



View from Limerstone Down © Countryside Agency Photographer Joe Low

**T**HE spring and early summer months are my personal favourite time of year – The vigour of new growth of previously dormant plants and the playful antics of young livestock making their first steps in life, all contribute to a great sense of vitality to the Island's finest landscapes. The special clarity of light and the more temperate winds herald the awakening of the AONB from its winter slumber welcoming all who are now venturing out to enjoy its special qualities and natural beauty.

This April sees the beginning of a new phase in the management of the Isle of Wight AONB. The first statutory AONB Management Plan has now been published setting out our vision for this nationally important landscape. The Plan has been formulated by the AONB Partnership on behalf of the Isle of Wight Council. It outlines the special qualities of our AONB as part of the national family of protected landscapes; provides a vision for the AONB in 2025; lists the current threats and challenges facing its management; provides policies and policy

objectives to guide public bodies and the local authority; and details actions being undertaken by the AONB Partnership over the next five years towards achieving our vision. Copies can be viewed at all Libraries, at the Isle of Wight Council's Customer Service Centre at County Hall and at Reception at Seaclose Offices. Alternatively copies can be viewed and downloaded from our website [www.wightaonb.org.uk](http://www.wightaonb.org.uk).

**John Brownscombe**  
AONB Officer ■

## Chairman's Welcome

Welcome to the fifth edition of Finest Landscapes the newsletter of the Isle of Wight AONB Partnership.

We hope that you enjoy reading the articles in this edition, which have been written by members of the Partnership and cover many of the facets of the AONB which combine to give it its special character.

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

# Zummet vor Nippers!!!

Many of the place names on the Isle of Wight, have origins far back in time, with a large number recorded in the Domesday Book in 1086 (although several can be traced as far back as c600-800 AD!). In those days most people were not able to read, and there were not the kind of maps that we use now, so places were often identified more descriptively using either: - a feature in the landscape, how the land was used, particular birds or animals that could be found there, or by who owned the land. Although it is difficult to be exact as to the origin of a name, Historians research thoroughly all possible old languages to interpret what each place name could mean.

See if you can find Isle of Wight AONB Places in our wordsearch, and then look to see how they may have got their names. You could also challenge your parents with the old spellings to see if they know what they are!

**Alum Bay** – recorded as *Allum Bay* (1720) – It is possible that quantities of Alum were found here and mined as early as the 16th Century, then used industrially in paper-making and leather tanning.

NB. This origin is investigated further and other possibilities are explored by the Isle of Wight Industrial Archaeological Society, see their website [www.iwhistory.org.uk](http://www.iwhistory.org.uk).

**Bembridge** – recorded as *Bynnebrygg* (1316) – ‘(the place lying) within the bridge’.

This refers to Bembridge being sited on an island peninsula. Before the bridge being built c1300 at Yarbridge the only access to Bembridge was by boat. An older name for Bembridge may have been Orham (1086), which translates as ‘the river-meadow or promontory by the shore.’

**Bouldnor** – recorded as *Boulner* (c1150) – ‘the shore of the bull’ This either means that bulls were grazed here, or possibly that the steeply rising outline of Bouldnor Cliff was thought to have resembled a bull and therefore Bouldnor means ‘shore by a cliff called The Bull.

**Brading** – *Brederinges* (683) – ‘(the settlement of) the dwellers on the hill-side’.

Brading is the only ‘folk-name’ type on the Island, in that it originally referred

to a tribe or family of settlers and then later (before the Domesday Book, 1086) becoming the name of the settlement itself.

**Bierley** – recorded as *Berlay* (1341) – ‘the woodland clearing where barley is grown’.

**Brighstone** – possibly *Weristetone* (1086) – ‘the farmstead or estate belonging to a man called Beorhtwig’

**Cheverton Down** – recorded as *Cevredone* (1086)- ‘the hill or down infested with chafers or beetles’

**Cranmore** – recorded as *Cranemore* (1235) – ‘the marshy ground frequented by cranes or herons’

**Harboro** – recorded as *Hauedburghe* (1324) – ‘the chief or most important hill or barrow’.

There is a Bronze Age barrow here, and in 1324 it was the site of a defensive beacon (this was still shown on the 1611 map by Speed).

**Kingston** – recorded as *Chingestune* (1086) – ‘the king’s manor or estate, the royal manor’

**Mottistone** – recorded as *Modrestan* (1086) – ‘the stone of the speaker or speakers at a meeting’.

This probably originally applied to the large menhir (now called The Longstone) standing on the hill above the village and then transferred to the settlement.

**Newtown** – recorded as *Niwetune* (1189-1204) – ‘the new town or borough’.

Also known as Francheville, meaning ‘the free town’ - both names were used up to the 16th Century.

**Shorwell** – recorded as *Sorewelle* (1086) – ‘the spring or stream by the steep slope’

**St Martin’s Down** – recorded as *Smerdone* (c1240) – ‘the hill or down where butter is produced’ (i.e rich pasture).

An unusual transformation of the name through sound similarity has resulted in Smardon being translated as St Martin.

**Totland** – recorded as *Toteland* (c1240) – ‘the cultivated land or estate with a look-out place’

**Yaverland** – recorded as *Ewerelande* (683) – the cultivated land or estate where boars are kept’

If you want to find out more about Place names and their origins, there are several books you can look for in your local library (we found the ‘The Place-Names of the Isle of Wight’ by A.D. Mills, very helpful). Another excellent source of local information is The County Records Office in Newport. Alternatively try these websites (for starters) – [www.iwhistory.org.uk](http://www.iwhistory.org.uk) or [www.domesdaybook.co.uk](http://www.domesdaybook.co.uk) ■

## Wordsearch

See if you can find these Isle of Wight AONB places

ALUM BAY	BEMBRIDGE	BOULDNOR	BRADING
BIERLEY	BRIGHTSTONE	CHEVERTON DOWN	
CRANMORE	HARBORO	KINGSTON	MOTTISTONE
NEWTOWN	SHORWELL	ST MARTINS DOWN	
TOTLAND	YAVERLAND		

C	A	L	U	M	M	O	T	T	I	S	T	O	N	E
H	A	R	B	O	R	O	M	E	B	H	Y	A	E	B
E	G	B	R	R	I	D	G	E	B	O	O	U	W	L
V	N	I	I	D	B	A	R	B	R	R	O	N	T	D
E	I	N	G	G	B	O	I	E	R	W	L	E	O	E
R	D	S	H	H	D	G	U	I	R	E	B	R	W	Y
T	A	T	S	O	N	N	E	L	C	L	H	O	N	A
O	R	E	T	O	T	L	A	N	D	L	V	M	E	L
N	B	R	O	T	O	N	D	L	O	N	W	N	N	U
D	H	E	N	R	O	M	N	A	R	R	O	A	C	M
O	A	B	E	M	B	R	I	D	G	E	R	R	B	B
W	I	T	T	O	M	N	O	K	O	R	V	C	O	A
N	O	T	S	G	N	I	K	I	T	S	G	A	N	Y
S	T	O	N	E	B	I	E	R	L	E	Y	N	Y	E
N	W	O	D	S	N	I	T	R	A	M	T	S	T	W

# AONB People

**Peter Matthews** has an obvious love of the Isle of Wight AONB and a pride and enthusiasm in his trade. Since his great, great grandfather, a Bark Merchant, who coppiced oak and supplied bark for use in the tanneries in Newport, the Matthews' have retained their occupations in woodland industries. Although Peter spent a period of time in advertising, he now runs the Timber Merchants, Clifford J Matthews, Ltd, a small business started by his late father.

As a small company, using local wood sources, Peter acknowledges that it is impossible to compete with the incredibly low prices afforded through imported Eastern European Timber that supports the mass markets. Additionally, the UK timber industries are not eligible for rural grants that can sometimes be offered to land based businesses. His business, therefore is continually adapting, drawing on years of knowledge and experience, and trying to move with the times.

The wood they use is mainly Oak, Monterey and Lawson Cypress, Ash, Larch or Douglas Fir bought from the Forestry



Commission or from other private woodlands and the main core of the business is in supplying the more unusual shapes and sizes of timber, or making up special designs, often used for restoration works. With their customers ranging from the IW Council Rights of Way, National Trust, English Heritage, Ventnor Botanic Garden and many nature conservation charities and

organizations, their work can be seen in a variety of places in the AONB, from memorial benches, boardwalks, steps, information posts and boards to Isle of Wight Pattern Field Gates. They have also on many occasions sourced suitable wood for Paul Sivell's sculptures and often team up with a local graphic designer to produce intricately carved name plates, etc.

Peter is a believer in making things that last, and this sentiment is reflected in his feelings for the AONB. He agrees that it is right to safeguard the countryside for the future and considers that things such as overhead cables, or the division of land for activities such as 'horsiculture', are already marring the landscape. Spoilt for a choice of vistas, he lives on the southern tip of the Island and works in Whitwell. His love and appreciation of the landscapes around him is evident when you talk to him, and he has also been known to have advised people to 'get a map of Britain marking the AONB's and not bother going anywhere else'. ■

## Forests and woodlands by design

The Forestry Commission are preparing "Forest Design Plans" for many of the Island's woodlands this year. Firestone Copse, Combley Great Wood, Woodhouse Copse, Kemphill Moor Copse, Bouldnor Forest and Burnt Wood are all within the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Forest Design Plans are a tool enabling the public to influence the forests long-term future management. The Forestry Commission will soon be carrying out consultation to gather information, share ideas and discuss issues to feed into the preparation of these plans. Regular forest users, the general public and key stakeholders will be invited to become involved this summer.

A key stakeholder with whom the Forestry Commission will be consulting with is the Isle of Wight AONB Partnership. Forestry operations can have significant influence on landscape character, determining textures, colours, shapes and patterns. For example the darker evergreen pointed tops of some conifer trees contrast with lighter deciduous rounded tops of broadleaf's. Clear fells in particular are a key challenge. They create temporary open



Borthwood Copse © Countryside Agency Photographer Joe Low

habitats such as grassland and heathland and when re-planted, diversify the age structure of the forest. However if they are not carefully planned clear fells can impact on the landscape by introducing geometric shapes and blocks of uniform colour.

Wider issues within the AONB are also

considered in producing Forest Design Plans such as ecological habitat enhancement and the provision of sustainable rural employment. For example restoration of ancient woodland sites from conifer to broad-leaved and provision of suitable timber for local sawmills. Consultation often allows the key stakeholders and the public to appreciate that there are often conflicts between many of the key issues and compromises that need to be considered to make plans workable.

Forest Manager Tom Ransom explains "Last year public consultation to help produce a plan for Parkhurst Forest involved holding site meetings, evening workshops and public guided walks, where a wealth of opinions were gathered. Many consultees were surprised at the complexity of the issues discussed and how many diverse interests from the community were represented. It is the Forest Design Plan process that allows for potential conflicts to be resolved and a vision for the long-term nature of the woodland to be created."

Look in the Isle of Wight Walking festival programme and the County Press for details of how you can become involved in the consultation process. ■

# AONB Place – Wildlife

The extensive stretches of downland and coastline within the AONB have all the appearance of a 'natural landscape'. I imagine we think this way because the landscape looks as if it is unchanging and has remained so for a long time. In actual fact, the reason that these landscapes appear to be unchanging is because they have been managed in a fairly consistent way for centuries. So too have old hedges, flower-rich meadows and ancient woodlands, all products of the historic landscape.

Land which has been managed consistently for a long period of time is not only important historically but is also important for wildlife. The richest sites for wildlife are those which have remained unchanged for longest. Chalk grassland can have over 30 different species of plants in just one square metre of turf. These can include up to six species of orchids, the diminutive Early Gentian which is perhaps more abundant on our downs than anywhere else in the world, and the strange, parasitic Bastard Toadflax. Wherever a rich assemblage of plants are found, a wide range of insects are attracted to them for food and shelter. Chalk grassland is important for Skippers and brightly-coloured Blue butterflies, colourful day-flying moths, bush-crickets and grasshoppers, and a suite of other specialised insects. These in turn provide a food source for insectivorous birds and small mammals. The whole intricate web of life contributes towards the rich biodiversity of the Island's downlands.

Other habitats within the AONB are also



An Island Speciality, the Glanville Fritillary butterfly found on soft cliffs around the coast. Courtesy Countryside Section, Isle of Wight Council

rich in wildlife. Crumbling, south-facing cliffs are home to the Island's special butterfly, the Glanville Fritillary, together with a host of other, less showy, warmth-loving insects. Estuaries on the north coast have a rich mix of habitats - saltmarshes, shingle ridges, mudflats, old meadows and ancient woodlands stretching down to the shore, each with a wealth of wildlife.

We are indeed fortunate on the Island to be able to enjoy the rich wildlife which has sadly been lost from so many parts of lowland England. The special habitats support some of the choicest and most precious species. However, it is not just the rarities which make the place special. Plants and animals which are very localised on the mainland can be widespread and common in our Island countryside - black and white

chequered Marbled White butterflies; Red Squirrels in the woods; Water Voles in the streams; Skylarks singing in the sky; and Great Green Grasshoppers calling from hedges and field banks.

The richness of wildlife is a direct reflection of the diversity of landscape. The extensive Rights of Way network means that a great deal of the countryside is accessible for people to enjoy and appreciate. The survival of our rich biodiversity is dependent upon the high levels of nature conservation protection afforded to a great deal of the AONB but also, and at least equally important, to the management of the land in a traditional and sympathetic manner. This is dependent upon the support and good will of landowners and it requires money; management of land to keep it looking as it always has done does not come cheap. If future generations are to continue to enjoy the wealth of wildlife, we must ensure that it is viable for landowners to manage their land in a wildlife-friendly manner. We must also ensure that important wildlife sites and habitats are protected from development.

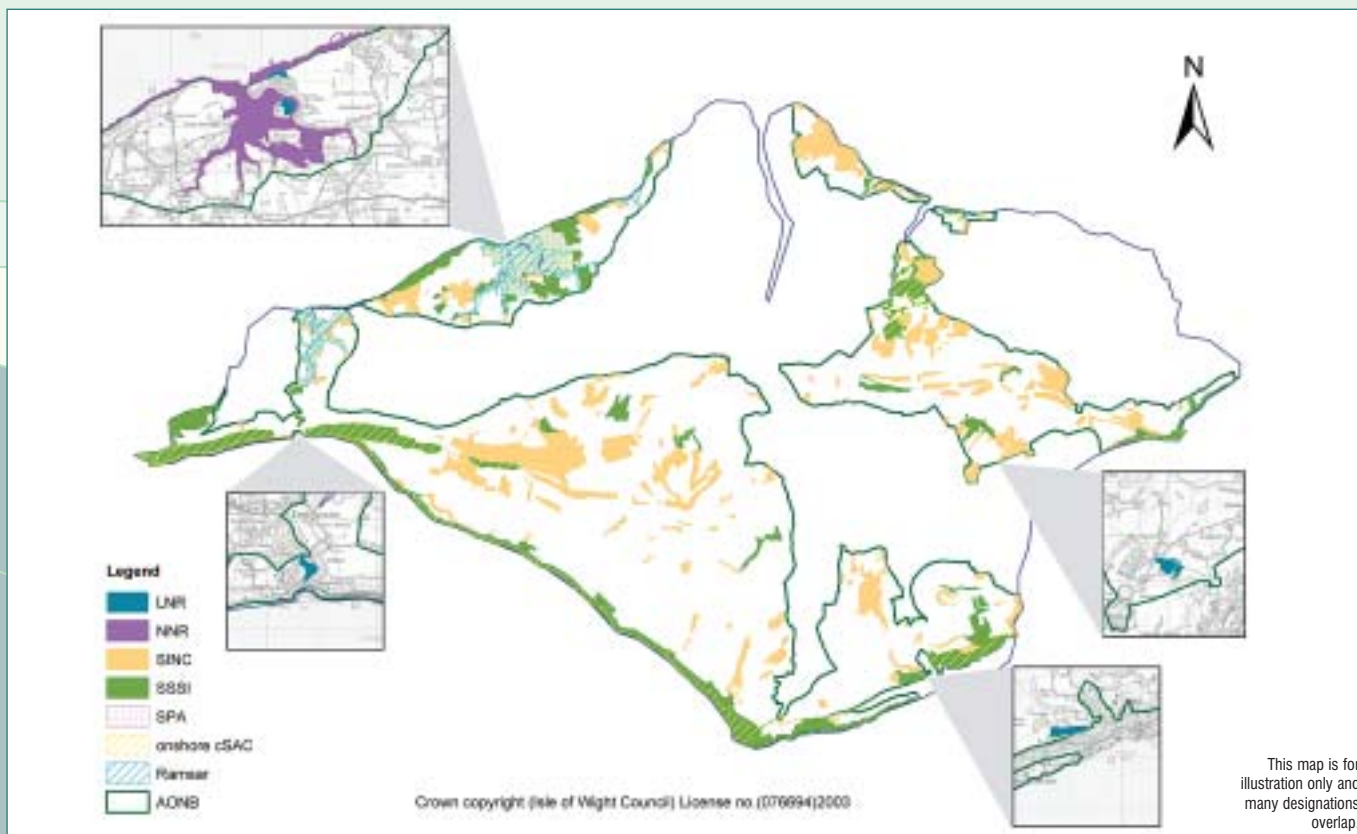
However, we must not lose sight of the fact that, as much as we wish to encourage people to visit and enjoy the countryside, increasing visitor numbers brings increasing pressures on fragile habitats and species. Disturbance to breeding and feeding animals and birds, and general wear and tear on the fabric of the countryside are matters to which we must all need to direct our attention over the coming years. Balancing our legitimate rights to enjoy the countryside against the protection and management of the landscape will require difficult and challenging decisions.

**Colin Pope**

*Ecology Officer, Isle of Wight Council* ■



Ramsons or wild garlic create spectacular floral carpets in woods on the chalk in the spring. © Countryside Agency Photographer Joe Low



# Nature Conservation Designations

As detailed within the Isle of Wight Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011, Glossary of Terms.

## Ramsar Site (International)

Sites identified by the signatory states to the International Convention at Ramsar, Iran in 1971, for the protection of internationally important wetlands and wildfowl habitats. In the UK, the sites are identified by English Nature on behalf of the Dept of the Environment.

## cSAC (European)

**Candidate Special Area of Conservation**

Areas of open water and land of international importance designated under the European Union "Habitats Directive" for the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora, which are considered rare or endangered and are recognized as being under particular threat. In the UK the Government have decided that all land areas included will already be SSSI's but that SAC's may include areas at sea.

## SPA (European)

**Special Protection Areas**

Areas of land and wetland of international importance classified under the European Union "Birds Directive" to conserve the habitats of rare and migratory wild birds. In the UK the Government have agreed that SPA designations will only be applied to areas which are also recognized of national importance as SSSI's. The designations in the UK will therefore only relate to areas above the mean water level.

## SSSI (National)

**Site of Special Scientific Interest**

Areas of land of special scientific interest by reason of its fauna, flora or geological or physiographical features, notified by English Nature under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Consultation with English Nature is required if works are proposed which could damage the scientific value of features in this area.



Reed Fringed mudflats on one of our quiet creeks on the north coast.

© Countryside Agency Photographer Joe Low

## NNR (National)

**National Nature Reserve**

Areas of land or wetland of national or international importance by reason of areas of natural or semi natural vegetation declared as a national nature reserve by English Nature who may make byelaws to protect to flora and physiological and geomorphological interest.

## LNR (Local)

**Local Nature Reserve**

Areas of land or wetland of local importance declared by the local authority, in consultation with English Nature under the provisions of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. LNR's are normally owned or managed under agreement by the Local Authority, who make byelaws to protect the fauna and flora.

## SINC (Local)

**Site of Importance for Nature Conservation**

Areas of land and wetland of local importance for the conservation of semi-natural habitats including mosaics of heathland, unimproved grassland, scrubland and plantation and/or habitats which support rare local wildlife species. They may not be of sufficient extent or quality to qualify for national recognition as a SSSI. ■

# Grazing on the Isle of Wight

The Isle of Wight has a long tradition of grazing animals particularly sheep. This produced open rangelands, including heathland, chalk downland and meadows which remained until the Enclosure Acts of the mid-eighteenth century. These enclosures changed the pastoral landscape producing a patchwork of small fields to the north of the Island with downland and heathland reduced to the higher land on the central ridge and the south-eastern corner.

Agriculturally unimproved land, high in nature conservation value, survives in significant quantity on the Island, despite the revolution in agri-chemicals and the advent of farming subsidies. Twenty-eight of the 41

Sites of Special Scientific Interest and 95 of the 248 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation have grazed habitat types covering some 2,000 ha (5%) of the Island's land surface (IW BAP 2000). It is thought there are a further 1600 ha capable of being restored back to grassland of high nature conservation value (Cox 2001).

This landscape and nature conservation resource provides income for some 512 agricultural holdings on the Isle of Wight as well as providing the basis for a thriving tourist trade, the lifeblood of this county's economy. Some 50% of the Island's agricultural land is under grass (GFA RACE 2001) and this is maintained by dairy cattle,

beef cattle, sheep and horses.

The Isle of Wight is one of the most accessible areas of the country with over 500 miles of Rights of Way. The Isle of Wight Council was the first to declare that all its Rights of Way were open and accessible and promotes an annual walking festival in May, the biggest such event in the country. The landscape and biodiversity of the Island is recognised nationally and locally and underpins the Island's biggest employer, the tourist industry.

**Richard Grogan**

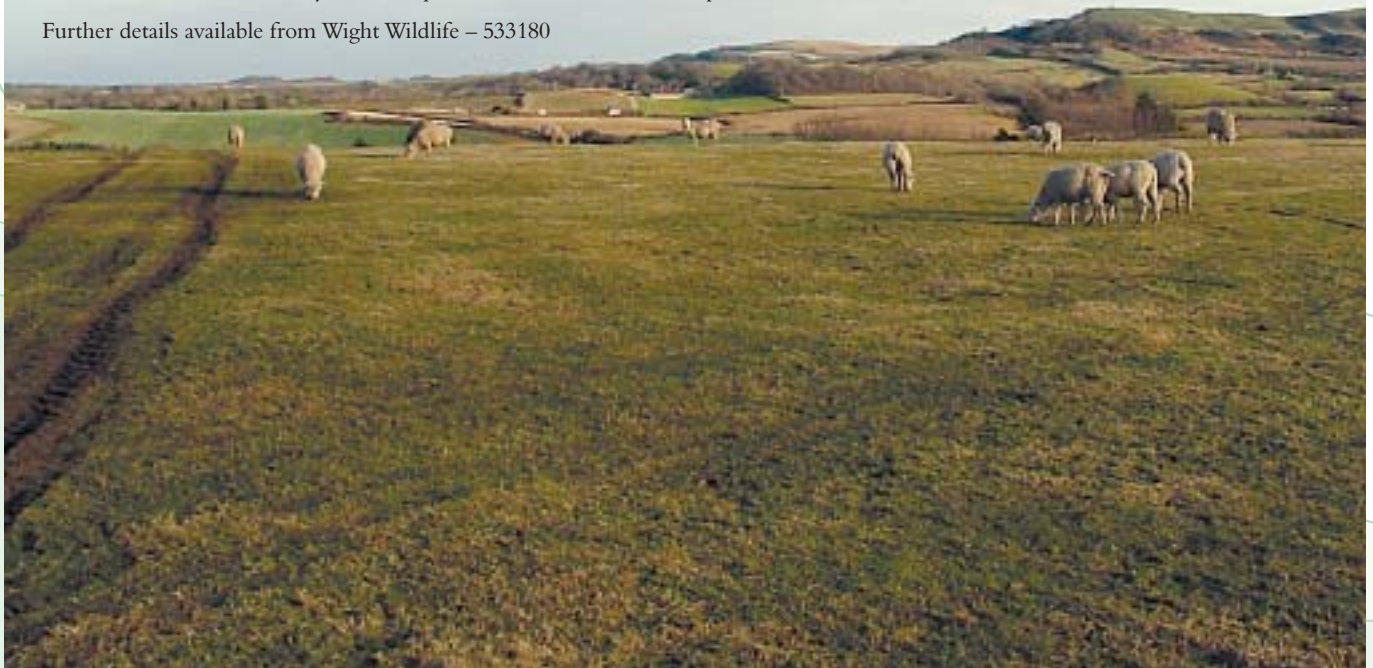
*Wight Wildlife* ■

## 'Living Landscapes' The Isle of Wight Grazing Project

The aim is to maintain and increase the viable and sustainable grazing herd on the Island and use these animals to bring areas of high landscape and nature conservation value into favourable condition. :

- Engage the farming community in constructive dialogue and persuade a proportion of those practitioners that there is a viable and sustainable way of producing meat.
- Persuade farmers in the target areas to undertake agri-environmental measures to produce meat in an environmentally friendly way.
- Undertake to aid farmers in producing farm plans and projects that will :
  - maintain and enhance the Island's landscape designated as AONB
  - maintain SSSI's requiring grazing to keep them in favourable condition, or restore those SSSI's that are currently not meeting these requirements.
  - achieve Biodiversity Action Plan targets for grassland and grazed habitats.
  - Increase accessibility to landscapes and habitats for the wider public.

Further details available from Wight Wildlife – 533180



Grazing on Bleak Down © IW AONB Unit photographer John Brownscombe

The IW Council Ecology Officer, Wight Wildlife, Wight Leisure, Forest Enterprise, Forestry Commission and Clifford J Matthews Ltd are members of the IW AONB Partnership and we would like to thank them for their contribution to our work.



[www.islandbreaks.co.uk/walking](http://www.islandbreaks.co.uk/walking)

# Enjoy a walk from Ghost to Coast

Walkers on the Coastal Trail © Countryside Agency Photographer Joe Low

The Isle of Wight Walking Festival is now in its sixth year and building on its resounding success of previous years, it is now not only the biggest festival in the UK but also Europe - boasting in excess of 160 walks!! This year we have introduced an "International" flavour to the event, with walks in the programme from five different countries - Australia, India, Kenya, Bulgaria and Florida in the USA.

In the 2003 Festival the oldest walker taking part was 82 years old. Jennefer Peele travelled from America for the second time specifically to take part in the Walking Festival. Mr & Mrs Alvey from Leicester won a break for two with HF Holidays for completing 14 walks during the festival!

The 2004 programme sees a wider variety of walks to choose from - offering walks for tots, teens and the more mature, be they seasoned ramblers or leisurely walkers. There

is simply no excuse not to take part.

Amongst some of the more unusual walks for the 2004 programme are: 'Family Fun' walks; 'Island Explorer Challenge' - a team based hike aimed at 13 - 18 year olds; 'Story-walks' for children - walking along the shore with stops for stories, songs and seeking seaside treasures; Walks for new parents and babies; 'Walking with Dinosaurs'; a stroll around Osborne House gardens; 'Butterfly and Swamp' walk - learning about forestry issues, 'Wildlife Wanders'; 'Canine Capers'; 'Evening Birdsong' walk; Health walks; a 'Naturally Active Walk' - to look and feel better; Ghost walks; 'Ghost walk for the blind'; 'Spirit to Spirit' - from Church to Hostelry; 'Full English Breakfast' walk with Isle of Wight Radio; 'Tea Party' walk; 'Hiking boot' walk; 'Flip Flop' experience; Trainer walk; 'A Walk from the Wild Side' - in aid of Christian Aid ..... and more.....

**For the more challenging walks**, step up the pace and take part in the **72 mile non stop 24 hour walk around the Island!!!** Jill Green and Mo Latham will be walk leaders, Jill being infamous for clocking up in excess of 48,000 miles (walking!!) Or **Walk the Wight** - taking you across the Island for the Earl Mountbatten Hospice, on a voyage of discovery through some of the most beautiful scenery.

Many walks taking place are in or around the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its two Heritage Coasts, (including two led by the AONB Officer) and the Isle of Wight AONB Partnership is pleased to be a sponsor of the Festival. This year's Festival programme will identify all walks within the Island's Finest Landscapes - look out for the Rolling Downs (AONB) and Lighthouse (Heritage Coast) icons next to the walk details. ■

## Festival of the Heritage Coast 11th – 30th September 2004



In our August issue we will be detailing the activities being held to celebrate the *30th Anniversary of the Tennyson and Hamstead Heritage Coasts* or look out for details on our website [www.wightaonb.org.uk](http://www.wightaonb.org.uk) sometime soon.

Carrie McDowell joined the AONB Unit earlier in the year, and is working part-time covering some of our Administrative duties whilst Marijke is on maternity leave. Still relatively new to the Island, we asked if she would share one of her discoveries in the Island's finest landscapes.



# A Trail of the Unexpected

Western Yar courtesy of Bob McDowell

Despite many holidays and now a year of residence, we still find those intriguing minor roads revealing the Island's treasures.

Travel down the Causeway off the B3399, and by the bridge is the spectacular sight of the estuary and saltmarshes of the Western Yar. You can take a circular walk around the estuary by following the pedestrian and cycle route towards Yarmouth. The trail snakes along the estuary shore following the trackbed of the Freshwater, Yarmouth and Newport railway, which carried passengers from 1889 to 1953. The route is fairly level on the outward leg, with a fairly steep climb and some stiles on the western side.

The estuary and marshes are rich in

birdlife, with brent geese and large flocks of over-wintering teal and wigeon. Curlews and redshanks can be seen searching the mud for tasty morsels, and occasionally a little egret picks his way delicately along the shoreline.

There are footpaths off the trail to Thorley and Wilmingham, and in the patches of woodland you may catch a glimpse of red squirrels. Robins sing merrily from the bushes, and increasingly endangered sparrows dart in and out of the hedgerows along the trail.

Bearing left through a gate following footpath Y1 takes you past the old tide mill complete with sluices, where the mallards

and swans will welcome any titbits. Follow the path around the car park along the A3054 across the Yar Bridge, and take the first lane on the left signed the Freshwater Way F1.

The trail climbs prettily up through Saltern Wood, then along field edges with fine views and glimpses of the estuary to the east. After crossing a footbridge and stile, the southerly field track leads to a gate and tree enclosure on the right, which runs behind Kings Manor Farm. Cross the field to a stile, and a right turn along the farm access road leads to a pathway beside the tranquil churchyard of All Saints. A left turn along the road takes you back to the bridge. ■



## 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

