

# Causeway Coast View

The Newsletter for the Causeway Coast AONB

Issue 2

Summer/Autumn 06

## The Chairman's View

It is an honour and a privilege for me to step into the esteemed shoes of Dr David Erwin as chair of the Causeway Coast AONB Management Group.



David and the staff in the Causeway Coast Heritage Trust have taken forward the challenge of introducing an appropriate management structure for the AONB. During my tenure we will build on the solid foundations already in place.

We face a number of often conflicting challenges. How do we do what is asked of us with minimal resources? How do we explain the benefits of proactive protected landscape management? How do we represent the needs of those living and working in the AONB? How do we improve the social and economic well being of the area while also ensuring its protection and conservation?

My background is that I am an employee of the National Trust. Accordingly, as you might expect, environmental issues are at the core of what I believe. Part of my job, combined with my new responsibilities in this role, is to explain and demonstrate that sustainable environmental management is not about thwarting economic opportunities and development — it can and should be about promoting them.

The most important thing for me is that the Causeway Coast is an area of great opportunity — for tourism and potentially also as an example of best practice protected area management. These opportunities should be grasped. This can only be grasped by ensuring the area continues to have appropriate protection, that we agree a series of key management priorities and that we work together as a constructive partnership to help realise them.

What does this mean? Appropriate planning structures in place to both allow for appropriate development and to prevent that which is inappropriate. This means a strong Northern Area Plan and a strong PPS 14 — many of you will find this uncomfortable. It means proper resourcing by Government and others to reflect the real need for protected area management. It means all parties working together — Government, Councils, the agricultural sector, business, tourism, environmental agencies and the community. By working together we can ensure that our special place not only stays special but also adapts to the changing needs of those of us lucky enough to live, work or visit the best part of Ireland - North or South.

S. Thompson

## 50 Outstanding years!



Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are just that! They contain some of our finest landscapes and countryside and are home to some of our most exquisite and unusual wildlife species.

Created by the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act in England and Wales and by the 1965 Amenity Lands Act superseded by the Nature Conservation and 1985 Amenity Lands Order in Northern Ireland there have been 50 AONBs designated since 1956 (36 in England, 4 in Wales, 1 straddling the English and Welsh border and 9 in Northern Ireland) the most recent of which is the re-designation of the former North Derry AONB as Binevenagh AONB this year.



White Park Bay

Collectively the AONBs are very diverse in character: areas of lowland heath; upland areas; rolling hills; dramatic coastal scenery; each with its own unique and fascinating landscape features.

2006 marks the 50th anniversary of the first AONB designation at Gower in South Wales. Since then millions of people, both residents and visitors have enjoyed these special landscapes, many without realising they are in a protected landscape. This year's celebrations offer everyone the opportunity to discover or in some cases re-discover what the UK's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have to offer.

Northern Ireland has 9 AONBs. These include the Causeway Coast, Antrim Coast and Glens, Sperrin, Binevenagh, Lagan Valley, Strangford Lough, Lecale Coast, Ring of Gullion and Mourne AONBs. Two further AONBs were proposed by EHS in Fermanagh.

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# World Heritage Site Management Plan

Whilst media attention has focused on proposals for a new Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre work has progressed steadily on a further element of the Ministerial Initiative the preparation of a World Heritage Site Management Plan. Although one of the first World Heritage Sites designated in the UK in 1986, it was also, until recently, one of the few UK sites without a management plan.

Following a meeting between UNESCO officials and the then Minister for Environment Angela Smith, it was agreed to prepare a management plan. Environment & Heritage Service led this process quickly establishing a Steering Group which included expertise in tourism, geology and visitor and environmental management as well as representatives from the local community.



*Proposed new visitor centre*

There was widespread consultation and several workshops ensured everyone had their say before the final report was launched in February 2005.

Since then Environment & Heritage Service have established a World Heritage Site Management Plan Steering Group whose main role will be to oversee the implementation of the Plan. As a non statutory plan, this will be dependant on the goodwill and support of a range of different organisations.

One important recommendation being taken forward is the preparation of an interpretative plan. Ideally this will provide a template for interpretation throughout the site and influence proposed interpretation within the new visitor centre.

Copies of the Management Plan can be downloaded from the EHS website: [www.ehsni.gov.uk](http://www.ehsni.gov.uk). For more information also see [www.ccght.org](http://www.ccght.org).

## Causeway Coast AONB represented on National AONB Association

The National Association of AONBs (NAAONB) is an umbrella body representing the needs of 49 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It acts as an important networking organisation and as a lobby on government for additional resources to be directed to protected area management.

Earlier this year Peter Harper, Trust Director with the Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust was elected to the Board of the National Association of AONBs at their annual conference in Swansea. This is the first time that Northern Ireland's AONBs have been represented on the Board. Commenting Peter said it's important to ensure the Association is relevant to all parts of the UK including Northern Ireland. Whilst management structures and funding arrangements are different in Northern Ireland our AONBs are just as much a national asset as those within England and Wales. It's clear they should also be managed and resourced accordingly.



*Members of the Causeway Coast AONB Management Group*

## Managing the Causeway Coast AONB

Since our last edition the Causeway Coast AONB Management Group has met twice. One of its main tasks is to encourage and support the implementation of the Causeway Coast AONB Management Plan. As a non statutory plan and with limited resources this can often be difficult, however good progress has been made on several initiatives.

For example Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust has taken forward a number of raising awareness initiatives including the production of an introductory guide and this newsletter. In due course it is hoped to produce a series of themed leaflets relating to different aspects of the AONB. It is also hoped to produce posters capturing the essence of the area and to arrange a series of talks to help people better understand just why this area has been recognised and designated as a landscape of national importance.

Other initiatives being undertaken by Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust include the production of a Cultural Heritage Audit of the Causeway Coast and Glens.

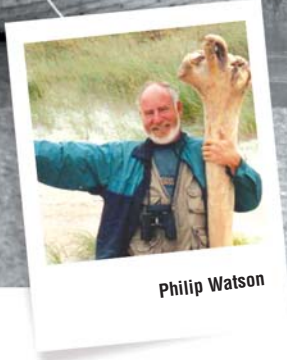
The involvement of the AONB Management Group in both Europarc and the National Association of AONBs has helped make contact with board members and officers from across Europe and often provided ideas for better management of the Causeway Coast.

Implementation of the plan depends on the support and goodwill of many different organisations however everyone can help. Anyone interested in looking after this unique landscape should get behind the Management Group as they seek to implement the agreed recommendations within the plan.



..hauling lobster pots  
from the clutches of kelp..

*The Ocean Pearl at Dunseverick Harbour in the early 1970s  
(photo — Philip Watson)*



Philip Watson

## My favourite part of the Causeway Coast AONB - Philip Watson

Harbours hold a fascination for me, perhaps because of many happy memories of working with Causeway Coast fishermen when I was studying lobsters and crabs. The little harbour of Dunseverick is my favourite, tucked away at the end of a windy road, where, on the rocky islet off the pier, seals sometimes lie about like badly rolled carpets, drying off in the sun.

In one of the fishermen's huts at the end of the road I had many long yarns with the late Gault brothers, with whom I went to sea on their boat 'Ocean Pearl', hauling lobster pots from the clutches of kelp under the awesome cliffs of Bengore Head.

Today there are no full-time fishermen here, but it remains a special place for me. In winter, exhilarating ocean swells crash over the rocks, scattering shorebirds; in spring the area is carpeted with sweet smelling scurvy grass flowers and bright sea pinks; in summer visitors drop in at the fisheries museum to sample a piece of history and autumn brings wild swans and geese flying in over the sea from Iceland and Arctic Canada. It's a place for all seasons, somewhere I keep returning to knowing I'll never be disappointed. Philip Watson is a naturalist and writer, and the author of "A Companion to the Causeway Coast Way"

## Geological Guide to the Causeway Coast

Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust have started work on the preparation of a new guide to the geology and geomorphology of the Causeway Coast AONB. As well as focusing on the Giant's Causeway & Causeway Coast World Heritage Site the new guide will feature other important sites within the AONB such as White Rocks and Portballintrae Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs) and the complex geomorphology of Ballintoy.

We hope the new guide will help more people to understand how this fantastic



coastal landscape was formed said Maxime Sizaret, Natural Heritage Officer for the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust.

It is hoped to launch the new guide early next year.

## Our Heritage

### Fauna: Narrow-mouthed whorl snail



*Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales*

The tiny narrow-mouthed whorl snail *Vertigo angustior* is classified as Vulnerable on the IUCN (the World Conservation Union) Red List, Endangered on the British Red List and included in Annex II of the European Habitats Directive. This Snail is one of the reasons for the designation of the North Antrim Coast as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which supports its only known living population in Northern Ireland.

"This species was rediscovered in 2002 within the North Antrim SAC. It thrives in tall and lightly grazed damp grassland and two sites within the North Antrim Coast SAC provide an ideal habitat."

### Flora: Bladder wrack (*fucus vesiculosus*).



*This alga is sometimes called popweed. Can you guess why?*

Bladder wrack is a familiar large olive-brown coloured seaweed, which you often find attached to rocks along the shore. It takes its name from the spherical bubbles it has all over its long leaves (or fronds) air filled. These bladders help the fronds to stay afloat in water during high tide so that they benefit from the sunlight.

The appearance of bladder wrack varies depending on where it is found; in more sheltered areas there are many air bladders, whereas in more exposed conditions there are often less.

### Ballintoy Harbour



At the end of the 19th century sett stones, chipped and shaped at the Brockie Quarry in Larry Bane, were shipped from Ballintoy Harbour to pave the streets of Dublin, Cork, Wexford, Limerick and Glasgow.

Today Ballintoy Harbour is mainly used by local fishermen. The old cave to the right of the car park was formerly used for boat repair and for a short while boat building.

Bendhu House overlooks the harbour and provides a spectacular landmark. This unusual building was both designed and built by the artist Newtown Penprase. Today it is in private ownership.

# Causeway Coastal Route commended



Pat Toal, Permanent Secretary Dard and Kathryn Thomson, Finance and Business Planning Director NITB presenting the award to Peter Harper and Karina McCollum from Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust

Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust achieved further success when shortlisted for the 2005/06 Area Tourism Initiative of the Year at the NITB Tourism Awards. The Trust was commended for series of infrastructure improvements along the Causeway Coastal Route which it supported as part of the Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative (NRRTI).

In total 23 projects were supported along the Coastal Route ranging from improvements to public amenity blocks to the creation of new stop off points. Commenting the judges felt This was an excellent project which would have a significant impact on tourism within the area linking three Signature Projects (Belfast, Derry and the Causeway Coast & Glens). Several of

the projects such as the recent improvements to Dunseverick and Magheracross stop off points were undertaken within the Causeway Coast AONB. This is the second success for Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust at the NITB Awards. The Trust was the first winner of the Area Tourism Initiative award in 2002.

Commenting Peter Harper, Director of the Trust, said This is another great accolade for the Trust and recognition for all the hard work undertaken by the NRRTI team and the promoters who undertook the actual work on the ground. It should help to establish the Causeway Coastal Route as a world class attraction ranking with other touring routes across the world .

## Kids competition time

Where is your favourite part of the Causeway Coast AONB? Send us a short poem (max 100 words) telling us why! The best one will be published in the next issue of the Causeway Coast View and the winner will receive a family ticket to Dunluce Castle kindly offered by Environment & Heritage Service.



## Competition

Do you know your AONB?  
This photograph was taken somewhere in the Causeway Coast AONB. Do you know where it is?

Send your answer to:  
**Do you know your AONB Competition**  
Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust,  
Tilly Molloy s, 18 Main Street, Armo y,  
Co. Antrim, BT53 8RQ.

The winner will receive a copy of Philip Watson's "companion to the Causeway Coast Way". The winning entry from all the entries received before the 29th December 2006.

The last issue winners were Sonny and Djay Erskine.  
The Answer was the Bell of the church at Port Bradden.



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



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

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