



## CHAIRMAN'S VIEW

As the new boy on the block as far as chairing this important Management Forum is concerned, I am conscious of the important burden that now falls on my shoulders in this time when cuts all round are the order of the day and there is so much we hope and need to accomplish in the coming years. First of all, I want to pay a warm tribute to my predecessor, Richard Gillen, and to thank him for all the drive and energy he brought to this task in recent years. I look forward to benefiting from his experience and counsel during my term at the helm.

For my own part, I have lived in Castlerock, the pearl on the coast and the gateway for many visitors to Binevenagh, for some 35 years and my affections for the area's truly outstanding natural attractions but also for its rich cultural heritage run deep and true. As I write this, I am picturing in my mind's eye the current white quilt of snowdrops in the Black Glen and looking forward to the rich abundance of wild garlic flowers and the bluebells that will soon carpet Downhill Forest.

Soon, too, if we climb the northerly flank of Binevenagh itself at the right time the ground beneath our feet will be alive with myriad tiny frogs, all hopping and scurrying about their lawful pursuits, as nature's bounty unfolds before our eyes.

Clearly, these are gems of nature that we normally take for granted but, these very gems are also threatened by the unscrupulous despoilers who, all too often, fly-tip and thus disfigure our fine countryside for their own selfish and unscrupulous reasons. On a recent visit to Ballinrees Reservoir, a fine walking area, I was appalled to see a heap of old mattresses, whiteware and domestic debris cast off all around the rim of the car park and, as I walked round the reservoir itself, there were heaps of dog faeces everywhere, casually left by irresponsible owners to pollute the precious drinking water supply for the surrounding area. This is a problem that urgently needs addressing if ever there was one.

On the campaigning front, CCGHT members and staff will need to be even more vigilant in future with respect to the drive to secure better protection for our natural heritage and its built environment, including proper legislation to protect the status of AONBs and of other areas of special interest, since the cuts announced so far already gravely threaten all the environmental protection services which are so essential to the preservation of the natural environment.



**Michael Jones**  
Chairman  
Binevenagh AONB  
Management Forum

# DOWNHILL FOREST

## 900 YEARS, 50 TREE SPECIES, AND 1 FAT CHAMPION...



**Downhill Forest is a small mixed woodland, about the size of 100 football pitches, just inland from the North Coast near Castlerock.**

It is a hidden gem, as it is the lesser-known part of the original estate of Frederick Harvey, the 4th Earl of Bristol and Bishop of Derry, which included Downhill Castle (now maintained by The National Trust).

A walk through Downhill Forest will allow you to view over 30 different types of conifers, over 20 species of deciduous broadleaved trees, and one of Ireland's oldest and fattest Sitka spruce – with a girth of nearly 7 metres! The area's history goes back to 1182, when a great battle took place near the Early Christian Promontory Fort and the Normans defeated Donnell O'Loughlin. The battle area, known as "Dungannon Hill", is flat only because the Bishop leveled the top in 1783, blowing it off with gunpowder in order to plant more trees.

This was a working woodland, and towards its southern end is an old disused water powered sawmill with its lade running round the small lake in the middle of this woodland. The lake was originally designed as a fishpond; it is now home to a number

of Mallard ducks and Moorhens who have taken up residence. Both the waymarked walks pass by this elongated pond: one is just over a kilometre long while the other is two kilometres in length.

The Ulster Way also runs through part of the forest. Part of the forest is linked into a province-wide cycling network called Sustrans route 93, running from the Mussenden Road down through mixed woodlands to the Burrenmore Road. The North West Orienteering Club has also created a permanent orienteering course in the forest, but for a more sedate visit, picnic tables are situated on the grass near the main entrance.

**Stephen McCartney,**  
Forest Service NI



## BINEVENAGH AONB MANAGEMENT FORUM

# WHO'S WHO?

## MEET THE FORUM



**Rachel Bain**

Rachel Bain, AONB Officer from November 2009 to

December 2010, has taken up a new post with Coleraine, Ballymoney and Limavady Borough Councils as Biodiversity Officer. A new AONB Officer is due to be appointed shortly.



**Mike Jones**

Chair of Castlerock Community Association

Mike Jones is involved in several local community based organisations and a particular champion of the Castlerock

area, where he has lived for over 30 years. Since retiring from the University of Ulster he has taken a special interest in the cultural heritage and environmental protection of the Binevenagh area.



**Cllr Gerry Mullan,  
Limavady Borough  
Council**

Gerry sits on the Economic Development; Planning and Development Services; Leisure Services; Finance and

General Purposes Committees as well as representing the Council on the Binevenagh AONB forum, Causeway Arts Committee, Causeway Museum Service, District Policing Partnership, Forum for Local Government and the Arts, Limavady Road Safety Committee, Magilligan Community Association, Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership, Northern Ireland Museums Council, Roe Valley Arts & Heritage Committee, Roe Valley Enterprises, Transition Committee and Westport Twinning Committee. Gerry's lives in the Binevenagh AONB and his interests include photography, craftwork, wheel based pottery and reading.



# BINEVENAGH AONB FORESTS

**Binevenagh Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is simply blessed with trees. Covering almost 4000 hectares of the AONB, the forest and woodland ranges from small stands of trees dotted here and there to former orchards at Ballycarton, Downhill's historic demesne, ancient woodland at Aghanloo and commercial forestry.**

The range of tree cover is as diverse as the landscape and the way we interact with it. Having such a resource provides a real opportunity for outdoor recreation with the forests being used by locals and visitors alike. Much of the Ulster Way and North Sperrins Way passes extensively through forests at Cam, Springwell and Grange Park before heading towards Downhill and Castlerock. The forests have hosted charity challenge events, adventure races, horse riding, orienteering and motorsport events.

There is no doubt that the forests & woodlands of Binevenagh AONB, as well as those that stretch further south towards the Sperrins, are a key landscape feature. Some of the best known views within the area have been changed or enhanced as harvesting opens up another long forgotten vista or the planting creates patterns that change with the seasons such as on the lower slopes of Binevenagh. Even after harvesting, the standing

deadwood, which is left intentionally, is of great biodiversity value providing raptor perches and shelter for insect life.

These forests are a haven within the landscape that we should all experience, explore & treasure

**Richard Gillen,  
Limavady Borough Council**

**A word of caution if you are walking through the local forests be aware of Sudden Oak Death (Phytophthora ramorum) which has a potential to attack a wide range of woody plants and could cause significant damage to woodland and other habitat if it were to become established. As the disease can easily spread, especially on footwear, the public is advised to stay on the main paths, not take plant cuttings and keep dogs on leads. For more information visit: [www.dardni.gov.uk/forests-service](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/forests-service)**

# REPRINT BIRDS OF BINEVENAGH

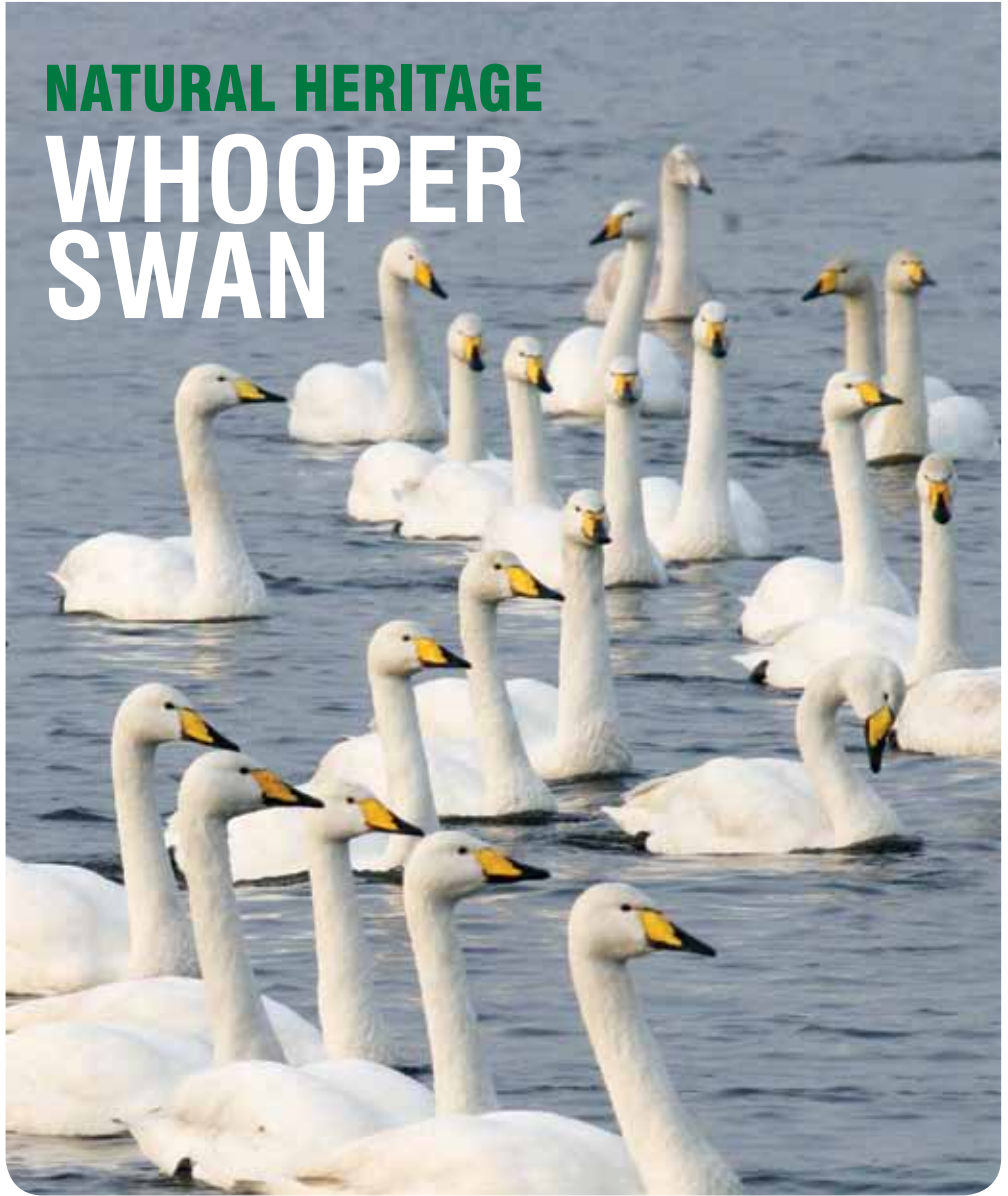
## The Birds of Binevenagh

*A guide to the wild birds of Binevenagh Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*



Due to the immense popularity of the Birds of Binevenagh guide we have reprinted and circulated the publication to Tourist Information Centres, libraries and schools in the area. If you require a copy contact us on [info@ccght.org](mailto:info@ccght.org)

# NATURAL HERITAGE WHOOOPER SWAN



Lough Foyle supports internationally important numbers of whooper swan. It has been recorded that over 5% of the total international population is supported here on the shores of the Lough, showing just how important this site is for these majestic

birds. The whooper swan has a long thin neck usually held in a straight, upright position and a yellow bill. For more information contact CCGHT for a copy of our Birds of Binevenagh guide.



### EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

CCGHT has applied to the Europarc Federation for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism for the Causeway Coast, Binevenagh and Antrim Coast & Glens Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Charter is a practical management tool which helps protected areas to continuously improve the sustainable development and the management of tourism taking account of the needs of the environment, the local population and the local tourism businesses. In April 2011 CCGHT hosted verification officers for the Federation, Hans Schiphorst and Richard Partington. The Trust arranged site visits and an action-packed itinerary allowing the verification officers the opportunity to sample local produce, local activities and speak to local tourism businesses. For more information on Sustainable Development in the Causeway Coast & Glens area visit the Sense & Sustainability section of our website: [www.ccght.org](http://www.ccght.org)

# DUNBEG WINDFARM

The Irish renewable energy group, Gaelectric, has secured full planning approval for a 42 MW wind farm at Dunbeg, Co. L'derry. Dunbeg will be one of the most significant wind farm developments on the island of Ireland and will generate sufficient renewable power to meet the electricity demand of 24,000 homes. The total investment at Dunbeg will amount to £58 million.

The development will consist of 14 wind turbines with a maximum hub height of 80 metres and a maximum blade diameter of 90 metres.

Commenting on the Dunbeg planning approval, Gaelectric Chief Executive Brendan McGrath, said:

"This is a very significant milestone for our business and greatly strengthens Gaelectric's platform in the energy market. We have now secured planning approval for over 80MW of wind energy developments in Northern Ireland. The Dunbeg site is a world-class energy resource and accounts for over half of this generation capacity."

Mr McGrath acknowledged the commitment and support of the Northern Ireland Executive to a sustainable energy future on the island of Ireland. He said:

"Our Northern Ireland projects will be invaluable in securing a sustainable energy future on the island of Ireland. The role of the NI Environment Minister, Mr Edwin Poots, has been particularly important in ensuring that development policy allows renewable energy projects to be progressed while ensuring effective planning controls and protection of the natural environment."

The Dunbeg site is located near the A37 midway between Limavady and Coleraine, and within the Binevenagh AONB. Planning approval follows Gaelectric's successful appeal to the Northern Ireland Planning Appeals Commission which overturned an earlier decision of the Northern Ireland Planning Service to refuse approval. Approval has also coincided with a planning policy decision that an AONB designation should not of itself present a barrier to the sustainable development of renewable energy projects.

Making the Dunbeg announcement, Gaelectric Operations Director, Mike Denny, said:

"Dunbeg will not only provide a significant boost to Northern Ireland's renewable energy capacity, it will also generate jobs, support increased workforce skills and provide economic activity to the area."

He said: "Gaelectric has completed an extensive consultation programme to update local communities on the Dunbeg project and a locally administered community fund will be established to support community projects in the area."



## A Community Perspective

The placement of 21 wind turbines in a designated AONB raises questions concerning the physical intrusion of an industrial scheme and its environmental impact measured against the infinitesimal contribution that these turbines will have in solving the world's climatic problems.

It highlights the contradiction which government faces when recognising, defining and protecting unique areas of living landscapes and yet allowing their desecration to meet imposed renewable energy targets and the demands of entrepreneurs dedicated to commercial growth. Legitimate objectives these may be but when considering environmental impact it would appear that the rationalities that environmentalists, social anthropologists, artists and poets can bring to bear, together with the recommendations of the government's own planning officers, are all outweighed by political and commercial argument.

"Landscape in itself is difficult to value objectively. Much of what is valued in a landscape is a mélange of natural features and social and cultural history, which is highly evocative and thus important to people. The poignancy of this is outwardly reflected in art, poetry and song and inwardly in a sense of pride, belonging and comfort, all reinforcing this feeling of 'value'. Increasingly this value is also being realised in economic terms with the overt marketing of landscape for tourism and as a pleasant place to recreate or live."

Shared Horizons: statement of policy on protected landscapes in Northern Ireland. DOE, Environment and Heritage Service, February 2003.

Not on this occasion, it would seem.

**Peter Craddock**

If you would like to comment on the wind farm developments contact CCGHT on [info@ccght.org](mailto:info@ccght.org)



European Year of Volunteering 2011

**The efforts of the many thousands of volunteering organisations make a huge difference to our lives in countless ways. The world would be much worse off without volunteers!**

[www.europa.eu](http://www.europa.eu)



**Pictured above:**  
Young volunteers making a clean sweep of the beach

As part of the 2011 EYV celebrations the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust is recruiting a small band of volunteers to assist us with promoting and protecting the landscape. If you are a keen environmentalist and would be

interested in carrying out a range of practical work on sites, or taking part in walks and talks in the Binevenagh Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty contact the CCGHT office for an application pack on [info@ccght.org](mailto:info@ccght.org)

## SAVE THE NEWSLETTER!

This publication has been produced to inform local people, visitors and businesses of projects undertaken by the Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust (CCGHT) to enhance and promote the unique beauty and heritage of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

We liaise with landowners, stakeholders, local authorities, tourism and community sectors to produce up to date information on the management of protected areas, projects within the area, issues that impact the landscape, historical, geographical and ecological facts, events and competitions. If you value your AONB newsletter and you want to ensure that the publication continues visit: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/QDRQKZY](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/QDRQKZY) to complete a 5 minute survey. Alternatively contact CCGHT office to complete the survey by email ([info@ccght.org](mailto:info@ccght.org)) or by phone on: (028) 20752100

**All completed surveys received before 30th June 2011 will be entered in a Prize Draw for a Canon SLR Camera, Case and Memory Card bundle.**



# CAM QUARRY 'SUPER DUMP'



## NI Planning Service has approved the location of a landfill site for non-hazardous waste at Cam Quarry owned by B. Mullan & Sons.

The quarry will be used to deal with waste from seven local council areas. The quarry which lies on the boundary of the Binevenagh Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is in an area convenient to the Ulster Way, a 1000km walking trail popular with tourists.

In a recent interview with UTV Environment Minister Edwin Poots defended his decision saying it was the only one that could be made.

“North West Management Group, who looks after the waste in that area, had agreed a procurement process with the owners of the quarry on the basis that planning permission would be approved.”

He said a public inquiry is not necessary as there was “not a significant conflict” between any of the issues brought forward by the applicant and the relevant government departments.

John Dallat, East Derry SDLP MLA, who also sits on the Environment committee, insisted in the UTV interview that the ‘super-dump’ has the potential to ruin tourism in the area.

“They are people, some of whom are involved in rural tourism, and of course, they have the fears that anyone else would have when they are told there will be a super-dump on their doorstep.

“It will fundamentally change the way of life.”

**We are keen to hear your views so if you have any concerns or comments on the development of the ‘Super Dump’ at Cam Quarry send an email to the Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust at [info@ccght.org](mailto:info@ccght.org)**

Visit CCGHT's newly refurbished website which features ....

a Learning Zone, Facts and Information on the 3 North Coast AONBs, Our Heritage, Image and Publication Libraries and links to the new CCR Alive website.

[ccght.org](http://ccght.org)



CAUSEWAY COAST & GLENS  
HERITAGE TRUST

For more information on the Binevenagh AONB visit the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust website:  
[www.ccght.org](http://www.ccght.org)

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### Binevenagh AONB Fact File:

**Designated:** 2006  
(Formerly North Derry AONB designated in 1966)

**Area:** 14100 ha

**Population:** 5706  
(Estimate based on 2001 census)

**[www.ccght.org](http://www.ccght.org)**

Photographic Credits: St Anthony's Primary School, Picture This! Gaelectric, Forest Service NI, Paul Weston

Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage provides a secretariat service for the Binevenagh AONB. The trust is grateful for support from the following organisations:

