

# Antrim Coast & Glens View

The Newsletter for the Antrim Coast and Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Issue One

Spring/Summer '06



Cushendall and Lurigethan

## The Antrim Coast and Glens AONB

The Antrim Coast and Glens AONB was first designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (A.O.N.B) in 1989 under the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order. One of nine designated AONBs in Northern Ireland, it has been recognised as a landscape of national importance. The aim of this designation is to protect and enhance the landscape quality of the Antrim Coast and Glens for the benefit of those who live and work there and for those visitors who come to enjoy it.

The Antrim Coast and Glens AONB includes Rathlin Island, the coastal area between Larne and Ballycastle, the Glens of Antrim and a large part of the Antrim Plateau. Within this area there is a rich and diverse natural, built and cultural heritage.

In terms of natural heritage, it includes the Garron Plateau a designated RAMSAR site with internationally important wetland areas supporting many breeding birds and specialist bogland plants. It also includes Rathlin Island recognised for the importance of its breeding seabird community. There are also many other designated sites of either European, national or local importance.

The coastal villages of Glenarm, Carnlough, Cushendall, Cushendun and Ballycastle have all been designated as conservation areas. There is a rich archaeological heritage with a record of settlement since Mesolithic times. The Antrim Coast and Glens AONB has also a large number of listed buildings and historic monuments. Five of these, including, Bonamargy Friary in Ballycastle, the Layde Church in Cushendall and Ossian's Grave in Glenties are in state care.

Much of the character of the area has been derived from its close associations with Scotland and this is reflected in many aspects of life within the glens. The Antrim Coast and Glens AONB was once part of the ancient sea kingdom of Dalriada and also the setting for many battles between rival chieftains the McQuillans and the McDonnells.



There is also a rich folklore tradition and some of the most famous stories within Irish literature and mythology are set within the area.

The Antrim Coast and Glens AONB is a special landscape with a unique character. It is a good place to live, work and visit with a landscape well worth looking after.



## The Chairman's View

As Chairman of the Antrim Coast and Glens Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Group I welcome this publication. The Antrim Coast and Glens AONB Management Group was established in 2004 and brings together a wide range of organisations with an interest in protected area management. Coming from the tourism industry I fully understand the need to protect our special landscapes, often the main reason why visitors come to the area. There is clearly a close link between environmental management and tourism and the long term future of the industry is dependant on how we manage this resource.

***" Coming from the tourism industry I fully understand the need to protect our special landscapes "***

The aim of this newsletter is to keep people informed about the work of both the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust and the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB Management Group. Equally the newsletter may encourage you to air your views on how the AONB is managed. There may be an issue you are interested in...if so why not get in touch? In the meantime I hope that both those who 'live in' and 'live off' the countryside will support our efforts to safeguard the unique heritage of this outstanding natural landscape.

**DON WILMONT**  
Interim Chair  
Antrim Coast and Glens AONB Management Group



Members of the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB Management Group outside Tilly Molloy's in Arroy

## Managing the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB

In 2004, (DoE NI) Environment and Heritage Service invited the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust to help establish a management structure for the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB. Following this the first Management Group meeting was held in September 2004 in the Londonderry Arms Hotel, Carnlough.

Membership structure of the Management Group tries to reflect the different interest groups within the area and includes representatives from Ballymena Borough Council, Ballymoney Borough Council, Larne Borough Council, Moyle District Council, North Antrim Community Network, the National Trust, Ulster Wildlife Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Ulster Farmers' Union, Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers' Association and Causeway Coast and Glens Ltd. (the Regional Tourism Organisation). The Management Group also includes advisors from the four Councils, DoE Planning Service, DoE Environment and Heritage Service, DRD Roads Service, Northern Ireland Tourist Board and DARD Countryside Management Branch.

One of its main objectives is to oversee the preparation of a management plan for the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB and it is hoped that funding can be secured to enable this work to begin in the near future.

In the meantime Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust is taking forward a number of tasks on behalf of the Management Group aiming to raise awareness of the purpose of AONB designation and the unique natural, cultural and built heritage of the area.

- The production of an Antrim Coast and Glens AONB introductory guide
- Provision of website information on the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB (Available on the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust website see [www.ccght.org](http://www.ccght.org)),
- A biannual Antrim Coast and Glens AONB Newsletter (this publication),
- Production of publications on specific aspects of the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB,
- Promotion of environmental awareness within the Tourism industry...

Commenting Peter Harper, Trust Director with Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust said:

*'The Antrim Coast and Glens has been recognised as a special landscape. Our job is to encourage the management of this resource in a way which safeguards its unique heritage for the benefit of those who live, work and visit the area for many years to come.'*

## Culture in the Glens?



Gig racing, Carnlough

Culture in the Glens? Who said that? There is no doubt we have a rich cultural heritage within the Antrim Coast and Glens but has anyone truly got to grips with everything we have?

Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust is currently taking forward an exciting initiative to audit the Cultural Heritage of the Causeway Coast and Glens. Reporting to a Steering Group involving the Museums Service, Limavady, Coleraine, Moyle, Ballymoney, Ballymena, Larne, Newtownabbey and Carrickfergus Borough and District Councils consultants undertaking the audit aim to complete their work by the end of May 2006.

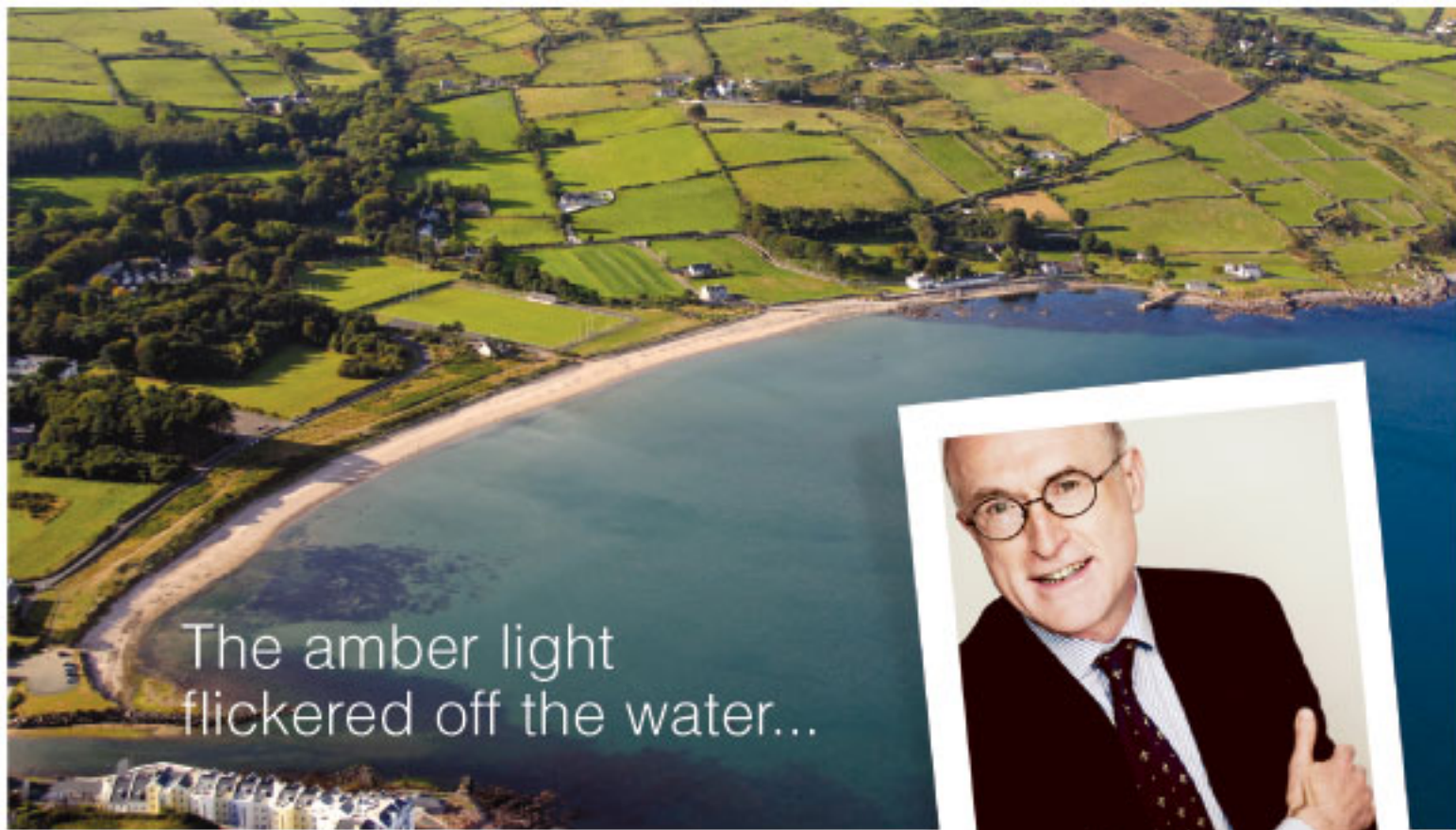


The Oul Lammas Fair, Ballycastle

Karina McCollum, NRRTI Project Officer with the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust said:

*"The audit will look at the many different aspects of cultural heritage within the Causeway Coast and Glens such as music, dance, visual arts, oral history and literature. Following its completion we hope to undertake the production of a Cultural Heritage Directory which will be based on the main findings within the audit".*

The Cultural Heritage Audit is being funded as part of the Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative under the EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation.



The amber light flickered off the water...



Jamie Delargy  
Business Correspondent UTV

In the Glens the sun dips very quickly towards the end of the day. One minute it's above a hill. The next, the land is in shadow. For that reason in many places you are denied the rich colours of sunset. Out at sea is one exception.

I recall one evening in late summer rowing a boat with friends in Cushendun Bay. The water was unusually calm. Its surface had an almost oily sheen. My companions and I may have been fishing. I can't remember. Coming homewards we found ourselves in the middle of the Bay about a hundred yards from the beach. The sun, now at a low angle and shining off shore, suffused land and sea with a coppery glow. Our pace of rowing slowed until we finally stopped altogether. For a few minutes we let the boat drift, nudged by long, slow waves. The amber light flickered off the water. The only sound: water dripping at the end of the oars. You might revisit that spot a hundred times and never repeat the experience. But it's worth the search.



Rathlin Island Sustainable Tourism Strategy steering group at the launch of the study on Rathlin Island

## 'Greenprint' for Tourism on Rathlin

In 2005 Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust took forward the production of a ten year Sustainable Tourism Strategy for Rathlin Island. Consultants undertaking the study reported to a Steering Group involving representatives from Government, the tourism industry and the island itself. As part of the study the consultants interviewed those within the tourism industry, those visiting the island and those who live there. Several workshops were held on the island all of which were well attended and following its completion the study was launched in October 2005 by Bruce Robinson, Permanent Secretary from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment. Commenting Peter Harper Trust Director with the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust said *"This is an important document which helps to map out the future development of tourism on Rathlin Island. Whilst tourism presents an economic opportunity it will be important to ensure that any future development is sustainable"*.

Work is now underway to help identify funding to undertake the many recommendations within the plan. The Rathlin Island Sustainable Tourism Strategy was undertaken as part of the Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative under the EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation.

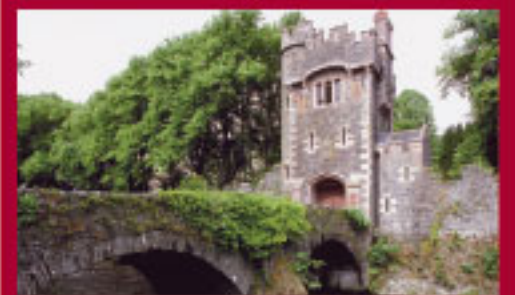
## Our Heritage

Glenarm (Glen of the Army) – Glenarm is the first of the nine glens as you travel north. Home to the Antrim McDonnell's much of the Glen is part of the Antrim Estate. The Upper Glen includes Glenarm Woods designated as an Area of Special Scientific Interest. This area is managed by the Ulster Wildlife Trust and is home to many rare birds and plants. Nestling at the foot of the Glen is Glenarm Village, a conservation area with many interesting buildings including Glenarm Castle and the Barbican Gate.



Flowering in spring and early summer the primrose is common in Glenarm Forest, along the Coast Road and throughout the AONB area. However it is also one of 56 species protected under the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985. Under this Order, you may not: 'intentionally pick, uproot or destroy any wild plants listed in the schedule, or even collect their flower and seeds; sell these plants or their seeds if taken from the wild; uproot any wild plants intentionally, except on your own land or with permission'.

The name of the plant is derived from prima rosa (the first rose) because of the fact that it flowers early in the year. There are two kinds of flowers, externally they look the same but internally they are different. One is known as 'pin-eyed' and the other as 'thrum-eyed' (thrum – unwoven ends of thread). However they are never both found on the same plant. This is an adaptation which helps to ensure cross pollination.



The imposing entrance to Glenarm Castle, the Barbican Gate, is situated in the heart of Glenarm village. A castle was originally built by the Bissets in the mid 13th Century but by 1597 this had fallen into ruins.

The present day castle was built in 1636 by Randall McDonnell, the Earl of Antrim and is still a private residence. Although normally closed to the public, visitors are welcome to visit during the annual open days in July.



## An introduction to the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB

One action already being undertaken by the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB Management Group is the production of an introductory guide to the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB. As well as providing information on natural, cultural and built heritage the guide will provide a detailed map of the AONB.

Commenting on the proposed new guide, Maxime Sizaret, Natural Heritage Officer for the Trust said "As well as being of interest to visitors the introductory guide should also be of interest to those who are lucky enough to live and work in this special landscape".

The introductory guide highlights what AONB designation means in practice and highlights many of the special features of the area. Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust aim to launch the new introductory guide in the near future. For further details visit the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust website at [www.ccght.org](http://www.ccght.org)

## Kids competition time

Where is your favourite part of the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB? Send us a short poem (max 100 words) telling us why! The best one will be published in the next edition of the Antrim Coast and Glens View and the winner will receive a season pass to Carnfunnock Country Park (free entry to the park for one car and its occupants from April to September) kindly offered by Larne Borough Council.

## Quiz?

**Where in the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB was this photo taken?**

Send your answer to:  
**Antrim Coast and Glens AONB quiz!**

Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust, Tilly Molloy's, 18 Main Street, Armoyle Co. Antrim, BT53 8RQ.

The winning prize will be a copy of Alan Turner's recent book entitled "The Glens of Antrim". The winning entry will be drawn from all the entries received before the 30th June 2006.

**Do you know your Glens?  
Which of these are the famous nine Glens of Antrim?**

- Glenoe
- Glencorp
- Glenballyemon
- Glengormley
- Glenola
- Glenshesk
- Glenarm
- Glentaisie
- Glenshane
- Glenties
- Glencloy
- Glenariff
- Glencolumcille
- Glenaan
- Glendun
- Glenravel

Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust provides a secretarial service for the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB. The Trust is grateful for support from the following organisations:



For more information on the Antrim Coast and Glens AONB please check the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust website.

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