



# Causeway Coast View



The Newsletter for the Causeway Coast AONB

Issue 6

Autumn/Winter '08

## The Chairman's View



Graham Thompson  
National Trust Chairman  
Causeway Coast AONB  
Management Group

The largest settlement in the Causeway Coast AONB is the town of Bushmills. We should be asking the questions "Do the people of Bushmills benefit from being at the centre of a protected area?" "Do the people of Bushmills benefit

from being so close to our primary tourist attraction?" We should also be asking the question "Can they benefit more?"

Bushmills is uniquely located as a stepping stone to some of Ireland's top tourist attractions: the Giant's Causeway, the Bushmills Distillery, Dunluce Castle, Carrick-a-rede Rope Bridge. It is home to two of the country's most renowned restaurants: the Bushmills Inn and the Distillers Arms. It has a range of excellent shops and services. It has the opportunity to avail of key financial support due to the Conservation Area status of the centre of the village. It is the chosen second home location of many people from the Greater Belfast area and beyond. Bushmills could be the Kinsale of the north.

To get there there needs to be a concerted effort to reduce the number of unused and derelict buildings, building on existing schemes and encouraging appropriate investment activity. Efforts need to be made to continue the good work that has already started to make the village as welcome as possible to the many visitors to the area, especially at the peaks of the tourist season. The needs and desires of the community need to be reflected in the statutory planning process, within various initiatives and in coming to a conclusion regarding new visitor facilities at the Giant's Causeway.

There are and will always be setbacks: the closure of the Northern Bank for example is a very unwelcome development. Would the bank have remained open if Bushmills was making the most of its opportunities? The real questions perhaps for the future is "How can we work together to make sure that the like of this doesn't happen again and make this very special village a better place for those who live there and those who visit?"



## Colours of the Causeway Coast

The blue flower of Dunluce, the bird's-foot-trefoil, the sea pink or the sea campion are some of the many beautiful flowers colouring the Causeway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) over the year.

To celebrate the guide, the Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust launched, on the 11th September in Portrush, their new guide to the wildflowers of the Causeway Coast AONB – Colours of the Causeway Coast.

The guide provides information on some of the many wildflowers that can be spotted along the Causeway Coast from the seashore and the dunes to the heath & grassland at the top of the cliffs.

The blue flower of Dunluce or meadow crane's-bill is a wild blue geranium found exclusively along the Causeway Coast in Northern Ireland. More common is the bird's foot trefoil, named as such as its seed head looks like the toes of a bird's foot, colours the sand dunes in yellow. The sea campion and sea pinks turn large

areas of the cliffs white and pink over the end of spring and the summer.

Commenting, Maxime Sizaret Natural Heritage Officer with the Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust said "The publication of the guide is part of an ongoing project co-funded by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency aiming at raising awareness of the Causeway Coast AONB and its special qualities and encouraging people to come and explore this magical place. It is hoped that we will be producing a whole series of publications in the future."

Graham Thompson, Chair of the Causeway Coast AONB Management Group added "the diverse habitats found within the Causeway Coast AONB offer opportunities for many of our

wildflowers to grow and give distinctive colours to the area. This guide will help everybody wanting to learn about these many flowers and to come and see the glorious colours of the Causeway throughout the year."

This free new guide will be distributed widely throughout the Causeway Coast AONB and copies will be available in libraries, schools, tourist information centres and from the Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust Offices. For further information on this guide and on the Causeway Coast AONB or to get a copy of the publication please contact Maxime Sizaret on 028 2075 2100 or maxime@ccght.org.







# Local Heroes

by Phillip Watson



The fishery bothy at Portmoon, home to the Arrow for almost a century

The crews of East Antrim who race skiffs on that coast might have a real challenge on their hands if the clock could be turned back 120 years. The four-oared racing skiff Arrow was taking on all-comers at Causeway coast regattas in the 1880s and was proving hard to beat.



Arrow in storage with the National Trust

At the Portrush Annual Regatta of 27 August 1888, the big race of the day was between the Arrow of Portmoon, crewed by James McMullan, James Brewster, Daniel McMullan and Joseph Brown and the Empress of Portrush, crewed by D. Patton, J. McAlister, W. McNeill and R. McAlister. The prize was £6 but that wasn't what mattered; what really mattered was the contest. The Arrow won by a couple of lengths. In the same class, skiffs of 25 feet, this time with only two rowers, the Arrow, Empress and the Supple Kate of Portrush competed for the £1.10 shillings first prize. This time the Empress won.

These epic ocean battles were recorded in the Coleraine Chronicle newspaper but a less objective and more poetical account is found in the book Rowlock Rhymes and Songs of Exile, edited by folklorist Sam Henry and published in 1933. The following quote is from the poem Oul' Portmoon, by a writer whose pen-name was "North Antrim"

*The Arrow then was well  
an' widely known,  
From the Bull of Rachray  
over Innishowen;  
She nivir yet was bate,  
An' she raced the Soople Kate,  
An' many a fishin' crew  
was put from crown'  
The Lochaber boys  
knewed somethin' about rowin'.*

Well, clearly she was "bate" as the record above shows, but not often. Lochaber is the old name for the Causeway shores between Portnaboe and Dunseverick. Another line from this poem says An' the Arrow yit's still swingin' in Portmoon. It was in the old fisheries bothy at Portmoon in 1985 that the author and two friends, the late Sammy Gault of Dunseverick and the late James McLernon of Portballintrae found the Arrow slung in the rafters, where she'd rested for at least 80 years. We rescued this historic boat and James restored her as best he could, for little information existed on her construction other than the oral history record, which suggested she was built at Greencastle or Moville in Inishowen about the mid-nineteenth century.

This unique vessel was displayed in the original Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre from 1986 but was fortunately moved into storage before the fire of 2000 that destroyed most of this building. She remains in safe storage with the National Trust. The author, and others, would dearly like to see her on display again on her home shores, and where better than the proposed new Visitor Centre at the Giant's Causeway.



## The Distiller's Arms Michelin Eating Out in Pubs 2009

The Distiller's Arms is one of many listed buildings in the conservation town of Bushmills. Distinct and rich in heritage it was once home to the past owners of the Bushmills Distillery. The Arms is one of only 8 pubs in Northern Ireland which have been listed among the best in the UK and Ireland for grabbing some grub, according to the prestigious food guide, Michelin Eating Out in Pubs 2009.

## Action plan launched

to protect Coleraine Borough's biodiversity



An action plan to protect and promote Coleraine Borough's biodiversity was launched on Thursday, 26 June 2008 at Flowerfield Arts Centre.

Biodiversity simply means the whole variety of living things from the tallest trees and largest mammals to the smallest flowers and minute insects, and the habitats in which they live.

The new action plan, developed by Coleraine Borough Council in partnership with the Ulster Wildlife Trust, aims to celebrate the rich biodiversity that exists in the Borough, raise awareness of its importance and encourage local people to get involved to protect it for the future.

Guest speaker, and television presenter with the BBC, Daryll Grimason joined the Mayor of Coleraine Borough Council Cllr David Barbour and Chairman of the Ulster Wildlife Trust, Pat Boaden in commending the plan as a 'promising initiative that will lead the way in biodiversity conservation in the Coleraine Borough.'

If you want to find out more about Coleraine Borough's biodiversity, how you can be involved, or if you'd like to obtain a copy of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan contact Emma McLaughlin, Coleraine Biodiversity Officer on 028 70347272 or email: [emma.mclaughlin@colerainebc.gov.uk](mailto:emma.mclaughlin@colerainebc.gov.uk)







# Causeway basalt look-a-likes and their formation



The Giant's Organ showing the transition from the regular columns of the colonnade to the more irregular columns of the entablature

While the view of the Giant's Causeway featuring six-sided basalt columns is undoubtedly the iconic one, the Giant's Organ at the Causeway is the view which is more complete in terms of explaining how the regular columns were formed.



The Giant's Organ is composed of the colonnade columns of the first flow of the Causeway basalts and they pass up into the irregular entablature columns.

The marvellously regular hexagonal columns are only part of the story and observation of the cliff at the Giant's Organ shows that the regular vertical columns pass upwards into a zone of thinner and often curved columns.

These sub-divisions within the Causeway lava flows were recognized in the 1930's by a Russian geologist named Sergei Tomkeieff, who borrowed the terms colonnade and entablature from classical architecture to describe them. These terms are now used across the world to describe these types of columns.

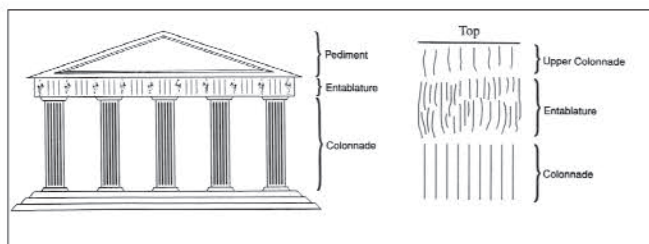


Colonnade and entablature, Fingal's Cave, Staffa

Probably the best known example of a similar occurrence is the supposed other end of the Giant's Causeway at Fingal's Cave on the island of Staffa in the Hebrides.

Here the same sharp transition from the lower columns of the colonnade into the irregular columns of the entablature is easily seen and is similar to the Causeway. Although the Staffa flows are part of the same volcanic episode that occurred during the opening of the North Atlantic, some 60 million years ago, there is no direct connection and the similarity relates to the conditions under which they were erupted. This combination of a lower set of regular columns below an irregular zone can be seen in many locations throughout the world, including Australia, the Columbia River plateau in USA, Iceland and South Africa. Research in these localities has shown there is a common set of conditions required to produce spectacular columns like the Causeway. After eruption a lava loses heat from its top and bottom surfaces, and columns begin to grow upwards from the base and downwards from the top as the flow cools and shrinks. In all of the localities that show Causeway-type columns there is evidence that the top of the flow was flooded while still hot inside, forming the irregular curved joints of the entablature. This rapidly cooling zone then acted as an insulating blanket for the lower part of the flow, allowing slower cooling and the formation of the more regular columns of the colonnade. The water to flood the tops of the flows came from rivers present before the eruptions, and all Causeway-type basalts throughout the world show river valleys filled by basalt, along with lake and river sediments between the lava flows.

Paul Lyle



## Cliff top dedication

On 20th July 1942 a Wellington Bomber on a low flying exercise from Limavady airfield crashed on the cliffs near the Giant's Causeway. On board that flight were Pilot Officer Wilson Twentyman aged 26 from Hukanui, Wellington, New Zealand, and Sergeant Pilot Vernon Pither from Shepparton Victoria, Australia, aged 28.

Both of these men lost their lives, and are buried in Drumachose Parish Church, Limavady. Last year, at a World War One and World War Two Exhibition in Bushmills, a painting was raffled and enough money raised to erect a granite memorial to the two men who had died. The cliff top unveiling of that new memorial and the dedication ceremony took place on Sunday July 20th 2008.

## Dunluce Castle



Located on the Coast Road towards Portballintrae, approximately 3 miles from Portrush, Dunluce is one of a series of fortifications built on rocky outcrops extending into the sea. It is thought by many to be the most picturesque and romantic of Irish castles. It was first documented in McQuillan hands, in 1513, and later became the stronghold of the McDonnells, Earls of Antrim and Lords of the Isles. During the McDonnell ownership it was taken by Somhairle Buidhe (Sorley Boy) MacDonnell, whose brother had married the daughter of McQuillan. Besieged and badly damaged by Sir John Perrott, the Lord Deputy, in 1584, it was subsequently recaptured by Sorley Boy who, submitting to Queen Elizabeth in 1586, was made Constable of the Castle. This did not stop him from aiding the few survivors of the Girona, an Armada galleass that sank off nearby Lacada point, and salvaging cannon from the Girona for use at Dunluce.

For more information about Dunluce Castle visit:  
[www.ni-environment.gov.uk/dunluce.htm](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/dunluce.htm)







# Causeway Coast AONB 20th Anniversary



Shannon McAllister with her winning entry in the Antrim Coast & Glens AONB competition.

In 1989 the rugged coastal scenery and gentler Bush valley landscapes of the Causeway Coast was recognised and designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In 2009 the Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust will celebrate the 20th anniversary of this important milestone.

As part of the celebrations we will host a schools photography competition similar to the very successful and popular Picture This! competition held in the Antrim Coast & Glens AONB in 2008.

Seven primary schools were invited to visit sites within the AONB and submit images of their special area. Shannon McAllister from Ballycastle Integrated Primary School won a digital camera for her photograph of Ballypatrick Forest. Shannon's image, along with the other award winning images, has been illustrated on postcards, bookmarks and in other various publications. If you think your school or youth organisation would be interested in participating why don't you drop us an email highlighting your school's contact details? We are looking for other innovative ideas to celebrate this occasion so if you have any suggestions send an email to [Carole@ccght.org](mailto:Carole@ccght.org)



## Competition

Can you identify the wildflower in the photograph which is common in the Causeway Coast AONB? If you don't already know you will find the answer in our Colours of the Causeway publication.

Send your answer to the Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust, 18 Main Street Armony, BT53 8RQ or email your answer to [info@ccght.org](mailto:info@ccght.org) before 30 January 2009 and you will be entered into our competition to win a meal voucher for two at the Distiller's Arms, Bushmills.

Congratulations to Mrs M. R. Clarke from Craigavon who correctly identified the Bushmills Distillery in the photograph in issue 5 of the newsletter. Mrs Clarke won a £20 National Trust gift voucher.

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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**Photographic credits:**  
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**design by:**  
[www.elevator8.com](http://www.elevator8.com)  
 028 7965 9886

printed on recycled paper

