

## The Chairman's View



Graham Thompson  
National Trust

The importance of the Giant's Causeway to the people of Northern Ireland has been demonstrated in a very extreme way over recent weeks. The public outcry and media coverage, following the statement by Arlene Foster that she is of a mind to approve the planning application by Seaport Investments for a Giant's Causeway Visitor and Study Centre, have been phenomenal.

Much has been said and not said about many issues but what is very clear is that the people of the area and from throughout Northern Ireland, including elected representatives from every political party, believe strongly in the following:

- ¥ The Giant's Causeway desperately needs new visitor facilities to replace those lost in the fire of 2000
- ¥ New visitor facilities at the Giant's Causeway should remain in public ownership
- ¥ New facilities should not take away anything from the experience of visiting the Causeway
- ¥ No decisions should be taken which could potentially have a detrimental impact on the site's World Heritage Status
- ¥ All the key stakeholders should work together to try and realise an acceptable solution for the North's premier tourist attraction
- ¥ Any solution should provide good value for money and allow for direct re-investment in the site and the wider area
- ¥ A solution should be realised as soon as possible

The Causeway Coast AONB management group shares these views and believes that they represent the views of most people in the area. The management group will continue to do what it can working with others to achieve the right solution for our greatest asset.

G Thompson

## Giant's Causeway World Heritage Site Visitor Centre



The Management Group of the Causeway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has written to Arlene Foster expressing its concerns about the news that she was of a mind to approve the planning application from Seaport Investments for a Giant's Causeway Visitor and Study Centre.

At their last Causeway Coast AONB Management Group meeting, the Group came to the unanimous view that:

- ¥ Visitor facilities at the Giant's Causeway should remain in public ownership;
- ¥ The current process for new visitor facilities at the Giant's Causeway, being led by the Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, an integral element of the three stranded approach to issues at the site, should be resumed; and
- ¥ No solution for integrated management at the Giant's Causeway would be possible without full participation of Moyle District Council and the National Trust.

Before coming to her final decision on the application the group urged Minister Foster to give full consideration to:

- ¥ existing planning policies (notably BH5 of PPS6 and COU 12 of the draft Northern Area Plan);
- ¥ the content of the 2003 UNESCO Mission report on the Giant's Causeway WHS;
- ¥ the 2003 AONB management plan; and
- ¥ the 2005 WHS management plan.

Following the meeting a spokesperson for the Management Group said:

*The position of the Management Group underlines the views expressed across the North Coast by many*



*individuals and interested parties. It supports the position of both Moyle and Coleraine Councils and is a genuine representation of the strong feelings felt in the management group.*

The spokesperson went on to say *It is now incumbent on all of the interested parties to get together to produce an agreed world class visitor experience at the Causeway. This must recognise the conservation and landscape values of the site and the international obligations that go with World Heritage Site status.*



# New Coastal Zone Centre



This summer, Portrush Countryside Centre was relaunched as the Coastal Zone, Environment & Heritage Service's first dedicated coastal and marine exhibition centre. The centre aims to inspire and inform the public about the wealth of marine life around our shores. It caters for local people, the educational sector and tourists, in addition to specialist groups looking for a coastal venue.

The new exhibition 'Time and Tide' opened this summer tells the story of how the rich marine environment and natural processes of the Northern Ireland coast and more specifically the Causeway Coast have and continue to influence past, present and future human activities — from fishing to tourism and from wars to settlement, and how it itself is now under threat by modern pressures. Gerard Cutmore, Portrush Site Manager explained:

*We are delighted with the new facilities at the Coastal Zone, fast set to become a hub of excellence in interpreting our coastal environment and educating the public through multi-sensory experiences.*

*Highlights include a 3D model of a plunging wave, interactive beachcombers club involving children's craft area, model of Drontheim boat used by local fishermen and an encased exhibit showing a complete porpoise skeleton. There is also the opportunity to view the fish and marine life close up with newly installed fish tanks and replica rock pool.*

*As well as being a popular North Coast visitor attraction, the centre has long played a key role in interpreting the natural history and maritime culture of the North Antrim Coast and more particularly the Causeway Coast.*

*In addition, it has operated as a local base for EHS maintenance work within the many National Nature Reserves and Areas of Special Scientific Interest in Co Antrim, including coastal sites such as the Skerries, Whitepark Bay and Rathlin Island.*

The remodelled centre has the potential to become a hub of excellence in interpreting and educating the public about the coastal environment, whilst building upon its status as a popular North Coast visitor attraction.

Entrance to the new exhibition is free (groups need prior booking). Further information is available from the Centre staff on 028 7082 3600.



## One of my favourite spots in the Causeway Coast AONB!



Peter Harper

The view from Portaneevy is breathtaking. It changes with the weather. Looking east you can see the Mull of Kintyre, Islay and Jura and Rathlin Island to the north. Carrick-a-rede Rope Bridge is just below. Looking west the view opens up to include the Skerries, Portrush and Inishowen. Portaneevy is a great place to take time out and get things in perspective. If you're lucky you'll have it all to yourself with only the sound of the gulls and the sea crashing along the shoreline below. Try Portaneevy on a cold winter morning and watch the Atlantic waves crashing into Bull Point or huge seas swirling around Rathlin Sound. Or go there just before dusk on a long summer evening. The sunsets here are the best on the North Coast.

Peter left the Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust at the end of August to take up a new position as a Planner with Colin Buchanan and

Partners Limited. Peter had been with the organisation as Trust Director since it was established in May 2002.





Jeff Rooker (Lord Rooker)  
Minister of State N. Ireland 2005-2006

*...no idea of the sheer splendour that awaited*

## Guest Contribution

The Causeway Coast was an eye opener for me when I arrived in Northern Ireland in 2005. I had not previously visited and neither had I seen any of the Coast to Coast programmes on television. I therefore had no idea of the sheer splendour that awaited.

Areas of outstanding natural beauty are just that - natural and beautiful. I only made it once on official business, but during my frequent duty weekends a visit was a must. The coaches parked up told a story of people from the Island of Ireland in attendance. Furthermore the languages spoken by visitors included most of Europe especially eastern Europe.

Occasionally I accosted such a visitor to ask what they thought of the landscape and how they heard about it. It was clear that the status of part of the Causeway Coast as a World Heritage Site is truly important as it alone must generate thousands of visits. This status must be maintained at all costs and any developments moulded to fit the area rather than the area fitting the developments.

On one of my weekend jaunts I came across an old political colleague from Birmingham who was actually on an All Round Ireland cruise as the best way of seeing the beauty and whose boat visited Belfast for the day. They had the good sense to get on an excursion to the Giants Causeway for the day rather than tour Belfast, as they already knew what a thriving City looks like.

I hope I will be able to visit again and experience the new visitor centre when completed.

## Trust Director

Helen Noble



Helen Noble replaced Peter as the Trust Director of the Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust in October 2007. Helen graduated in Public Administration BA (Hons) and English Law (LLB). She has over 15 years of

senior management within protected areas throughout the UK and Europe working primarily within the national park and AONB family and for non governmental organisations, whose remit covers protected areas and landscapes throughout Europe. Over the years, Helen has been able to develop experience and expertise in strategic and policy development, management planning, financial and funding management, people skills and organisational development. She has applied these skills at international, national and local levels.

Her main career has involved working closely with and engaging key stakeholders, agencies, partners and local

communities to produce statutory plans including management plans, state of the park reports and local development plans. She has extensive experience and knowledge of consultation and facilitation processes.

Her European experience has enabled her to explore and experience many spectacular places, cultural and built environments.

Helen has two grown up children, who are currently studying. She enjoys outdoor activities including horse riding, sailing, jogging and walking.

***The Causeway Coast AONB Management Group wishes both Peter and Helen success in their new posts.***

## Our Heritage



Up until recently Portballintrae was a quiet village with its lobster fishing boats and salmon fisheries. It is nowadays better known for its holiday homes and apartments. During the 18th Century Portballintrae was a busy harbour exporting limestone and basalt from local quarries. Portballintrae retains some of its historic character around the horse shoe-shaped bay, with a number of prominently sited listed buildings. These buildings date from the time when the local fishing industry was active. One of them the Ice House used to store ice for preserving fresh fished salmon.

Portballintrae is also well known for its sheltered crescent bay result of marine erosion along a geological fault. Geological faults were produced at the same period than the widespread volcanic activity (notably producing the Giant's Causeway) from shifts in the level of the land. Along the Causeway Coast north/south oriented faults formed such as Portballintrae, Portrush and White Park Park Bay. These were then widened by marine erosion along the time forming bays such as at Portballintrae bay.

More recent marine erosion is evident. Up until the end of the 19th Century the bay had a wide sandy beach even used as a tennis court. All the sand had disappeared by the 1980s possibly due to development of the harbour, upsetting the wave patterns in the bay. Since then Groynes were built and sand imported to retain a small sandy beach.

A positive result for scientists of the recent erosion is that it has exposed some very interesting geological features on a stretch of the shoreline revealing information on the geological history of the Area. Part of the bay was designated in 1995 as an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) for its geological value.



Leatherback turtle

Off the coast and with a bit of patience marine mammals such as the harbour porpoise or common dolphins can sometime be spotted. Leatherback turtles, a sea going reptile also occasionally visit the coastal sea off Portballintrae. Sometimes the leathery carapace of this amazing animal is mistaken for an upturned boat. Leatherback turtles are the largest living turtles in the world and can grow to 1.5m in length and weighing anything between 200 and 700 kg feeding mainly on jellyfish. Leatherback turtles can live to a great age and will undertake many long distance migrations in a single life time.



# Know your AONB



Early purple orchid

A series of evening talks on the Causeway Coast AONB has been organised for this winter. The talks are open to the general public and anyone interested is welcome to come along and join us to listen and discuss with our specially invited speakers.

7pm 26 Nov

**Salmon in the Causeway Coast AONB**

Gary O'Neill  
Bushmills Inn,  
Bushmills

7pm 3 Dec

**Bushmills Townscape Scheme**

Arthur Acheson  
Bushmills Inn,  
Bushmills

7pm 14 Jan

**Flora in the Causeway Coast AONB**

Jenny Campbell  
Giant's Causeway  
Hotel, Bushmills

The talks are free of charge. Tea and coffee provided. As capacity is limited pre-booking is recommended, please contact the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust Offices on 028 20751 2100 or [info@ccght.org](mailto:info@ccght.org)

## Causeway School



The Causeway School museum is housed in a former school that functioned as such from 1915 to 1962. The building was designed by Clough Williams-Ellis. It was built by the Macnaghten family in memory of their father Baron Macnaghten of Runkerry. During term time it is widely used for living history lessons by visiting schools. Pupils and teachers get the chance to dress up and experience a 1920s school day. Visitors to the Causeway School are able to have a hands on experience. They can sit in the rows of desks, use nib pens and ink wells, read from old text books, do sums in imperial measures and toe the line, that is stand in a semi-circle with their toes at the metal studs in the classroom floor to receive instruction. Two sculptures by the Hollywood-born artist Rosamund Praeger (1867-1954) add to the unusual character of the building. One is a relief of Fionnula, the daughter of Lir, seated on a rock comforting her swan brother, the other, Sadie, a bronze sculpture of a girl asleep by a pitcher.

The Causeway School is well worth a visit and if you miss it, you miss something very special and 'unique' to the Giants Causeway.

## 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: **Maxime Sizaret**, Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust, Tilly Molloy's, 18 Main Street, Armoyle, Co. Antrim, BT53 8RQ. Identify the photograph and win a framed poster of the Giant's Causeway. Competition entries must be returned to Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust office before 31 December 2007.



**Congratulations:** Marie Wells from Ballycastle correctly identified Bushmills Education Centre from the photograph in the third issue of the Causeway Coast View and won a bottle of Bushmills Whiskey.

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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