferry for the sunny but breezy crossing. 'Just like going on holiday!' said one delegate as we viewed Calshot Castle and the other defensive forts.

One field trip had a theme of Moving Coasts and Historic Landscapes, looking at access management, coastal landslip, and the importance of the historic environment and its contribution to local landscape character. The other focused on Diverse Projects for

Diverse Landscapes, looking at how SDF has catalysed greater practical partnership delivery of the Management Plan by putting policy into practice.

'Coasts and Landscapes' first explored the impressive cantilevered road at Afton Down, a very visible preparation for future erosion. The skylarks sang and the orchids flowered. We saw the collapsed Undercliff A3055 road, before heading onwards and upwards up onto the coastal path above Gore Cliff. AONBs from more mountainous regions swiftly lost any illusions that the south is flat! John powered easily up the steps, with helpful stops, while the less fit among us puffed along, vowing to get more fit! The view from the top was worth it - and gave us an appetite for the excellent local produce lunch at Shorwell Village Hall. Particular personal thanks for the excellent gluten-free alternative of an enormous baked potato! (Nb: lunch provided by Brighstone Tea Rooms)

After lunch, we learned about HEAP and community work, before exploring local landscape character and vernacular buildings. We had been far too lucky with the weather, and paid for it by a brief downpour at Compton, where we viewed the 'rubber crumb' car park, a sustainable solution to vehicular wear and tear. Small plastic bags full of rubber crumb, supplied by the warden, are now heading for various parts of the UK - though we



Geocaching. Photo courtesy of Cat James

thought there was a disconcerting similarity to a bag of liquorice sweets....

Even more variety followed, hunting for dinosaur footprints at the shoreline, trying to work out just why they were convex and not concave where the dinosaurs had trodden. It was a very moving example of how ancient, and yet how fluid, are the Island's coastal boundaries. There can be few places where the geology and coastal transience is so clear to see.

Our final stop was at Dimbola, to see the famous home of Julia Margaret Cameron, with the opportunity to view her work as a pioneering Victorian woman photographer.

'One of the very best field trips ever' said a long-experienced AONB Officer. Several plan to return to the Island to explore more. They will bring with them an enthusiasm for sustainable tourism and an informed approach to exploring the landscape and communities. We had been given a hugely varied and enormously enjoyable day - so thank you to John, Fiona, Nicky, Carrie and all who made it such a very special and memorable field trip.



The AONB Unit team would like to thank everyone involved in assisting them in making the field trips to the Island's AONB such a success but especially: Martin Munt, Curator of Geology, Dinosaur Isle
Dennis Russell, AONB Partnership Vice-Chairman
Vicky Basford (County Archaeology & Historic Environment Service) for a talk on HEAP
Katie-Sue Wilson, (IW Council Conservation & Design team) for a talk on AONB funded project with Shorwell Community.
Paul Davies, National Trust warden at Compton Car Park

Heather Bradshaw & David Metcalfe from National Trust at Needles New Battery
Matthew Chatfield & Cat James, (IW Council Countryside & Parks Section) for their help with Geocaching
John, Gill, Nicky and the team at Dimbola Lodge Museum
Linda Cahill, head teacher and Susie Pugh year 4 teacher at Brighstone (CofE) Primary School - and Aaron, Ben, Florrie, Dabeoc and Christopher : children from year 4 who came to Winchester, gave the full conference a presentation - and brought the house down!

Isle of Wight Cycling Festival 2007

This week-long festival runs from 15th to 23rd September 2007 offers people of all ages and cycling ability the opportunity to sample different cycling routes that encompass some of the most breathtaking and picturesque areas of the Island, as well as local landmarks and the occasional country pub!

The Festival launch event takes place at Seaclose Park, Newport, on Saturday 15th September 2007 from 11am until 4pm and includes a fantastic free Cycle Show and Mountain Bike Stunt Display, as well as the humorous 'Sink or Swim' competition, where homemade pedal powered crafts attempt to make it across the River Medina without getting wet.

Easier beginner/family routes include the 'Afton River Loop'; 'West Wight Easy Ride'; and 'Back in the Saddle' whilst other more quirky events incorporate the 'Toddler's Trail', 'Dino ride - Fossil Hunt' or the 'South Wight Pub Trail'. With a programme for everyone there are plenty of more testing rides for the more experienced cyclist and this year once again offers the popular 'Cycle the Wight', a 65 mile road race around the Island's spectacular coastline, and 'The Hills Killer', a challenging orienteering ride set against the clock.

For the super fit, two triathlons have been added to this year's programme: The West Wight Triathlon: a 35km cycle ride, 600m pool swim and a gruelling 7.5km run (www.westwight.co.uk/triathlon) and the Wight Challenge: a 32km cycle ride, 16km run and 4km open canoe race (www.wightchallenge.co.uk).



For further information contact: Claire Whittington on 01983 203891. E-mail: claire.whittington@iow.gov.uk
For a complete programme of rides check our website www.sunseaandcycling.com or pick up a Festival Programme from any of the Island's tourist information centres



AONB on Display

.....with our new panels and interactive board, the AONB team will be attending the following events:

Chale Show (Chale Recreation Ground) : Sat 4th/Sun 5th August 2007

Fort Vic Foray (Fort Victoria, Yarmouth) : Thursday 9th August 2007

Wolverton Show (Wolverton Manor, Shorwell) : Sat 1st/Sun 2nd September 2007

Hope to see you there.

Harvest Home

Alan Phillips, Isle of Wight Natural History & Archaeological Society

In 1886, W H Long described in his Dictionary of Isle of Wight Dialect a traditional 'Hooam Harvest' that was fast passing away in favour of the newer Harvest Festival instituted by the church. The older custom had been observed from time immemorial by the smaller farmers cultivating 100 to 200 acres, who kept most of their men in house and supplied them with meat and drink during the harvest month.

The last load of the harvest having been hoisted onto the wagon, a puncheon - or small keg - of 'nammet beer' was generally drunk round it in the field, then with green boughs stuck on top it proceeded, accompanied by cheering, to the 'rickess' (or rick yard), where it would be unpitched. The supper, prepared by the farmer's wife with her maids, would be almost prepared. The carters, farm servants and labourers all arranged themselves round a long table, while 'meyaster' and his select circle - generally including the carpenter and the blacksmith - would be seated at a cross-table at the top of the other. They would be served up with a large leg of mutton and a ham or two, mutton pies or a 'chine' [a special cut], for the first course, followed by huge plum puddings and an even larger apple pie.

The master generally carved at the top of the table, and an invited guest at the bottom. After the meal, jugs of real 'Home Harvest Stingo' with pipes and tobacco were placed before the men, whilst 'meyaster' and his party would receive in addition bottles of spirit and the necessary ingredients for making 'grog'. Everybody would then be expected to sing a song or two in turn, and Long gives a detailed account not only of the songs, but also of the typical dialect banter in between; he also waxes lyrical about the camaraderie that these old-style harvest celebrations engendered.

The mention of 'the last load of the harvest' refers to a much older belief that as the harvest reaping progressed the Harvest Spirit retreated into the remaining corn until it took refuge in the last strip of corn. The reapers would then take turns in throwing their sickles at it, so the Corn Goddess would never know whose hand cut the last stalks. She became the Corn Dolly or Kern Baby, and would have once had a place of honour at the harvest home. Then on Plough Monday, she was taken to the fields again and interred in the first furrow, ready to work the necessary magic for the next harvest!



HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 2007 Thursday 6 – Sunday 9 September

Heritage Open Days celebrate England's fantastic architecture, history and culture. Over 20 events are on offer on the Isle of Wight over the four day period and include:

A walk in the special nature reserves of **Alverstone Marshes** (10.00am, Thursday 6th) to look for birds, water voles and a bit of pond dipping for bugs too! Meet at the parking area, past Sandown High School and just past Sandown/Shanklin Golf Course.

A ghost and history walk around **Freshwater Bay** (Sat 8th at 11am and 3pm), visiting the former homes of Alfred Lord Tennyson and Julia Margaret Cameron. Meet at Freshwater Bay Car Park.

Free entry to **Bembridge Windmill** (Sat 8th from 10am to 5pm; last admission 4.30pm), the only surviving windmill on the Island! Limited capacity.

View an exhibition at **Brading Station** focusing on the Island's rail heritage (Thurs 6th to Sun 9th from 10am to 4pm). For an introductory tour of the exhibition pre-book on 01983 401770 or 401222.

Free entry to **Brading Roman Villa** (Fri 7th from 10am to 5pm). See the villa's 4th Century mosaics and the award winning cover building.

Free entry to the **Dimbola Lodge Museum** (Fri 7th from 10am to 5pm). Former home of Victorian pioneer photographer, Julia Margaret Cameron, the museum houses an exhibition of her works, photographic equipment and contemporary photography.

Guided tour of the grounds of **Haddon Lake House** (Thurs 6th, Sat 8th & Sun



9th from 9am to 6pm, Fri 7th from 3pm to 8pm) with its newly restored Victorian lake, woods and walled garden. Limited capacity, pre-book on 01983 855151.

Free entry to the **Isle of Wight Bus Museum** (Sun 9th from 10.30am to 4pm). The museum houses a collection of vintage buses & coaches from c.1919 onwards. There is also a display of bus related memorabilia.

Free entry to the **Isle of Wight Steam Railway** (Thurs 6th to Sun 9th from 10.30am to 5pm), includes: Station Yard, Museum, carriage and wagon workshop, woodland walk, and model railway exhibition. Usual charges for train travel apply.

Free entry to the **Museum of Island History** (Sat 8th from 10am to 5pm). Discover the Island's history from the time of the dinosaurs to the present day.

Free entry to **Newport Roman Villa** (Sat 8th from 10am to 4pm). See the well preserved remains of a 3rd Century farmhouse. There is an education room, mosaic making, a demonstration of Roman games, and a children's quiz.



Free entry to the **Needles Old Battery** (Sat 8th from 10.30am to 5pm; last admission 4.30pm). Built 1862 this spectacularly sited cliff top fort contains exhibitions about its involvement in both World Wars.

Free entry to **Shankin Chine Historic Gorge** (Sat 8th from 2pm to 10pm). A beautiful and natural geographic phenomenon, with a swift flowing

stream and waterfalls running through the sandstone gorge. A haven for wildlife and plants.

Visit **St Michael the Archangel, Shalfleet** (Sat 8th from 1pm to 4pm). A chance to tour this grade I listed, 11th Century, church and to climb the top of its unusually squat Norman tower. Discovery trail for children.

Explore the Island's maritime past at **The Underwater Archaeology Centre** (Sat 8th from 10am to 4.30pm) with displays and hands on activities it is housed in a Victorian fort built in 1855.



A talk on the ruins of medieval **Quarr Abbey** (Fri 7th, Sat 8th and Sun 9th at 12noon and 3pm). Meet at the disabled parking area at the Old Abbey.

Visit the **War Shrine at Havenstreet** (Fri 7th to Sun 9th from 11am to 4pm). The Shrine, built 1917, is a distinctive local landmark. A special display will tell its story. The Shrine is located 0.5 miles north of Havenstreet on public footpath.

Free entry to **Ventnor Heritage Museum** (Sun 9th from 2pm to 5pm). A former furniture shop, it now displays an exhibition of Ventnor's history and a model railway.

Free entry to **Yarmouth Castle** (Thurs 6th & Sun 9th 11am to 4pm), visit the Henry VIII castle overlooking Yarmouth harbour. New exhibitions on the castle, the town and its maritime links for 2007!

Enjoy a stroll around Brighstone, the largest village in the Isle of Wight AONB, with Nicky Rogers, AONB Planning Officer on Friday 7th, starting at 10.30am. Entitled **Brighstone – then and now** Nicky will be reviewing the village's history and looking at the challenges it faces today. To book phone 01983 823855

Visit: www.heritageopendays.org

The Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Committee, SEEDA, The Isle of Wight Natural History & Archaeological Society, Isle of Wight Council Events Team and Conservation Design Sections and Isle of Wight Estuaries Project are members of the IW AONB Partnership and we would like to thank them for their contribution to our work.

Out and About in the AONB

Sue Hawley, Isle of Wight Estuaries Project

The north west coast is one of the most beautiful and interesting parts of the Island with a wide range of landscapes, heritage and wildlife. Situated at the mouth of the stunning Western Yar estuary and beside the historic town, Yarmouth Harbour provides a wonderful gateway to the area, whether arriving by land or sea. To develop new and appealing ways to raise awareness of this fascinating area, the IW Estuaries Project has been working with Yarmouth Harbour Commissioners, through the AONB Character Building Fund.

The IW Estuaries Project has completed a number of projects including the creation of the Yarmouth Harbour Activity Book which is packed full of absorbing puzzles and things to do for all the family. Many of these activities encourage visitors to explore the countryside and local attractions, such as Yarmouth Pier and Fort Victoria, and at just £1 a copy, is already selling like hot cakes!

Together with the employees of the Harbour Commissioners, the Estuaries Project has also produced a giant sliding puzzle on which tiles can be moved around the board to form a map. Under each tile are pictures and interesting facts about the area, including the famous 'gribbles' under the pier and the wildlife of the Western Yar estuary.

The puzzle can be found in the reception area of the harbour office so next time you are passing by, see if you can solve it! The project also funded a reprint of the popular Western Yar Circular Walk leaflet and the wonderful route is now enhanced by a new information board near the Freshwater causeway. The attractive board provides information about the southern end of the estuary and is well worth a look.

So put on your wellies, pick up your activity book and go exploring around Yarmouth.....who knows what you might discover!

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.



AONB Unit Team

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The Isle of Wight AONB Partnership is jointly supported by Natural England and the Isle of Wight Council

