



Cliffs at Tennyson and West High Downs from Brighstone Bay © Countryside Agency/IW AONB Photographer Joe Low

**S**pring is with us and the countryside is bursting into life – the lengthening days and warmth of the sun lift the spirit and make this a season when the beauty of the Island's finest landscapes can be really appreciated.

The new IW AONB Partnership is approaching its first full year; we have made good progress but have many challenges ahead. 2003 also heralds the 40th year of designation. In September there will be a celebratory event to mark the occasion, more details in the next edition of finest landscapes.

The review of the AONB Management Plan is now progressing rapidly to meet the Government's April 2004 target date. The first draft will be published for consultation in late May and there will be opportunities for all to have a say on the plan for the future of our AONB. If you would like further information on how to become involved please contact us.

The AONB Unit is now fully staffed with the recruitment of an AONB Planning & Information Officer. We can now screen and provide comment on all proposed development within the designation to the planning authority. Alongside this we are working with other Isle of Wight Council services in the review of the AONB Management Plan. Our aim is to secure accords with them, agreeing on how best to conserve and enhance the Island's finest landscapes together. Regionally we (along

with our colleagues in other AONBs) have secured a similar agreement with the key Government Agencies such as South East Economic Development Agency (SEEDA), South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) Government Office of the South East (GOSE), Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and our joint funders the Countryside Agency through the publication of a Joint Statement of Intent. This recognises the importance of AONBs in the region and has identified them as potential champions of sustainable rural development, balancing the needs of the environment, economy and community.

Our first annual Open Forum will be held at Northwood House on May 15th. Titled 'Living with Landscapes – Making Sense of Place' the day will look at the importance of the local distinctiveness and complex character of the Isle of Wight AONB. There will be guest speakers and workshops. The event is free but space is limited. If you would like to attend please contact us at the AONB Unit.

Finally, thank you to all who took the time to contact us after the publication of our first edition. It was good to know that we have such strong support for what we aim to

## Chairman's Welcome

Welcome to the second edition of the 'Finest Landscapes' newsletter. With a full team now in place at the AONB Unit we will be able to make real progress with the many issues that face the AONB. One of these is the preparation of the Management Plan which outline the priorities for the AONB over the next few years. John Brownscombe will say more about this in his report.

I hope you enjoy the interesting features in this issue.

**Tony Tutton**  
Chairman  
IW AONB Partnership  
Steering Committee ■

achieve. We hope that this edition will inspire readers to venture out into the countryside and enjoy the Island's finest landscapes.

**John Brownscombe** AONB Officer ■

## Zummet vor Nippers!!!

### A WOODLAND WONDER WANDER

Woods are great places to go and explore, so grab your mum/dad/gran/grandad (or all of them) and your wellies and visit one of the woods in the AONB. Woods in the AONB include: Firestone Copse at Wootton; Borthwood Copse at Alverstone; Brighstone Forest; Walters or Town Copse at Newtown; Eaglehead or Bloodstone Copses at Ashe; Bouldnor Forest near Yarmouth or Combley Great Wood near Havenstreet. While you are there, see if you can find the following: (you may need a pen & a piece of paper to note down what you find.)

- 3 different flowers (ie. bluebells, daffodils, primroses, wood anemones, celendines)
- 3 different types of trees (ie. Oak, Birch, Hazel, Ash, Beech)
- Something chewed by an animal (ie. hazelnuts, fir cones)
- Any other signs of an animal (droppings, burrow holes, etc)
- Something sharp or prickly (but be careful)
- 3 different birds
- Something Smelly (nice & nasty)
- A camouflaged animal or insect
- A feather
- Something Soft
- Something red
- 10 Fir/Pine cones
- A fungus
- Something white
- Something that shouldn't be there!

Please remember: leave the woods for other people to enjoy and don't take anything away with you

We hope you enjoy your woodland wander, please let us know what you find or what else we can look for in the woods by writing to us at - AONB Unit, Freepost Natw339, Newport, PO30 2BR. For more woodland walks in the AONB look out for Forest Enterprise Walks during the IW Walking Festival in May. If you want to find out more about what you found or can find in our woodlands try these websites: [www.offwell.free-online.co.uk/](http://www.offwell.free-online.co.uk/) or [www.naturegrid.org.uk](http://www.naturegrid.org.uk) or [www.naturenet.net/education/](http://www.naturenet.net/education/) ■

## CHILDRENS COMPETITION WINNER

CONGRATULATIONS to Lucee White, age 11 from Newport who has won a trip to Dinosaur Isle and a day out fossil hunting with her picture of Yarmouth.

In the end the panel agreed on two runners up and so Thomas Grand, age 9 with his picture of 'Carisbrooke Castle at Sunset' and Stephen Allard, age 11 with his poem 'My best Jungly Walk' both win themselves a trip to Dinosaur Isle.

It was a very close competition with all pictures and poems of a very high standard, a **big thank you to all who entered.** ■



## Sense of Place

### Small Grant Fund

We are pleased with the interest we received in the Small Grant Fund. With more applications than funding available, it was necessary to be quite firm in deciding which applications to approve.

The projects we are funding vary from: a feasibility study into the operation of a baggage transfer service for walking/cycling holiday makers; the planting of several new hedgerows and trees in various locations around the AONB; scrub clearance; Kissing

gates at footpaths in Niton; interpretation boards at three Wight Nature Fund Reserves and support for the IW Hedgelaying Competition both in conjunction with Leader+.

In future editions of 'finest landscapes' we will be able to follow the implementation and success of some of these projects. ■

### Landscape Reflections

This arts project is now underway, with the communities of Brading, Chale and Totland involved and using a broad range of materials

used from poetry to ceramics, dance to beach sculpture – truly something for everyone.

Tim Johnson has been recruited as the lead artist (you may have seen him last year at the Quay Arts Centre) and the results of the project will be exhibited in each community and at a final central exhibition in the Quay Arts Centre, Newport in May 2003. Full reports on this project will be featured in the next issue of 'Finest landscapes'.

For further details contact Hannah Birks on 822118 or check our website [www.aonb.org.uk](http://www.aonb.org.uk). ■

# AONB People



**Jill Green**, inspired by her parents, has always enjoyed walking in the countryside and the first walk she led was a children's ramble for the 'Countrywide Association' in 1952. She now leads walks, both in her job, part-time, for 'Step by Step' Walking Holidays and for the Rambler's Association.

Jill moved from Surrey to the Island in 1976, when her husband joined Britten Norman, not knowing beforehand how beautiful the Island was. Now she feels that the Island's finest landscapes are a large part of the reason she would never want to leave. Actively involved in conserving the landscape, the countryside and its wildlife for the future generations as well as being a member of the IW AONB Steering Committee (as Recreation & Tourism Portfolio holder), she is also: a member of

IW Natural History and Archaeological Society; on the Wight Wildlife Committee; heads up the Ramblers Association 'Countryside Panel'; and represents the Ramblers on CPRE's (Council for the Protection of Rural England) Executive Committee. As well as this, Jill works part-time job hairdressing at Sunnyclyffe Residential Home and finds time to compete in Ultra Distance Race Walking through which she has represented Britain three times in the Paris-Colmar Race (208 miles non-stop).

As someone who is always walking in the AONB, Jill has seen many changes over the years, though she feels that people are beginning to realise how precious and fast diminishing a resource it is, and that there are more organisations (and legislation) now

working to protect it. However, she believes that current legislation 'does not have enough teeth' and that although change is in some ways inevitable the AONB 'needs to be cared for in a sustainable way rather than just for short term profit'. She also suggests that 'until towns feel good to live in the pressures on the countryside will keep increasing'.

When asked for one particular aspect (or place) within the AONB that personally inspires strong feelings, her answer was 'the peace and tranquillity of sitting on top of the rolling downs, with its unspoilt fields of flowers and listening to the larks singing'. ■



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**Carol Flux** is the Leader+ Project Development Officer employed by the Isle of Wight Economic Partnership. Carol, 'born and bred' on the Island was previously at the Wight Green

Centre working on environmental projects, including starting 'The Woodshed', a wood recycling scheme. She still maintains these links with her former projects and in her spare time works as a volunteer for BTCV and runs the IW Pond Wardens.

Leader+ is a European Union Initiative in which £2,500,000 is available to rural communities on the Island over the next five years to support sustainable rural development projects. The boundaries of the

Leader+ area are slightly different to that of the AONB but there are many opportunities to tap into this important source of funding for innovative solutions to rural issues within the Island's finest landscapes.

Carol said 'It is very much a community lead programme, and will fund schemes identified by people living and working in the various villages, which they feel will improve their quality of life. My role is to assist community groups and individuals to develop projects and make applications for funding, which will then be considered by a panel of assessors'

The main criteria for any project is to improve the quality of life by meeting a proven need within the community. Projects that have already been approved include funding towards: a Sustainable Tourism Officer at Island 2000 Trust; Chale Nursery, enabling them to extend their hours; Wight Community Transport Project, to assist in opening a call centre; Green Life;

West Wight Swimming Pool and a water saving feasibility study; Brading Town Council's I.T. facility; and the provision of interpretation boards in three Wight Nature Fund's reserves.

Grant funding for community projects can be up to 67%. Applicants will need to identify other sources to make up the short fall; part of this can be through volunteer time or in kind contributions. Small grants of under £3000 have a simplified application process. For more information or an application pack please contact Carol on 01983 535836 or email [carol.flux@iwpartnership.com](mailto:carol.flux@iwpartnership.com)

When asked for her vision for the future of the Island's AONB she said "I would like to see people who live in the AONB and Leader+ areas to be less excluded, either through better transport links or by more going on in their area, but I hope that it isn't over-developed and can retain its character and beauty." ■

IW Economic Partnership, County Archaeology & Historic Environment Service, Forest Enterprise and the organisations noted within Jill Green's article are members of the IW AONB Partnership and we would like to thank them for their contribution to our work.

# Enjoying the AONB

Ruth Waller, County Archaeologist reflects on Newtown



The 1768 Estate map by James Hallet showing the plan of the medieval Newtown.



An aerial view of Newtown deserted medieval village within its AONB landscape.

The 189 square kilometres of the Island designated as being of outstanding natural beauty also provides information on the way in which humans have interacted with the Island's environment in the past.

Newtown was a medieval borough which was founded in the 12th Century by the Redvers family. Because of French raids and depopulation in the 14th Century, the town became deserted by the 18th Century, leaving

behind the earthworks which were once the streets, houses, garden plots and fields of the medieval townfolk. A comparison to the 1768 Estate map shows just how much of the former town still survives in the landscape.

○ The 17th Century town hall is owned by the National Trust and is open to visitors (from 2pm - 5pm: Mondays/Wednesdays/

Sundays (plus Good Friday) between 31st March - 30th June and 1st September - 29th October and; Sundays to Thursdays between 1st July to 31st August, telephone: 531785), whilst the rest of the former town is preserved as part of a Conservation Area. ■



## AONB Unit Team

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The Isle of Wight AONB Partnership is jointly supported by the Countryside Agency and the Isle of Wight Council

