

Countryside Recreation Network News



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Marine recreation & coastal access

About the Countryside Recreation Network (CRN)

CRN is a membership organisation comprising representatives from government departments, agencies and other organisations with a role in outdoor recreation.

The Network's members meet quarterly to discuss outdoor recreation matters and share best practise, as well as working collaboratively on research and other projects.

To communicate with its wider subscriber-based audience, CRN publishes journals, hosts conferences and seminars, and issues e-newsletters. This is coordinated by the Network's management team and secretariat, the latter of which is staffed on a part-time basis.

The Network's key aims are to:

1. Encourage cooperation between members in identifying and promoting the need for research related to outdoor recreation, to encourage joint ventures in undertaking research and to disseminate information about members' recreation programmes.
2. Promote information exchange relating to outdoor recreation and to foster general debate about relevant trends and issues.
3. Share information to develop best practice through training and professional development in provision for and management of outdoor recreation.

Write for the CRN Journal

If your organisation is doing something innovative, inspiring or groundbreaking in the field of outdoor recreation, we'd love to chat to you about becoming an author for our journal.

To discuss writing for a future edition of the CRN journal please contact our secretariat.

Author guidance and the Network's editorial policy is available on our website at www.countrysiderecreation.org.uk/publications

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Countryside Recreation Network

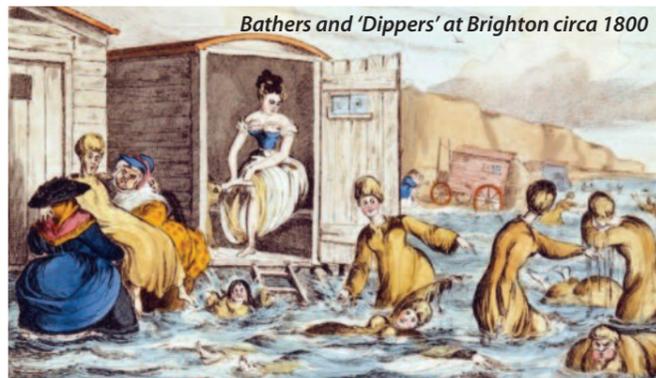
Welcome and Introduction

by Guest Editor, Tony Flux - Coast and Marine Adviser (SW) for the National Trust

What is it about the coast that resonates so deeply with most of us? Can we identify what the magnetic attraction is? It is often said that it is rooted in the fact that we are an island nation; frequently invaded in the past and consequently, the coast features prominently in our history and our national characteristics. Our trading with other parts of the world demanded a strong naval and merchant fleet since the middle ages. Many of our greatest cities are on the coast and grew up around defence and/or trade. Think of London, Liverpool, Portsmouth, Southampton, Plymouth and Hull for starters.

Today, most of us want to enjoy the coast and sea by following gentler pursuits than defending it from invaders! At the nominal level, just walking along a coast path or sitting on a secluded sunny beach is sufficient to give people a sense of peace, rejuvenation and well-being... just listening to the lap of the waves or watching an autumn sunset is sufficient for some. Many of our best loved authors, painters and musicians have repeatedly used the coast as their source of inspiration.

Some of these deep-seated emotions and derived health benefits are difficult to quantify but some research carried out by the European Centre for Environment and Human Health at Exeter University¹ has suggested that there is a positive correlation between people's health and their residential proximity and involvement with the coast and sea. Perhaps we sub-consciously knew this already; as far back as 1750, a certain Dr Russell wrote a treatise on the health benefits to be derived from immersion in seawater². He also advocated drinking it! The growth in popularity of mid-18th century seaside towns such as Scarborough, Brighton and



Weymouth can be directly attributed to the perceived health-giving properties of the sea. It was popularly described as 'taking the waters' and was enjoyed by women as much as by men as this picture shows.

Coastal devotees today need slightly more stimulation than just sea bathing and sunbathing though, so activities such as dinghy sailing, coastering, surfing and wakeboarding are becoming increasingly popular. The permutations and combinations of 'things to do at the coast' are endless but they all depend upon the use of our natural environment as described under the heading of 'coast and sea'. The wonderful thing about this is that we should be able to create interests and activities that encompass all age groups, all levels of ability and physical exertion (from minimal to Olympic!)

From the perspective of usage, leisure, recreation and tourism exert great pressures on fragile environmental systems. We have a fine balance to draw between encouraging and welcoming the active use of our coastal environment by more people but at the same time protecting the ecosystems from potential damage caused by heavy use. This is one of the core principles underpinning Coastal Zone Management (CZM). In order to manage our coastline and inshore waters effectively, we have to learn to work more sympathetically with natural processes. This means proactively caring for our coast paths, cliffs and beaches and our inshore waters and protecting them from pollution, inappropriate developments etc in order that the beauty and ambience that attracts people in the first place is maintained well into the future.

Amongst regular coastal users, we also have a great opportunity to enhance learning and understanding about the natural world and some of the dynamic processes taking place. The coast for example, is the ideal 'shop window' to witness the impacts of climate change³ (happening both now and into the future).

As recreational professionals, we have an implicit duty of care upon us to ensure that the activities we promote are sustainable as well as beneficial and enjoyable for the participating general public. The articles in this edition of Countryside Recreation Network News all reflect this point of view.



Red Walls, Gogarth, Wales © Alex Messenger

Coastal Access Beyond Footpaths

Cath Flitcroft, British Mountaineering Council

If you've never tied onto a rope, then you may not know how lucky British climbers are – geologically speaking. We've got it all here, from hard granite to soft chalk, from white limestone to the darkest gabbro. But things get really special on the coast because British sea-cliff climbing is absolutely world class.

The sea gives climbing a beauty and sometimes a danger that is absent from inland rock climbing. It's a whole extra dimension to inhabit. Standing on a tiny ledge as the sea races in against the base of a cliff, or sun-bathing at the start of a climb while seals play in the water are just two unusual experiences that many sea-cliff climbers will recognise as familiar. You get to see an aspect of our landscape in a unique way, and visit places most people will never see.

Climbing has taken place on sea cliffs since the sport was developed in the late 19th century, but things really got going in the 1960s. During the following manic decades of exploration, whole new cliffs were discovered which have become forcing grounds for the development of the sport: the sandstone of St Bees in Cumbria, the quartzite of Gogarth on Anglesey, the limestone of Portland in Dorset, the huge and often dangerous shale cliffs of Devon, even the terrifying chalk climbing on the white cliffs of Dover.

There are some 16,100 individual climbs or 'routes' for climbers to complete but their offer is much more than the chance to practice our

sport. Our unique sea cliffs and headlands offer magical rock formations, dramatic views, secluded settings amongst intimate, spectacular coastline habitats, making them wild and unforgettable places to visit.

The British Mountaineering Council (BMC) is the representative body for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers in England and Wales, with over 74,000 members, and many of them participate in all sorts of activities along the coast. These range from walking, sea-cliff climbing, coastering – exploring the rocky coastline by swimming and scrambling – and the relatively new activity of deep-water soloing, climbing routes without a rope above deep water, often at high tide – strictly for the expert climber.

The campaign for coastal access

Around half the foreshore of England and Wales is owned by the Crown Estates. Beaches and coastal cliffs are under a variety of ownerships including local authorities, private landowners and the National Trust. Public access to many of these places is often either permissive or simply de facto, a luxury which can and on occasion has been revoked. The public footpath system around our coast is variable in quality and currently does not yet allow for a continuous journey.

The BMC has therefore campaigned long and hard to secure better coastal access for climbing and walking around our English and Welsh

References

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³ <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/107550.aspx>

coast. We were heavily involved in shaping Part 9 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act as it went through parliament under the previous government. The 2009 Act ensures better coastal access will be a reality in England by creating clear and consistent rights for users enjoying open-air recreation on foot.

The Act outlines twin objectives for coastal access, the first relating to a new right to walk along the full 4,422km (2,748 miles)¹ of England's coastline and the second relating to a permanent right of access to a margin around the coast which will include beaches, headlands and sea cliffs.

Yet this second provision remains poorly understood and has been poorly publicised. You would be forgiven for thinking that better coastal access in England means a new coastal footpath and that is all. It is in fact much, much more for the climber, picnicker and intrepid explorer. It allows the public to wander off the beaten track and onto our beaches, and it allows our members to access the whole length of our coastal cliffs. This margin of accessible coastal land on the seaward side of the new coastal route means this most adventurous playground can be enjoyed in perpetuity.

Natural England has a duty to use its powers to secure this coastal access. Following its report outlining the alignment and management principles for the first section of improved access from Rufus Castle to Lulworth, the BMC welcomed the recognition by Caroline Spelman, then secretary of state for the environment, that climbing is "a permitted activity," not just under existing Countryside and Rights of Way legislation, but also under the 2009 Marine and Coastal Access Act.

In Wales, the situation is different. The Wales Coast Path opened in May of this year and will provide a continuous walking route around the whole of Wales – from the outskirts of Chester in the north to Chepstow in the south. It will be as near to the coast as legally and physically practicable, taking into account the needs of health and safety, land management and conservation.

Some of the very best sea cliff climbing in the UK is found on the Welsh coast, but while the Wales Coast Path creates a linear route for walkers, it will not create a permanent right of access to these iconic world class venues, which is only available by permission or tolerance of the landowner. We feel this is an opportunity missed.

Conservation principles

The coast has long been a focus for BMC members and we have been involved in managing access for conservation for over 30 years. We recognise our climbing cliffs are valued for their geological importance and especially for the wide variety of plants and animals, some of which are nationally and globally important.

In managing access, the BMC works with landowners and conservation organisations so our activities bring benefits to both conservation and recreation. In order to protect our coastal environment, we agree

seasonal climbing restrictions and sanctuary areas for wildlife across England and Wales. Many of our members are birdwatchers and care passionately about wildlife and the environment.

For example, along the English coast there are currently 80 voluntary seasonal climbing restrictions in place to protect cliff-nesting birds. The bulk of these voluntary restrictions are to protect Schedule 1 listed species or large colonies of nesting seabirds including peregrine falcons, puffins, guillemots, razorbills, fulmars and kittiwakes. In 2012, 18 different species of bird were in fact protected.

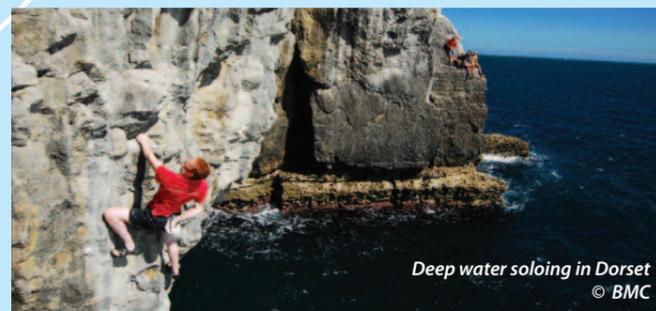
Restrictions are agreed on a case-by-case basis and often last for only a few weeks during which time the birds will breed and fledge. All of the nesting restrictions are advertised on the BMC Regional Access Database (RAD), which contains a comprehensive list of all the crags – including coastal cliffs – where restrictions are in place and provides up to date access information (www.thebmc.co.uk/rad). Areas where restrictions are found are marked with circular disks or on notices at the boundary points of the restricted areas.

The BMC encourages monitoring and reviewing of restrictions and actively encourages climbers to tell us of any significant changes in nesting patterns or new nest sites. We understand the importance of our coast for nature conservation and continue to support the necessary restrictive measures to ensure the protection of our wildlife for future generations. The breeding success of cliff-nesting birds is testament to how successful an approach this has been – with its foundations in open discussions with partnership organisations and landowners.

Increase in participation

Figures from Sport England's Active People Survey 5 (2011)² show that participation in mountaineering, which includes climbing indoors, climbing outdoors, mountaineering, bouldering, trekking and hill walking, has grown from 86,100 adults (0.21%) in 2008 to 109,600 adults (0.26%) in 2011, an increase of 23,500.

Although this has slipped back a little in the wet early summer of 2012, the long-term trend is upwards. The thrill and excitement of exploring our coastline's more rugged sections will only grow in the coming decades, as the new legislation becomes more widely understood. It's our job to ensure that access continues, and to understand our impact on the environment.



Deep water soloing in Dorset
© BMC

Opinion Piece

The call of the sea - a personal view by Martin Kocsis, climber & writer

When I was a kid, any mention of going to Cornwall during the summer holidays always made me buzz with excitement, because I knew what was coming. Once the endless drive from the grim industry of Sheffield was out of the way, there was serious fun to be had. These days, as a slightly bigger kid, the pleasures of climbing the granite sea cliffs of Cornwall extend well beyond the rock faces and the crashing zawns.

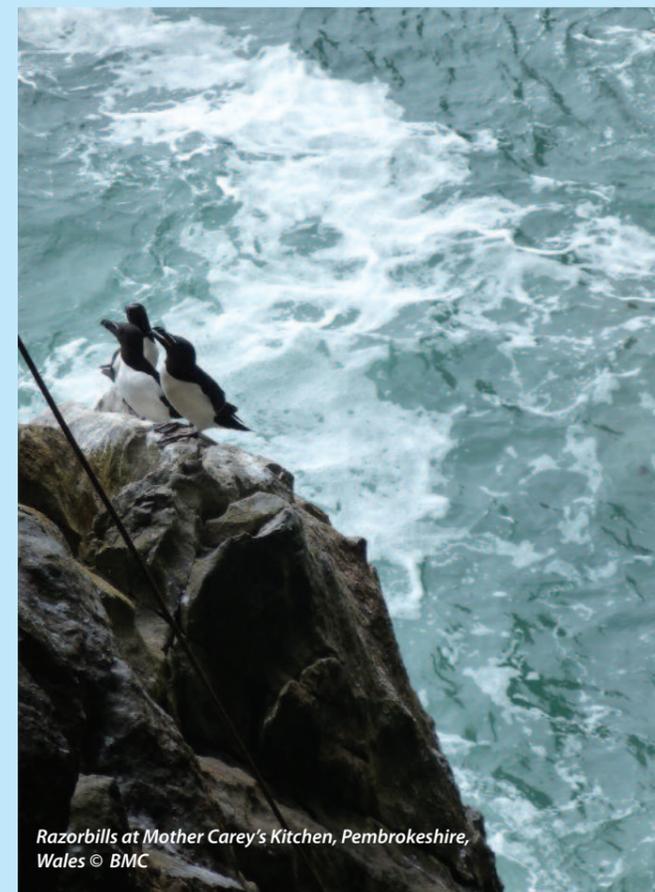
The first time I climbed in Cornwall I went to Land's End and took huge pleasure in climbing right at the very toe of the country. Beyond Land's End, the other Cornish cliffs stretch all the way from the sunny Lizard in the south, not far from Falmouth, all the way round to the brooding Pentire Head, somewhere north of Wadebridge.

All these cliffs have a unique atmosphere, something you could probably say about Cornwall in general, which lends the climbing an abstract air. The approach to some cliffs is gentle and rolling, but contrasts starkly with the jagged coastline. Often the cliffs are hidden until the last minute, until you almost fall over them as the ground drops away to the wild Atlantic Ocean.

The names of the cliffs that climbers play on are as evocative as the landscape itself. There is the mythical Tintagel, beyond that is Carn Gowla where the routes weave fantastically exposed lines up monolithic cliffs, which, being north-facing, have a very dark and foreboding air about them. Their names – "Mausoleum", "The Tomb" and "The Diabolist" – reflect their reputation for commitment and seriousness. However, just a few hundred metres away on the same stretch of coast those same climbers could take their pick from attractively named routes such as "Crystal Voyage" or "Journey to Ixtlan".

Travelling further south and west, the more gentle, touristic crags appear and they're never all that far from a good pub or cafe. Sennen may be relatively small, and certainly lacks the impressive scale of Carn Gowla but size is not the issue here. The routes are friendly and accessible, the mood encouraged by the nearby cream teas and tourists staring goggle-eyed over the cliff edge at the climbers below.

The first time I climbed in Cornwall I fell in love with the land and the climbing. The lines that each route took were strong and direct and the sound of the sea made the experience dreamlike. So often in the Peak District the soundtrack consists of cars, aircraft and the proximity of dirty towns and cities. Here, I was able to climb with nothing but the sound of the waves, the wind and the seabirds – and that has always been all I have ever really needed to get myself into the car and drive south again for another adventure in the truly spectacular and unique coastal landscape of Cornwall.



Razorbills at Mother Carey's Kitchen, Pembrokeshire, Wales © BMC

Where the land meets the sea - a personal view from BMC President Scott Titt

The rare coast path walker is out of sight over the top, the pleasure boaters are safe in their marinas, and the fishermen are working out to sea; you are on your own and reliant on no one except your climbing partner. Yes, there is fear and anxiety; but it is countered by huge satisfaction and retrospective pleasure when the top is finally reached.

To climb a new route without any previous inspection is pure exploration. To know with certainty that the yours is first hand to have ever discovered a perfect handhold as you puzzle out your upward progress, is a pleasure denied to the inland climber on the busy mountains and crags.

Sea cliffs are special places, forcing us to rely only upon ourselves, places where strength of character and firm resolve bring the reward. There can be no admiring audience to impress, no handy mate to throw a rope if you are stuck, the experience is an internal one, reflecting the isolation of that cliff base.

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The Intrinsic Value of Coastal Walking

Kate Conto, The Ramblers



Coastal walk near Devon

Britain is blessed with a rich variety of coastal landscapes. From the white cliffs of the south coast to the wild cliffs of Northumberland, from the salt marshes of Suffolk to the wooded combes of the Exmoor coast, the coastline of Britain is diverse and ever-changing.

As citizens of an island nation, the British public is passionate about the coast and is ever drawn to it. In April 2012 alone, there were an estimated 22 million visits to the coast in Britain¹. The reasons why people make these journeys to the coast are as varied as the coastal environments themselves - for exercise; to enjoy nature; to explore our heritage; for artistic inspiration and spiritual renewal; or simply to take in the open views.

History and identity

The coast is an integral part of British history, culture and identity. Britain's history of invasion and exploration, of empire and absorption of other cultural influences is shaped by our relationship with the sea. Tangible connections with the past can be seen by the visitors of today, for example in harbours and ports; on ancient trails; in the remains of lost villages; and through physical features such as the white cliffs of the south east.

Some of this country's greatest artists, including John Constable, JMW Turner and Maggi Hambling have been inspired by the sea, and have sought to try to capture the movement and energy of coastal environments. Great British writers such as Robert Louis Stevenson, Joseph Conrad and Charles Dickens have also been enthused by the British coast and so have innumerable musicians and poets. All of

these artistic endeavours, consciously or not, influence the way people relate to the coast and sea and have increased our desire to experience it personally.

The Prince Regent (1762-1830) popularised the seaside with his visits to Brighton 200 years ago and later, with the advent of steam, the logical destination for holidays for the masses was the coast. From Blackpool to Bournemouth, the pull of the coastline proved irresistible. Seaside holidays, complete with buckets and spades, fish and chips, Punch and Judy shows etc are a rite of passage for British people and especially for young children. Childhood memories of seaside holidays long past are treasured by most of us.

Wilderness and the natural world

Visits to the coast help us to connect emotionally with our past and with our cultural heritage but also to the natural world. Proper wilderness, areas seemingly unaffected by human development, are a rare commodity in Britain; yet as anyone looking out to sea has surely felt, wilderness lies just beyond the shore. Untameable nature, perhaps counter intuitively, helps to ground us, put our worries into perspective and connects us with the wild and the unknown.

Britain's land-based wildlife can be surprisingly spectacular. From our shores we can occasionally glance killer whales – one of the most formidable predators on earth - and basking sharks, the second largest fish in the sea. On the micro scale, rock pools offer children and adults alike a chance to experience nature's diversity armed only with a net and bucket.

The rich natural history of the British coast isn't limited to the animal giants of today. The Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site (East Devon and Dorset) has been a site of major fossil discoveries for 200 years, from Mary Anning's ground breaking discovery of the first Ichthyosaur in 1810 to the unearthing in 2009 of an even bigger extinct marine reptile, the giant Pliosaur. New finds are constantly being found as the natural process of coastal erosion reveals previously unseen layers of the past. As the great conservationist Rachel Carson once remarked, "in every outthrust headland, in every curving beach, in every grain of sand there is the story of the earth".

Health and well-being

The British coast is extraordinarily diverse and visiting it is good for individual health and well-being. Natural England's national survey of the natural environment (Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment, or MENE) found that:

'those who had been on visits to the countryside and coast were more likely to indicate that they had experienced a positive outcome than those who had been on visits to green spaces in urban areas. Visits to seaside destinations were particularly likely to have had positive outcomes with 43 percent of these visitors agreeing strongly that their visit made them feel calm and relaxed, while around half of visitors to seaside resorts or towns agreed strongly with the outcome 'I took time to appreciate my surroundings' (49 percent)².

This shows that visits to the coast are particularly beneficial to the public, and we should continue to find ways to encourage them to visit the coast, alongside measures to enhance wildlife, habitats and local businesses.

Blue spaces

There is a growing recognition of the importance to the human psyche of visiting the coast, and in particular to the interplay between land, sea and sky. Dr Ronan Foley, of the Department of Geography at the National University of Ireland has recently suggested that 'blue spaces' – defined by blue sea and sky – should be specially designated and valued in much the same way that we value inland green spaces³.

Clearly there is a discussion to be had about what this special status would mean, which areas should qualify, and what benefits this status could bring to landscapes, habitats and the public. But there would seem to be merit in an approach which protects this valued resource and encourages people to reconnect with nature in the fast-paced, increasingly urban modern world. The beautiful simplicity of walking the coast is that it is there for free; it is accessible most of the time and to most of us.

Causeway Coast, Northern Ireland



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Durdle Door from Swyre Head © Duncan Gammon

The England Coast Path

Phil Owens, Natural England

Everyone has access to the coast don't they?

Well not quite, in fact Natural England's Audit of 2007 highlighted that a third of the coast does not have a secure and satisfactory path around it and that which does, is only continuous on average for two miles before access is punctuated.

So what's being done to improve the access and why should we bother?

We make over 70 million trips to the coast each year, a favourite outdoor destination and we spend £1.4bn doing it with 19% of trips involving an overnight stay. It is estimated that the south west coast path alone, generates £307m/annum for the regional economy. We all have a need to recharge our batteries and choose a variety of ways to do that, a visit to the coast is one of the most popular. It allows us a respite from the day to day, a chance to walk, exercise, rest and relax, to reorder our lives or just simply stare into the far distance; whatever our motive it is a fabulous way of creating a sense of well being and appreciating our environment.

The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 is the Government's tool to enable a walking route around the English coast to be set up. Natural England has a statutory duty to create the England Coast Path. When complete it will be the longest of the national trail series, a continuous, where possible, walking route around the entire English coast line. There will also be new public rights of access to areas of coastal land adjoining the path such as beaches, cliffs and foreshore - in many places for the first time.

So how is this happening, what are the benefits for society and the issues arising?

The coastal access scheme interprets the legislation and is the 'rule book' for implementation on the ground. Each stretch will be a defined length of coast between two readily recognisable geographic points on the ground. Alignment of the path is a joint activity between Natural England, local access authorities, land owners and occupiers.

The Weymouth Bay stretch was the initial pilot stretch identified for its links to the Olympic and Paralympic sailing events at Portland and officially completed in June 2012. The trail takes in much of the existing South West Coast Path and that initial work gave a real opportunity to ground truth delivery, understand the level of local support for the path and listen to the concerns of land owners and occupiers. It also provided the first run through of the lengthy and complex process with draft consultation report, final report, objection, representation and hearing, establishment and restriction stages. During the final establishment stage, Defra undertook a 'lessons learned' report and the key outcomes of that have been melded into the ways of working for the other lead stretches. These lead stretches in Cumbria, Somerset, Kent, Norfolk and the Durham coast are making good progress but each requires careful planning. Each one can take as long as three years to complete.

The benefits are numerous and varied. A key principle is that once people get to the coast path their choice will be simple, whether to go

left or right. As a premier walking route they will know the national trail standard to expect. Well constructed but discrete sign posting means that walkers will be able to use the route almost without the need to refer to a map. Some benefits will be immediate on completion, others may take longer to come to fruition.

Some of the more obvious benefits are:

- Public access on foot is legally secured for the whole of the English open coast providing access to some areas previously not available
- Increased (legally secure areas) wide access (spreading room) associated with the trail, created around the English open coast in accordance with the provisions of the scheme
- Areas of potential slumping cliff or eroding coastline have pre-designated alternative routes that can be implemented at short notice
- New and existing tourist and economic ventures will be assisted by increased visitor numbers; opportunities for the creation of distinctive local accommodation, crafts and produce
- Visitor pressure is spread more evenly along the whole coast not just in the honeypot sites
- Linking towns may provide an impetus for local businesses to diversify from their traditional beach-centred tourist activities
- Rural / urban transport networks may be improved and/or developed
- Seasonal employment in local areas could be extended (i.e. longer shoulder periods) and other services could also be provided for longer
- Greater opportunities for visitors to appreciate the range of cultural, historical and natural features on the coast with provision for high quality interpretation to inform people and shape their knowledge, appreciation and use of the coast
- Significant improvements in physical and mental health resulting from exercise and a greater sense of well being
- Where Natural England exercises its estuaries discretion, linear access on foot can be created using the Coastal Access scheme to include every estuary in England.
- Offer potential to create new multi-use paths where appropriate

The process of aligning the route requires extensive consultation and is very time consuming (so fairly short on quick wins!). The scheme is also not without its critics. Land owners fall into two main camps, those who are pro access and those who are less so. Some feel the legislation imposes restrictions on them rather than allowing public access to be provided by them on a voluntary basis. Land owners, not just estate owners and farmers but householders and business owners have raised concerns over specific implications of the path, for example, littering, dog fouling, vandalism, risks of a loss of privacy due to an increased numbers of users. There may be impacts on the natural and historic environment as a result of visitor numbers and activity which require consideration when an alignment is proposed. The consultation process allows us to take account of the interests of local people and local interest groups by holding 'drop in' sessions at community centres, libraries and hotels.

There is no such thing as a "one size fits all" approach to this programme and while some basic elements remain the same, the experience so far highlights that each stretch is providing new challenges while also recognising that what users require and appreciate is so fantastically varied. For example who would have thought that at Great Yarmouth, the area to the south of the Pleasure Beach (in providing access to the industrial maritime heartland of this east coast town) has some of the best bird watching locations in the county.

It is not the role of Natural England to hold a moral compass to the access people want or recreational pursuits they enjoy but to provide a trail which links to the myriad of interests they may have so that people can appreciate a range of experiences at and adjacent to the coast. Hopefully, these trails will provide such enjoyment that repeat visits will become the norm.

So how are we moving forward?

There are some simple principles for sequencing the 'roll out' of coastal access. Once we have commenced working with an access authority, we will normally finish their jurisdiction and we will maximise the opportunity to use what public access is already there. Natural England has announced work (starting in 2012/13) on five further stretches adjoining other work currently underway as well as proposing a medium term vision linking to existing national trails like Cleveland Way, Offa's Dyke and the Wales Coast Path as well as high profile routes like Wainwright's Coast to Coast walk

We cannot delegate our duty to others but we can and are looking for more efficient and effective ways of delivering the duty. We focused from the start on getting some serious distances of path progressed and 'under our boots'. We are also wearing our creative hats and talking to partners and major land owning organisations on the options to involve them in helping to progress the England Coast Path more proactively. There are opportunities for local community involvement which we hope will create a greater sense of ownership, pride in their patch of coast and ultimately pride in what has been achieved.

While there is a statutory requirement to undertake a review, we aim to use it to seek views on improvements, simplification and improved clarity of the scheme guidance. The National Trails review is still ongoing at the time of writing (July 2012) but will provide the foundation for the upkeep of the England Coast Path as it becomes established in stages in the years to come.

The programme will run into the next decade to complete at current rates of progress but the long term impact will be to more than double the length of national trail once completed.

The scheme is subject to review for 8 weeks in September and August and the consultation documents are on the Natural England website at www.naturalengland.org.uk/coastal_access

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Development of the Wales Coast Path

Quentin Grimley, Countryside Council for Wales

The 870 mile long Wales Coast Path, plus 60 miles of official alternative routes, officially opened with events in Flint, Aberystwyth and Cardiff on 5 May 2012. The opening was extensively covered by all sections of the national and local media and, as a result of the path's creation, Lonely Planet Travel Guides selected the Welsh coast as the number one region in the world to visit in 2012.

The development of an official path around the Welsh coast can be traced back to the decision to create the Pembrokeshire Coast Path in 1953 - although it was to be another 17 years before it officially opened in 1970.

It was the proven success of this route, particularly in economic terms, which inspired Rhodri Morgan, then First Minister of the Welsh Assembly Government, to announce (at the opening of the Isle of Anglesey Coastal Path in 2006) the intention to fund new and improved access opportunities all along the Welsh coast in a six year programme running from 2007 to 2013.

The Wales Coast Path has been delivered by improving existing paths and linking them up with the creation of new ones. Unlike the England Coast Path, it is not being designated as a requirement of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 - the access provisions of which do not apply in

Wales. Thus, it is not being designated as a long distance route/national trail and it is a purely linear route, not including 'spreading room', the term used to indicate that walkers can explore land that adjoins a path rather than have to stay specifically on the path itself. This has meant a considerably less bureaucratic process than is required in England and has enabled the path to be opened five years into the programme, to coincide with the Olympics.

Objectives

The physical objective - a continuous walking route around the whole of the Welsh coast, from the outskirts of Chester in the north to Chepstow in the south - has now been achieved. It is as near to the coast as legally and physically practicable, whilst fully taking into account the needs of health and safety, land management and conservation. Whilst it is not practical for the whole route to be accessible for equestrians and cyclists, CCW guidance requires that all sections currently available to these user groups should be maintained appropriately and local authorities should consider making other sections multi-user. Some sections of the route have been specifically upgraded for use by wheelchair users and others with restricted mobility and the whole project has adhered to least restrictive access principles.

However, it is important to stress that the Path is not seen as an end in itself, but as a way of delivering certain key objectives:

- To encourage and enable the public, both locals and visitors, to enjoy the coastline of Wales.
- To encourage and enable more people to enjoy physical recreation at the coast, thus helping in efforts to become a fitter, healthier nation.
- To make coastal access a 'flagship' tourism product, thus bringing economic benefit to coastal communities.

Delivery

Delivery of the project is being co-ordinated on behalf of the Welsh Government (WG) by the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) and delivered on the ground by the local authorities through which it passes. WG and the local authorities are contributing around £2 million a year to the project. Nearly £4 million in grants have come from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to support the projects in the West Wales and The Valleys convergence area.

CCW agree annual work programmes with the sixteen coastal local authorities and distribute WG and ERDF grant aid to support these programmes. Early in the programme CCW established route criteria and quality standards against which progress is monitored. The standards are essentially the same as those required for national trails in Wales as it is the aim to have a path of equivalent quality. Eligible categories of work include the employment of coastal access officers, path infrastructure development, compensation, legal costs, information provision and marketing.

The whole project is overseen by a project board comprising officers from CCW, Welsh Government and the local authorities.

Alignment Challenges

A major challenge has been achieving a path which is as near to the coast as possible.

It has always been accepted that it would be impossible to have a route which hugs the coast throughout. For example, the path diverts inland under the following circumstances:

- river estuaries - to the first bridging point accessible to walkers
- military firing ranges - on health and safety / security grounds
- ports - on health and safety / security grounds
- large industrial areas - on health and safety / security grounds
- conservation sites - to avoid unacceptable disturbance to wildlife
- steep or unstable terrain - on health and safety / practicality grounds
- landowners objections - where we have so far been unable to reach agreement

It should be noted that, whilst there are a few instances of public path creation orders being implemented, this is very much a last resort and the aim is to create as much of the route as possible through agreement, with compensation as appropriate, rather than compulsion.

CCW are continuing to work with local authorities and landowners with the intention of realigning the route closer to the coast wherever possible, whilst having regard to the above constraints.

Marketing and Promotion

To encourage and enable people to use the path it is very important to have effective marketing and promotion in both English and Welsh. Thus, the Wales Coast Path Communications Group has been established to co-ordinate and oversee this area of work. This group comprises of representatives from CCW, WG, Visit Wales, the local authorities, the Ramblers and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, who have been awarded a contract to assist with various aspects of the marketing work.

A very effective public relations campaign has been led by contractors, Quadrant Media and Communications, based in Cardiff. This has been both proactive and reactive in nature and has resulted in extensive



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coverage in the international, British and Welsh media. In addition the PR departments of both Visit Wales and CCW have actively engaged in promotion and marketing.

The launch events on May 5th 2012 were well attended and received considerable media coverage, particularly in the week leading up to them.

The Wales Coast Path website went live in time for the launch and active Facebook and Twitter pages have been established. These are all seen as very important tools in the 'new media' age.

See: www.walescoastpath.gov.uk/Splash.aspx or www.llwybrarfordircymru.gov.uk

In addition, one national and eight regional leaflets have been produced and CCW have entered into a partnership agreement with Northern Eye Books to produce a series of 'paid for' official guidebooks for all sections of the Path which do not already have them. The first of these is scheduled to be published later this year with the remainder appearing in 2013.

Monitoring

To measure the success of the project and inform future development, it is important to gather baseline data regarding both the path infrastructure and usage of the route. To this end, exeGesIS SDM are currently conducting a full inventory and condition survey of the route – excluding Pembrokeshire which already has established monitoring in place. The data gathered by field surveyors will be stored and analysed on a centrally hosted Countryside Access Management System (CAMS) database.

In terms of usage monitoring, people counters have been installed and a face to face survey is currently being conducted by Beaufort Research to determine usage patterns and opinions. The results will be analysed by Cardiff Business School. Also, The Tourism Company are conducting a study into how the path is benefitting the coastal economy.



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The Future

The current funding programme ends on 31 March 2013. However, there is no time to rest as infrastructure upgrades and, in places, realignments closer to the coast are required to improve the route and the user experience. This is in addition to routine maintenance that all paths require. Also the marketing and information initiatives already in place will need frequent updating and development. In particular, the website and social media require regular attention to keep them lively, useful and interesting.

With this in mind, CCW has been asked by Welsh Government to advise them on options for future funding and management of coastal access. This includes not only the Wales Coast Path itself but also the development of loops and links from it and access improvements for equestrians and cyclists. WG are expected to make an announcement on the next steps in the autumn of 2012.

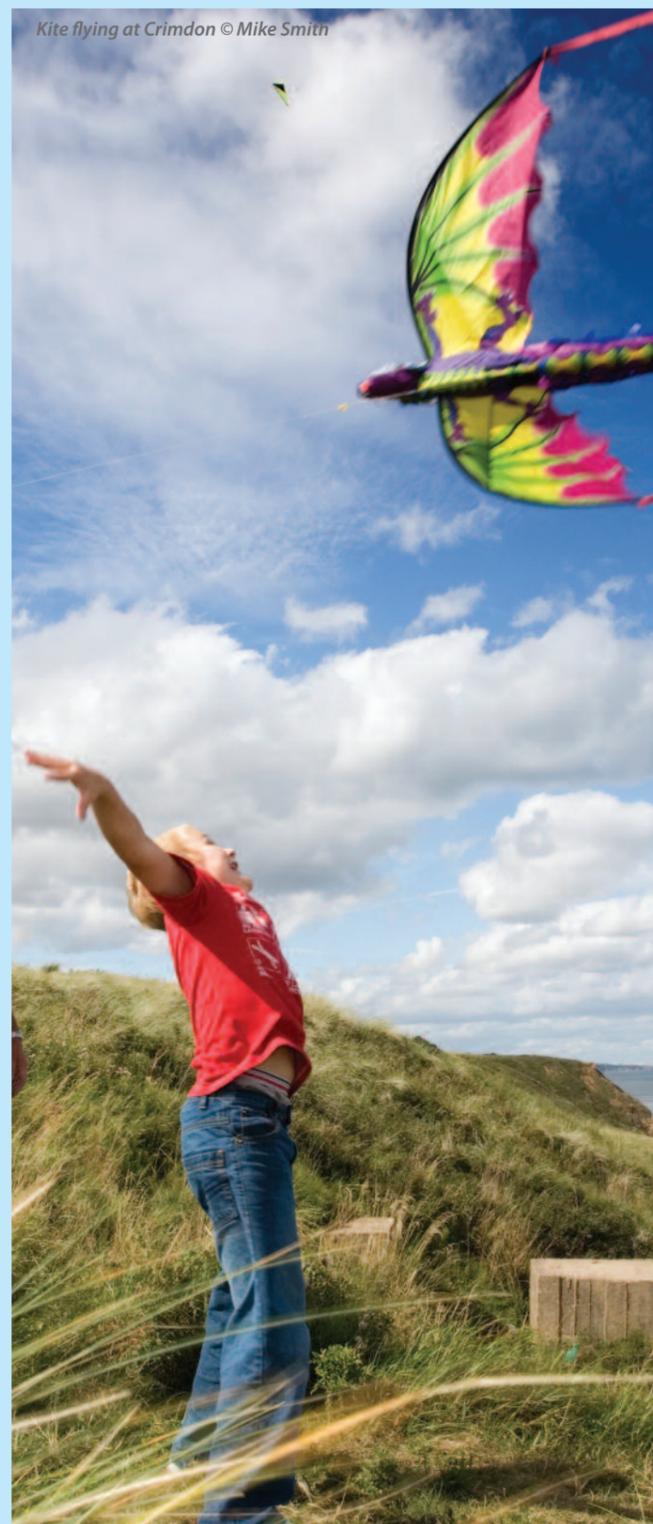
Conclusions

Given the tight timescales, it is a credit to all involved that the Wales Coast Path opened on time with so much having been achieved. Including Offa's Dyke Path National Trail, there is now a 1047 mile walking circuit of Wales and the borders available for all to enjoy.

The task now is to ensure that the path's potential - including benefits for the economy, health, education, enjoyment and conservation - is fully realised. In many ways, the May 5th opening marked the beginning, not the end!

Durham Heritage Coast - Power to Flower, an Amazing Journey

Niall Benson and Coraline Niven, Durham Heritage Coast Partnership



Kite flying at Crimdon © Mike Smith

From rocky shores and coastal grasslands to woodland denes (deep flat-floored cuts in the land) and gills (narrow steep-sided valleys) the Durham Heritage Coast is a haven for some of the most important flora and fauna in the UK. Coupled with fascinating geology, stunning scenery and a wealth of history waiting to be unlocked and discovered, the Durham Heritage Coast has to be one of the places to visit any year. Butterflies such as the Northern Brown Argus are often seen amongst the rich magnesian limestone grassland that adorns the coast and several unusual species of orchids such as the bee orchid can be seen dotted around the multi-coloured summer meadows.

Visitors and locals alike enjoy walking the coastal path throughout the year and an increasing number of people are pleasantly surprised at what this coast has to offer.

It was not always like this...

Twenty years ago most of the Durham Heritage Coast was a wasteland, the infamous Black Beaches that had, for a century been the dumping ground for the coal industry. At its peak 2.5 million tonnes of colliery waste was tipped onto the beaches of Durham every year. In addition, minewater and our own untreated sewage was pumped into the sea.



Easington Colliery 1992



Easington Colliery 2012 © Mike Smith

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The collieries were closed and with this went the livelihoods of 100,000 people who were dependent on the coal industry. What was once a major energy producing area for the country soon became an area of serious social and economic deprivation.

Not surprisingly this coast was not one visitors were likely to visit. There was a small Lido-style resort on the coast's only sand dunes at Crimdon, home to the annual Miss Crimdon competition, but this facility waned as Spanish holidays waxed.



Following the closure of the collieries came the regeneration initiative, the main environmental effort led by the £10.5 million Millennium project 'Turning the Tide' (1996-2002) laid the foundations; its success was marked by gaining Heritage Coast status in 2001. This led to the founding of the Durham Heritage Coast Partnership who have carried the baton ever since. Their work focussing on improving access to the coast, developing awareness, use and respect as well as encouraging visitors to explore.

Slowly the explorers have come, followed by devotees of ice cream, coffee and rock pools. Seaham's new marina opened its gates this summer with 80 berths. Equally important, Seaham's North Dock, once the coal exporting harbour for East Durham now has a new role, a far cry from its origins, but a working port still.

There is more to do. Visitor numbers are increasing substantially, up 10% in 2010 and 13% in 2011 (Visit County Durham, STEAM figures, pers comm). The coast will feature substantially in the tourism marketing campaign that is being planned for the next three years.

The Sunderland, Durham and Hartlepool stretch of coast features as one of the lead areas in Natural England's Coastal Trail programme¹. This coastal trail will be delivered locally over the next two years, directly linking Sunderland along the coast of County Durham to Hartlepool. We also have a new railway station being planned to open in 2015. Each of these initiatives will bring new views, new challenges and new opportunities which will bring change to our coast again.

There is real power in the story of this recovery, but how is this viewed by the local community? Slowly attitudes have changed over the past

ten years. Local cynicism about the potential of tourism is deep seated. Local cynicism about improving their local environment, information and access has decreased substantially. There are very few 'there's no point' comments nowadays. With much more informed and helpful information being provided and real involvement in activities and design processes the local mood is so much more positive. One local councillor, once strident in defence of vehicular access to the beach which led to severe fly tipping issues, recently stood in front of the tractor and mower of a contractor who had started mowing a coastal hay meadow one week early; an illustration of the local 'journey'.

Local communities are increasingly using a coastline that they were deterred from using for so long.

Nose's Point, Dawdon, a former colliery site that has been transformed into a 'gateway' to the coast by Durham County Council, is being adopted as a quiet site, for reflection and contemplation. This brings with it new issues and new responsibilities for site management and long term strategy to secure the social and environmental improvements for the long term, particularly with the financial challenges of these straitened times.



In Horden, one of the communities hardest hit by the industrial closures, a circular easy access path with the addition of inspirational interpretation has drawn villagers out to the coast, some for the first time. With strong support from the National Trust, interpretation was developed with Mor Design's David Buurma and the participation of local schools and community groups. The children's words cut into the steel panels have the power to move even the hardest of hearts, so that where once fly tipping, car burnouts and cable stripping were commonplace, family groups wander freely. The National Trust are supported by the work of local volunteers, one of whom early every Sunday walks the path and picks off any litter, quietly and unobtrusively; but such devotion is heartily appreciated nonetheless.

From a nature conservation point of view the coal spoil was not all bad as it provided a form of soft defence for the unique paramaritime magnesian limestone grassland on the coastal slopes. Coastal squeeze had reduced this amazing habitat to the very fringes, clinging to the coastal slope like a monastic tonsure, in real and present danger of liquidation. A programme to revert the immediate arable hinterland to



more natural grassland has been underway for over a decade. However, as the spoil on the beaches erodes, this unique limestone grassland is rapidly being lost to the sea. The pressure is now on to ensure its survival into the future – more direct intervention may be needed.

How has the marine environment fared? An initial Seasearch survey in 1992² makes salutary reading, noting 'little marine life was encountered' in the near shore, and thanked the volunteer divers for "diving where they never thought they would". Contrast this with the



Seasearch survey in 2009³ where 94 species were recorded, illustrating a strong revival of marine life. With support from the Heritage Lottery Funded Big Sea Survey⁴ local people are being recruited and trained as recorders and to become involved in their local shore and most importantly; providing evidence of improvement.

Participation is key to these amazing achievements; the partnership's persistent presence has provided the local community with a direct connection to an improving coast. We are encouraging them to become connected real physical projects as well as becoming part of a wider coastal network beyond their locality. The partnership also provides a useful link to the landowners and managers, the police force and the street wardens.

Heritage Coast status has been instrumental, without this there would have been no clear vision or external recognition. 'Heritage Coast status' can be seen as a bit of a sixties curio, lost amongst the Protected Landscape family and with no clear national support. It is a voluntary definition and as such has a unique strength, i.e. if you don't want to be involved you don't have to be. There is a real case to explore how the status can be refreshed to assist in delivering quality coasts for 21st century needs. For the despoiled coast of Durham it has been terrifically important in securing political 'buy-in', critical financial support and that clear purpose that links people to their coast.

The challenge now is to capitalise on what has been done, make the most of the increase in visitor numbers by linking the whole coast through providing warm, welcoming entry points and linking outwards to our wider heritage and recreational environment.

Note: Durham Heritage Coast won the UK Landscape Award 2010 and went on to represent the UK in the Council of Europe Landscape Awards where it was awarded a Special Mention.

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⁴ Big Sea Survey web page: <http://www.bigseasurvey.co.uk/>

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Accessing Coastal Recreation through Effective Partnership Working

Bridget Betts, Dorset Coast Forum

The Dorset Coast Forum (DCF) is a strategic coastal partnership that was established in 1995 to look at the long-term broad-scale issues facing the Dorset coast and its inshore waters. Seventeen years later it is still going strong and now has over 260 member organisations from the fishing, commercial, environmental, recreational, historical and tourism sectors, all who have expertise, local knowledge and a deep understanding of Dorset's coast and its inshore waters spanning from Lyme Regis to Christchurch out to 12 nautical miles.

The overriding aim of the forum is to promote a sustainable approach to the management, use and development of Dorset's coastal zone, which will ensure that its inherent natural and cultural qualities are maintained and enhanced for the benefit of future generations. The DCF does this in many different ways from encouraging co-operation and dialogue between the different interests and users of the Dorset coast, gathering and disseminating relevant information and carrying out research in relation to the physical processes, natural environment and human use of the Dorset coastal zone. The forum aims to integrate policies specific to the Dorset coastal zone.

At the core of the DCF there is a small team of staff who administer and coordinate Forum activities and take forward a variety of projects. These projects have partnership working at their heart and encourage a holistic approach to the delivery of outputs. Some of the recent focus of the DCF has been on the sustainable recreational use of Dorset's coastal and marine environment and the issues that may impact upon these activities. To this end, the DCF have developed and delivered two highly innovative pieces of work; one called iCoast

which is a web based recreation information tool which encourages sustainable use of the coast, and the other, the 'Litter Free Coast and Sea' project which aims to highlight the issues around the problem of marine litter and encourages action to change people's behaviour and attitudes.

iCoast

iCoast (www.icoast.co.uk) is a map based website which was created through the DCF's C-SCOPE (Combining Sea & Coastal Planning in Europe) European funded project on marine planning. The ethos behind iCoast is to promote and encourage people to carry out water and coastal recreation activities in a sustainable and responsible way. iCoast provides a whole host of information on 26 different watersport and coastal activities on the Dorset coast. The activities range from kayaking, walking, kite surfing to horse riding, rockpooling and beach activities. For each activity there is information on where to carry out the activity, where to find tuition and where to buy or hire the right equipment. There are also tide times, weather forecasts, beach award information, webcams, slipways, transport information and different facilities such as campsites, car parks and toilets. iCoast brings all this information together into one place on a user friendly interactive map. This makes access to recreation easy for both locals and visitors. Finally to help keep Dorset's coast and sea special for the future, there is friendly safety advice, codes of conduct for each activity and information on sensitive and restricted access areas.

How have we achieved iCoast?

Over 50 individuals and organisations have worked to deliver iCoast. Input has included the provision of information, web links, text, codes of conducts, photographs and help in design and functionality. iCoast was cleverly designed so that a wide range of diverse information could be viewed using map based spatial layering combined with web-based functionality.

The future of iCoast

Data and information is updated regularly and web use analysis indicates more and more people are visiting the iCoast website. It has now received over 25,000 hits in just over a year. The reviews are very complimentary and DCF have just produced a mobile app (m.icoast.co.uk) to make access to coastal recreation information in Dorset even more accessible. The aspiration is to see iCoast rolled out around the country and for iCoast to become the place where you can access all coastal and marine recreation information for the whole of the UK coastline. For the Dorset Coast Forum, producing iCoast has cultivated new working relationships with a wide range of recreation providers and promoted both environmental and economic sustainability on Dorset's coast..

'Litter Free Coast and Sea' campaign

The Litter Free Coast and Sea' campaign is another partnership project undertaken by members of the Dorset Coast Forum. It was funded and supported by the Jurassic Coast Trust, Dorset and East Devon AONBs and the Crown Estate. With marine and coastal litter continuing to be an ongoing problem, it was decided that a partnership approach might help turn the tide on this issue.

Impacts of litter on coastal recreation

Marine and beach litter can have a negative effect on the local environment, economy and communities. It not only creates a visual eyesore on our beaches, it also costs a significant amount of money for local authorities to clear it up. It is a safety issue for beach/coastal users and can be washed into the sea, harming marine life and damaging fishing and recreational boating equipment. Marine and beach litter impacts on coastal recreational activities include:

- Swimmers and divers becoming entangled, especially in fishing gear.
- People becoming exposed to toxic chemicals from contaminated plastic litter whilst carrying out their recreational activity
- Personal injury

Research shows that 48% of the litter found on Dorset and East Devon's beaches is created by the public. Many residents and visitors to coastal communities value the beach as a public amenity. Studies have shown that marine and beach litter can lead to a decline in tourist numbers and therefore a loss of revenue for coastal communities as people tend to avoid littered beaches'. The challenge is how to effectively engage with those who are dropping litter.

What we are trying to do in Dorset and East Devon

A Marine Litter Group has been established and includes representatives from the Dorset Coast Forum including the Jurassic Coast Partnership, Natural England, the Green Blue, the Exe Estuary Partnership, Dorset Wildlife Trust and Dorset Countryside. Through this group the 'Litter Free Coast and Sea' campaign was established to raise awareness of the impacts of marine and beach litter and promote practical action to keep Dorset's marine and coastal environment free of litter. Campaign representatives go out to talk to schools, local watersport shops and others to get them to sign up to the campaign and promote ways to reduce the amount of litter, for example having a litter free lunch.

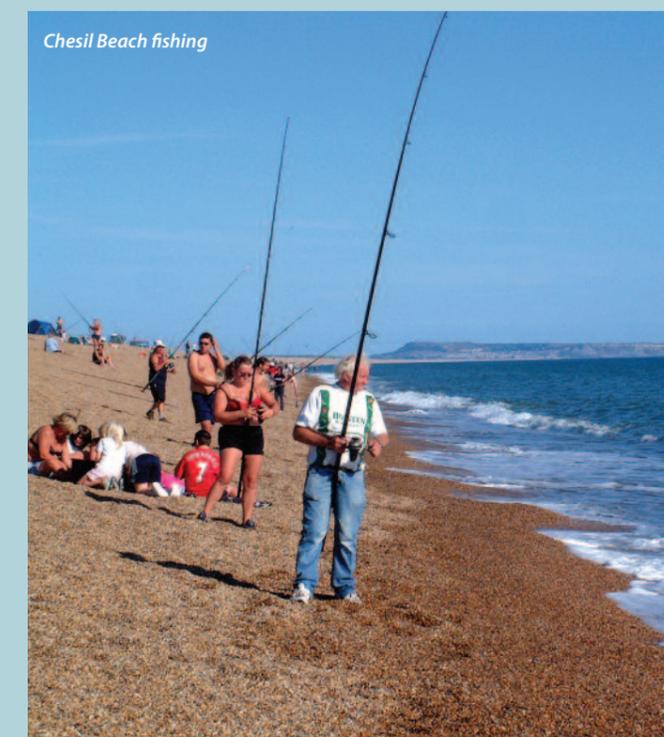
Dorset BeachCare

Since starting the campaign there has been success in small areas with shops joining forces to promote the message and encourage those who come to their area to keep the beach litter free. Recently DCF have joined forces with Keep Britain Tidy and have gained funding from Wessex Water, Environment Agency, Dorset AONB, National Trust and Poole Harbour Commissioners to run a 3 year project to widen the scope of the campaign and really put some effort into changing people's behaviour and attitudes to marine and beach litter. Dorset BeachCare will be working with local communities, ports and harbours, fishermen and recreational users to get support and promote effective measures to enable the Dorset coast to be 'litter free'.

More information on:

<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/litterfreecoastandsea>

Follow us on twitter #LitterFreeCoast



Chesil Beach fishing

References

¹ Figures analysed from the MCS beachwatch raw data - ring or email Sue Kinsey at MCS E.sue.kinsey@mcsuk.org or T.01989 561586

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Seagrass beds

Marine Conservation Zones

Michelle Hawkins, Natural England

Introduction

It is over 60 years since the 1949 National Parks Act was passed to create safe havens for wildlife on land, and provide enjoyment for millions of people who visit them. Legislation to protect the marine environment has taken much longer to arrive, and whilst some forms of Marine Protected Areas were introduced during the same period – for sea birds, some sea habitats, wetlands and Sites of Special Scientific Interest – the area protected today is still less than that which exists on land. To achieve more comprehensive coverage, the 2009 Marine and Coastal Access Act made provisions for a new type of protection called Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs). The purpose of MCZs is to ensure that underwater habitats, species and geology flourish; and to contribute towards the government's objective of creating a well-managed network of Marine Protected Areas to safeguard our seas by the end of 2016.

As well as protecting a range of nationally important marine habitats, wildlife and geology, MCZs are being designed to take sea users' livelihoods into account. Uniquely, it has not been the Government making the initial recommendations on where MCZs should go. Instead, four regional MCZ projects were set up in 2009 involving 'stakeholders' to represent different organisations, regulators, interest groups or individuals whose activities might be affected by a MCZ designation. Balanced Seas represented the south-east; Finding Sanctuary the south-west; Irish Seas Conservation Zones, the Irish Sea; and Net Gain represented the North Sea. It is the first time in the UK that sea users themselves have been responsible for recommending areas for marine conservation to the government.

Representatives of the leisure industry and recreational sea users were involved from the start – such as the Angling Trust; British Kite Surfing Association; British Sub Aqua Club; Canoe England; Royal Yachting Association; local charter boat, wildlife, heritage and tour operators; and local authorities. These people each brought their different points of view to the table. They worked in collaboration with other regional representatives from commercial fishing, land owners, marine industries, marine research and the natural environment to recommend sites which could benefit from designation, based on scientific evidence and their local knowledge. An independent Science Advisory Panel acted as a sounding board throughout as discussions took shape.

In September 2011, after two years' dedicated hard work, these four groups submitted their final recommendations to the government's two statutory nature conservation bodies – Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). The marine scientists from these two agencies assessed the ecological implications of the four projects' proposed site recommendations for MCZ status, and the ecological evidence base for the sites. At the same time, economists from the four regional MCZ projects prepared a socio-economic impact assessment for each MCZ, as well as one for all the sites combined together.

All of this information – the regional MCZ projects' recommendations (from September 2011), the regional MCZ projects' impact assessment, and JNCC and Natural England's formal advice regarding the ecological evidence – was brought together to make up the

advice package presented to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in July 2012. It will support the decisions the Environment Minister will make on the designation of MCZs after a formal public consultation is held (the consultation will start in December 2012).

As Dr Greg Whitfield, project manager for the Irish Sea Conservation Zones, said in 2011 when handing over his group's recommendations: "The public consultation will give people another opportunity to comment on the possible MCZs before they are designated. Around the world and across every sector there is a growing consensus that our marine environment needs more robust protection. Europe and the UK in particular are in the midst of a large and ambitious expansion of marine protection. Marine Conservation Zones will play an important role in this historic process."

Marine biodiversity: habitats and species that may benefit from MCZs

In total, the four regional groups put forward 127 recommended MCZs (rMCZs) – covering a total area of approximately 37,500 km². There are no set shapes and sizes for MCZs. The largest (approximately 5,800 km²) is offshore in the far south west of UK territorial waters; while the smallest occupies less than half a square kilometre in the AIn estuary in Northumberland. There are 116 types of feature that have been proposed for protection which – when calculating the number of times they appear in the different sites – account for 1,205 features in total. These are a combination of marine species, marine habitats, broadscale habitats and geological features, as well as others not included in the original Ecological Network Guidance. The guidance was written to help identify and locate the best places for MCZs to go. These features will only receive protection if the recommended MCZ is designated.

Many marine habitats act as shelter, nursery grounds and food sources for a myriad of species. For example, although not many people give much thought to undersea beds of mud, this is an environment where high numbers of worms, cockles and other bivalve shells, sea urchins and sea cucumbers live. Sea pens, burrowing anemones and brittlestars can also be found in the muds. Even subtidal sand seascapes may appear like barren deserts, but upon closer inspection can reveal flat fish and sand eels camouflaged on the surface of the sand; and worms and bivalves with their paired, hinged shells living within it.

Shallow water habitats like native oyster beds are located on fine, muddy sand. Large numbers of oysters and the dead shells amongst them form extensive beds, which become home to many other marine creatures, including crabs, worms, sea snails, sponges, sea urchins, and seaweed. Native oysters have been farmed for food since Roman times, and the shells are a common find in archaeological digs. Recreational sea users may be familiar with seagrass (also known as eel grass), another inshore habitat found in sheltered bays, which are grass-like flowering plants with dark green, long, narrow, ribbon-

shaped leaves. Two species of eel grass are found in England and all are considered to be scarce. This type of habitat is also home to short-snouted and long-snouted seahorses.

A variety of marine species has been recommended for protection by MCZs, a combination of shrimps, worms, lobsters, corals, crustaceans, seaweeds, anemones, snails and jellyfish. The tentacled lagoon worm is a tiny bristleworm, less than five millimetres long, and is scarce. It lives in a tube made of mud in sheltered estuaries and lagoons. It has six gills and a number of smooth thread-like tentacles, which it pushes out from around its mouth to gather food from the mud. Undulate rays are one of the few fish on the list for protection. Most fish species have a bony skeleton. The skeleton of an undulate ray, however, is made of cartilage, like that of the sharks to which it is closely related. They produce oblong eggs with pointed horns at the corners, and lay them into the sand, mud or gravel seabed. Because they lay only a few eggs they are vulnerable to fishing, as it takes a long time for the population to recover when numbers begin to decline.



Ocean Quahog

One species which very few sea users will have seen is the ocean quahog – this is because it lives buried in sand and muddy sand, often with its shell entirely hidden and just a small tube extending up to the surface of the seabed to breathe and feed. This is a typical cockle-shaped bivalve, and the two halves of its hinged, rounded shell are thick, glossy and dark brown in colour. The ocean quahog can live up to 400 years and is quite large for its kind, growing up to 13cm across. They can be found from just below the low water level to depths of about 500m, but are at particular risk from bottom trawling fishing gear. Like other slow-growing animals, once their numbers have been reduced, the populations can take a long time to recover.

There are more species that were not listed on the original Ecological Network Guidance, which may also benefit from the designation of MCZs. These vary from birds such as the black throated diver and the great northern diver, razorbills, puffins, fulmars, kittiwakes, guillemots, grebes and shearwaters to marine mammals such as grey seals, bottlenose dolphins, basking sharks and porpoises and to fish such as the black seabream.

What will designated MCZs mean to recreational users of the sea?

Recreational sea users can be reassured that no measures have been decided yet, regarding the management of activities on or in recommended sites. It is worth noting that the four regional MCZ projects' final reports include guidance on what activities they believed can continue on sites after designation without causing harm. There are recommended sites where sailing, sea angling, diving, bait-digging and use of the beach are taking place now, which – at their current levels – would not require additional management. This information is included in the advice package that Defra is currently assessing.

Jamie Davies, MCZ Project delivery manager, said: "It is a complicated project, but it's important to say this is a type of nature conservation which takes sea users' activities and livelihoods into account. JNCC and Natural England have had advisory roles throughout this process; and we're extremely keen to help local communities and industries understand exactly what has been recommended, the reasons why, and explain how people can get involved with the next step – which will be the government's formal consultation opening in December 2012."

Next steps

Between July and the end of the year, Defra will assess each component of the advice package and will provide its own impact assessment, which will be used during the three month public consultation that will open in December 2012. This will be the first formal opportunity for recreational sea users and others to comment on the proposals and the information in their entirety. Following the consultation, the Minister will consider all the available evidence and views provided before selecting:

- Sites that are to be designated in summer 2013;
- Sites where further evidence is required, to designate at a later stage;
- Sites that are not considered suitable to progress.

Once the first wave of MCZs is designated in summer 2013, JNCC and Natural England will provide further conservation advice packages for each site to help inform how these sites should be managed. The management measures will be proposed by the appropriate regulatory authority for each designated MCZ. These are likely to vary from site to site, reflecting different levels of usage and different environmental conditions. Local consultations will be held to finalise the proposals for managing each site, which is another opportunity for recreational sea users to have their say.

As Marine Minister, Richard Benyon, said last autumn: "It is important that we get this right. It is vital that we have an adequate evidence base for every site if we are to create successful well-managed MCZs. An adequately robust evidence base will be essential when we come to implement management measures."

Jamie Davies from Natural England concluded: "The fundamental assumption about human activities within MCZs is that activities can continue (under current licensing regimes where applicable), as long as they do not prevent the conservation objectives from being achieved."



Jewel Anemones

How to get involved

- Sign up to the MCZ Project newsletter: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-2409>
- Email the MCZ Project: mczproject@jncc.gov.uk
- Visit the interactive map: www.mczmapping.org
- Get involved with the public consultation in December 2012



Seb Coe spends time with 'Sail for a Fiver' participants

'Sail for a Fiver' Programme Helps Increase Coastal and Marine Access for Young People in Dorset

John Tweed, Chief Executive Officer of the Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy

It is a well-known fact that bids for large sporting events, such as the Olympic Games or the Football World Cup, place a heavy emphasis on the economic and infrastructural development benefits for the chosen host city or area. A bid to hold the Olympic Games is a perfect opportunity for a country to pour money into an urban economy that will result in an increase in the social and geographical structure, as well as the public image of the host city. Another important advantage of hosting the Olympic Games is the legacy gained from the new sports facilities that inevitably attract new talent into those sports.

A legacy programme has been put into action at the Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy (WPNSA) that introduces young people to sailing while also giving them access to some of the best facilities and sailors in the world.

The WPNSA is the world class sailing venue that hosted the sailing competition at the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. Open since 2000, the WPNSA was using old naval buildings and, in 2003 in order to update the site, the sailing venue received funding from the Sports England Lottery Fund, South West Regional

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www.naturalengland.org.uk

Development Agency (SWRDA), local authorities and private fundraising from the Academy's board that eventually totalled £8m. The new facility was opened by the Princess Royal in June 2005, and it was announced that London had won the Olympics a month later on 6th July 2005. In 2008, improved marine facilities were constructed. These were mainly funded by the Olympic Development Authority and SWRDA. The work included new slipways, pontoons, berths and a breakwater. When completed, the WPNSA was up to Olympic specifications, and was the first Olympic venue to be completed - with over three years to spare.

While the academy will provide world class athletes with a world class sailing venue this summer for the London Games, the vision for this Olympic venue goes well beyond August 2012. One main aim of the WPNSA is to extend its reach beyond major national and international events and to actively engage the local community. 'Sail for a Fiver' is a legacy programme run in conjunction with a local charity, the Chesil Trust, that utilises the incredible facilities at the Academy and makes them accessible to the whole Dorset community.

The concept behind 'Sail for a Fiver' is that children from Dorset schools can start learning to sail for just five pounds for half a day on the water at the WPNSA. The children are provided with professional

instruction and safety cover by Royal Yachting Association (RYA) qualified dinghy sailing instructors from the on-site company SailLaser. The scheme is subsidised by £12 per child to keep the costs low and to allow more children to take part. The legacy programme started in 2004, before the Academy won their Olympic bid, and the local community have been benefitting in this way from the investment and infrastructural development that the WPNSA has undergone ever since.

The Shadow Olympics Minister, Tessa Jowell, commented on the benefits that the Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy will bring to the local area, especially regarding increased participation in the sport of sailing and the benefits that this will bring to peoples' health and fitness. The Sailing Academy is a key asset for an area such as Weymouth and Portland, which is currently the 12th most deprived area in the whole of the United Kingdom and has the highest proportion of overweight Dorset children aged 4-5 years.

Sailing can be introduced to young people as a new and exciting way of getting involved in a sport as well as developing key practical life skills such as leadership and crucial lessons such as social responsibility. The overall aim of the programme is to provide young people in Dorset schools with the opportunity of trying sailing in the

hope that many will continue to participate, enjoy and benefit from the sport. Further elements of the scheme enable those who show particular aptitude or enthusiasm to take their RYA dinghy qualifications and to sail regularly. An unusual component of the work of the academy and Chesil Trust is to target those who are at risk from involvement in drugs, alcohol, crime and exclusion with a really positive activity and to raise that from an activity to a passion.

Currently the 'Sail for a Fiver' Programme is providing the opportunity for approximately 1600 children a year (of all abilities) to participate in the sport. Due to Portlands' versatility as a venue, 'Sail For a Fiver' also enables young people with learning difficulties or physical disabilities to try sailing for the first time.

And the results have been outstanding. The programme, which has now been running for eight years, has introduced well over 9,000 young people from the Weymouth and Portland community to sailing and has engaged all sections of the community. It has been supported by triple Olympic gold medallist Ben Ainslie CBE and gold medallist Paul Goodison MBE. This has helped and inspired participant's imaginations and opened their eyes to the opportunities and possibilities that exist within the sailing community. 'Sail For a Fiver' hopes to pass the 10,000 people mark later this year.

"Sail for a Fiver is a key element in the WPNSA's philosophy," commented Ben Ainslie CBE, "We are committed to helping less privileged children try water sports and continue in supporting them through to racing events. A 'Sail for a Fiver' child today may well be a medal winner in 2016." This prophecy is not just hyperbole as 'Sail for a Fiver' has provided the basic foundations needed for a beginner sailor to become a good racer on both a national and international level. Several 'Sail for a Fiver' participants have gone on to develop their skills and have progressed into serious dinghy racing. Some have been selected for National and Regional dinghy racing squads to help them become highly proficient in their class. The Chesil Trust has also assisted those young people who have been identified as having exceptional talent and some have gone on to win gold medals at Youth World Championship events. With scholarship funds available to help local children gain their RYA level 1 and 2 qualifications, more children are having access to the sport and the academy, and widespread interest in sailing is growing.

One local child who participated in the programme commented: "Before 'Sail for a Fiver' I had never tried water sports and hadn't visited the 2012 sailing venue. I learnt to sail quickly and have now completed RYA levels 1 to 4. I think that other children living near me should be able to try sailing so I raised some money for them, they love trying a new sport. I like my time at the Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy and feel more confident on and off the water, I was even chosen to pull the 2012 flag up for Weymouth and now got to meet the Olympic stars and media, I think 2016 is a good aim for me."



© Outdoor NI



Accolades such as this highlight the benefits that the 'Sail For a Fiver' programme can bring to children and communities alike, making the sailing world more accessible to those who previously have not had the chance to try the sport. The Olympic legacy provided by the Weymouth and Portland Sailing Academy will continue to bring communities together, increase the exposure and take up of sailing and encourage young children to become more active; achievements which will all be highly regarded in years to come.

The Olympic and Paralympics sailing events held at the Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy (WPNSA) were highly successful and enjoyed by thousands of spectators. The events showcased the talents of British sailors as well as highlighting the skilled operational management of the academy team. Britain came third in the Olympic (sailing) medals table and joint first in the Paralympics sailing events.

The successes can be viewed at:

<http://www.london2012.com/sailing/> and
<http://www.london2012.com/paralympics/sailing/medals/>

Contact

Weymouth & Portland National Sailing Academy
E.reception@wpnsa.org.uk or T.01305 866000



Alan Stokes in the water at Sandymouth

Pro-surfers Volunteer to Support the National Trust

Rob Joules, Sports Partnership Manager, National Trust

On 11 April 2012, nine of the country's top surfers gathered at Sandymouth, a National Trust beach in North Cornwall, to mark the launch of a new phase of the National Trust Surf Ambassador programme. The ambassadors are well known surfers who give up their time to help champion the conservation and coastal management work of the Trust around the coast. All the ambassadors are National Trust volunteers and they join some 60,000 others who give up their time to help and support the charity.

Alan Stokes, 2009 British Champion, Jayce Robinson, 2011 British Nationals Runner-up, and Dan 'mole' Joel, the legendary big wave surfer have been working with the Trust for the last few years. Recently they have been

joined by a host of Britain's best longboarders. The group included European Longboard Champion Ben Skinner, runner up Adam Griffiths, Ben Howarth, Candice O'Donnell, Becky Stanhope and Raife Gaskell. After a quick brief on how the National Trust manages the local coastal area and its importance, the ambassadors were put straight to work doing vital conservation work. "I had a lot of fun and learnt lots about the National Trust and what they do for the coastline. I'll be getting my hands dirty and involved in the conservation work again" said Candice O'Donnell, the 2011 British longboard champion.

After a couple of hours' hard work clearing scrub, the tide had dropped out enough to get in the water. All the ambassadors had been watching it

while they worked and knew the peak they wanted to surf. There was some healthy competition between the short and longboarders in the line-up, but everyone was stoked to be the only ones in the water. For many of the ambassadors, after wintering in places like Costa Rica it was great to be back in the water in Britain. "I think that the Trust Rangers are doing a great job by keeping the coastline looking pristine and it makes the surfing experience much more enjoyable with an amazing background like at Sandymouth" said Ben Haworth, the 2011 British longboard champion.

The aim of working with the ambassadors is to help promote the vital conservation work along the coast. The ambassadors all know the joy that the coast and especially the sea gives to them and understand that it

takes a huge effort to keep it in top condition. The pro-surfers are keen to use their contacts and profile to raise awareness and encourage others to use and care for the coast. They are in the water all the time and are very well respected members of the surfing community who people look up to. As a result other surfers and water users tend to follow their advice and become advocates of protecting the environment as well. There is the added benefit that they are in a position to influence and advocate beach and water safety messages to novice surfers as well.

A clean and sustainable coast is very important to surfers who surround themselves in this environment and have an active interest in managing it effectively for the future. Many of the top surfers have websites, blogs and social media channels working with them and this has enabled the



Alan Stokes doing scrub clearance at Sandymouth

Ambassadors'. Their media skills and PR ability have been vital in creating interesting articles for magazines and highly engaging web content. It's a real privilege to be working with such amazing surfers who are so practical and so interested in our work and keen to be more involved. Raife Gaskell said: "Delighted to be helping out and am impressed how many volunteers you have".

Interacting with the watersports community is hugely important as it allows us to get our very important messages of conservation, enjoyment and getting closer to nature across to as wide an audience as possible. Many water users are unaware of the work that we do and are equally unaware that we manage and conserve huge stretches of coastline, over 1100km in England Wales and NI in fact. The innovative 'Ambassador' approach allows us to educate and engage whilst also ensuring that surfers and watersports users see the National Trust in a positive light.



Ben Skinner conserving the footpath near Sandymouth

National Trust to engage with a traditionally hard-to-reach audience. Small measures such as having the National Trust logo on their surf boards helps to ensure the brand is seen in different places, which is key in helping to change perceptions and raise awareness of the efforts that are being made.

Providing access to this coastline is crucial and the physical labour that the ambassadors did at Sandymouth was typical of the work that is carried out day to day. They worked with the ranger team to cut back invasive plants and clear unwanted scrub. This work enables the coast path to be kept clear and open providing access for surfers looking for that secret spot or walkers looking for that special view. By using volunteers, the National Trust can achieve more whilst also educating and engaging all coastal users. It is learning by example. The volunteering opportunities are tailored to suit individual skills and passions hence the creation of 'Surf



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News Stories

World Champion Kayaker Launches Iconic Coastal Canoe Trails

This summer saw Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland (formerly CAAN) launch four new stunning coastal canoe trails meaning that Northern Ireland's entire coastline is now fully accessible by canoe or kayak.

Local kayaking sensation Andy McClelland, who clinched the Surf Kayak Junior World Championships in North Carolina last October, ranks Northern Ireland's coastline as among the best in the world and believes that these new trails will showcase Northern Ireland as one of Europe's top canoeing destinations.

Speaking at the launch of the coastal trails, Mr McClelland said, "I have lived in Portrush all my life and have always been amazed by the sea and the surf in this area. For me, kayaking is all about pushing myself in challenging surf and exploring the ever changing coastline but the fantastic thing about these trails is that canoeists of all levels and abilities can find sections of trails that will suit their needs."

Mr McClelland continued, "These trails are completely unique in that they will cover the entire length of the country which is absolutely fantastic for getting more people interested in the sport. However, it is also a real feather in our cap in terms of visiting kayakers as there are few other countries in the world which can rival the canoeing facilities we now have here in Northern Ireland."

These new coastal canoe trails consist of approximately 500km divided up into four individual trails stretching from Newry in the South East to Strabane in the North West; each with interactive online mapping and facility information on CanoeNI.com.

Among the many highlights on these trails canoeists can now paddle at the foot of the Mourne Mountains, around the spectacular Glens of Antrim headlands, under Carrick-a-rede Rope Bridge, up next to the Giant's Causeway World Heritage Site and through the UK's City of Culture for 2013, Derry/Londonderry.

An old fisherman's cottage in Port Moon Bay has also recently been converted to provide basic accommodation for canoeists and Sarah Noble from Outdoor Recreation NI believes that these trails really bring something special to the activity tourism offering here in Northern Ireland.

"These new trails offer unparalleled coastal canoeing and are the perfect compliment to our five award winning inland canoe trails currently in existence here in Northern Ireland." Sarah continued, "Our inland trails have been hugely popular amongst both local and visiting canoeists over the past five years and we are confident that the dramatic coastlines, unique cityscapes, natural and ancient history of these new coastal trails will raise the bar even higher."

The coastal canoe trails were developed by Outdoor Recreation NI over a three year period by working closely with local authorities, non-public bodies and private landowners to secure canoe access to existing and new sites along the coastline. These range from isolated stretches of coastline to sailing clubs and busy harbours.

For further information:

Sarah Noble, Development Officer, Outdoor Recreation NI
E.sarah@outdoorrecreation.com T. ++44 (0)28 9030 3930



View of the Mourne Mountains from Murlough National Nature Reserve © Outdoor Recreation NI



New research from the European Centre for Environment and Human Health

A new study from the European Centre for Environment & Human Health has revealed that people living near the coast tend to have better health than those living inland.

Researchers from the centre, which is part of the University of Exeter Medical School, used data from the UK's census to examine how health varied across the country, finding that people were more likely to have good health the closer they live to the sea. The analysis also showed that the link between living near the coast and good health was strongest in the most economically deprived communities.

The study used data from the 2001 census for England, which brought together responses from over 48 million people. Researchers looked at the proportion of people who reported their health as being "Good" (rather than "Fairly Good" or "Not Good") and then compared this with how geographically close those respondents' homes were to the coast. They also took into account the way that age, sex and a range of social and economic factors (like education and income) vary across the country.

The results show that on average, coastal populations reported rates of good health higher than similar populations living inland. The authors were keen to point out that although this effect is relatively small; when applied to the whole population the impacts on public health could be substantial. Along with other studies the results of this work suggest that access to 'good' environments may have a role in reducing inequality in health between the wealthiest and poorest members of society.

Previous research has shown that the coastal environment may not only offer better opportunities for its inhabitants to be active, but also provide significant benefits in terms of stress reduction. Another recent study conducted by the centre in collaboration with Natural England found that visits to the coast left people feeling calmer, more relaxed and more revitalised than visits to city parks or countryside. One reason those living in coastal communities may attain better physical health could be due to the stress relief offered by spending time near to the sea.

Lead author of the study, Dr Ben Wheeler said:

"We know that people usually have a good time when they go to the beach, but there is strikingly little evidence of how spending time at the coast can impact upon health and wellbeing. By analysing data for the whole population, our research suggests that there is a positive effect, although this type of study cannot prove 'cause and effect'.

We need to carry out more sophisticated studies to try to unravel the reasons that may explain the relationship we're seeing. If the evidence is there, it might help to provide governments with the guidance necessary to wisely and sustainably use our valuable coasts to help improve the health of the whole UK population".

For further information:

The full study is published in the journal *Health and Place* and can be viewed online here: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2012.06.015>

Additional information on the project can be found on the European Centre's website here: <http://ecehh.org/publication/does-living-coast-improve-health-and-wellbeing>

Dr Mathew White said:

"While not everyone can live by the sea, some of the health promoting features of coastal environments could be transferable to other places. Any future initiatives will need to balance the potential benefits of coastal access against threats from extreme events, climate change impacts, and the unsustainable exploitation of coastal locations."



CRN 2013 Conference

Theme: Growing the outdoor economy
Venue: The Studio, Birmingham
Date: Wednesday 6th March 2013
Time: 10:00 – 16:00
Cost pp: £95 (members) / £130 (non members)

Target Audience

The seminar will be of interest to anyone involved in the outdoor economy including:

- providers of activities and experiences at outdoor leisure destinations;
- retail and service providers supporting the outdoor experience;
- the voluntary sector involved in promoting and managing the natural environment;
- research institutions and contractors involved with gathering and sharing evidence related to the outdoor economy; and
- policy, decision makers, and practitioners in national and local government with responsibilities for outdoor recreation, economic and rural development, and the natural environment.

Background

One of the major challenges facing the UK is the current economic crisis. Generating economic recovery will be a priority for government for years to come. Outdoor recreation has a role to play in this through supporting businesses from a range of sectors, including tourism, retail of products and equipment relating to outdoor recreation, leisure and sports, the social economy and the cultural and creative industries. The success of business and enterprise related to outdoor recreation is often dependant on attractive and well managed natural environment.

At the same time with cuts in public sector expenditure there is less national and local government funds available to manage the attractive environment for leisure visits, and less to promote outdoor recreation. There is a need to secure new sources of funding to maintain the quality of and access to the resource upon which businesses depend.

Aims of the event

With a range of innovative speakers representing commercial success, social enterprise, voluntary and public sector partnerships participants will be stimulated to participate in discussions to explore new ways of thinking, new partnerships and new solutions to grow the outdoor economy. By attending the event we expect participants to have an improved understanding of:

- How the outdoor sector can support economic recovery;
- The commercial and environmental ingredients required to successfully grow the outdoor economy;
- The respective needs of business, destination managers, site managers and the customers using sites and facilities;
- Ways to raise funds to pump prime and support outdoor recreation business and social ventures.
- How the funding environment is changing to become more focussed on growth and jobs

Programme

1 Setting the scene

A practical (& personal) view of how a business can be developed based on the great outdoors. Lessons learnt & things to think about. How can the public sector facilitate business growth & jobs?

Speaker confirmed - Jerome Mayhew, Go Ape

2 The role of & significance of the outdoor economy for delivering growth & jobs

Speaker Confirmed - Neil Ravenscroft, University of Brighton

3 Creating the environment for growth & jobs – Walkers are Welcome

Speaker Confirmed - Ruth Coulthard, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

4 Growing tourism, based on the outdoor economy

Speaker TBC

5 Future funding opportunities

An overview of funding opportunities to create the environment for business growth, with a particular focus on Rural Development Programme funding. How is this changing? What will be future priorities? What will be the role of Local Enterprise partnerships & how will they relate to Local Nature Partnerships?

Speaker Confirmed - Pippa Langford, Natural England

6 Economic value of outdoor recreation

Methodology and results from a study in Northern Ireland

Speaker TBC

7 Economic impact of mountain biking in Scotland

Speaker confirmed - Graeme McLean, Cycling Scotland

8 How can the public sector help stimulate economic growth

Case study: The Helix, Falkirk

Speaker confirmed - Richard Millar, Scottish Canals

Workshop session

Split into 2 or more smaller groups, depending upon numbers

To answer questions, such as:-

- What can the sector do to help support business growth?
- What other stakeholders need to be involved? What is their role?
- How can actions be funded?



Booking Form

First Name

Surname

Organisation

Position in Organisation

Address

Postcode

Email

Telephone

You can book in the following ways:

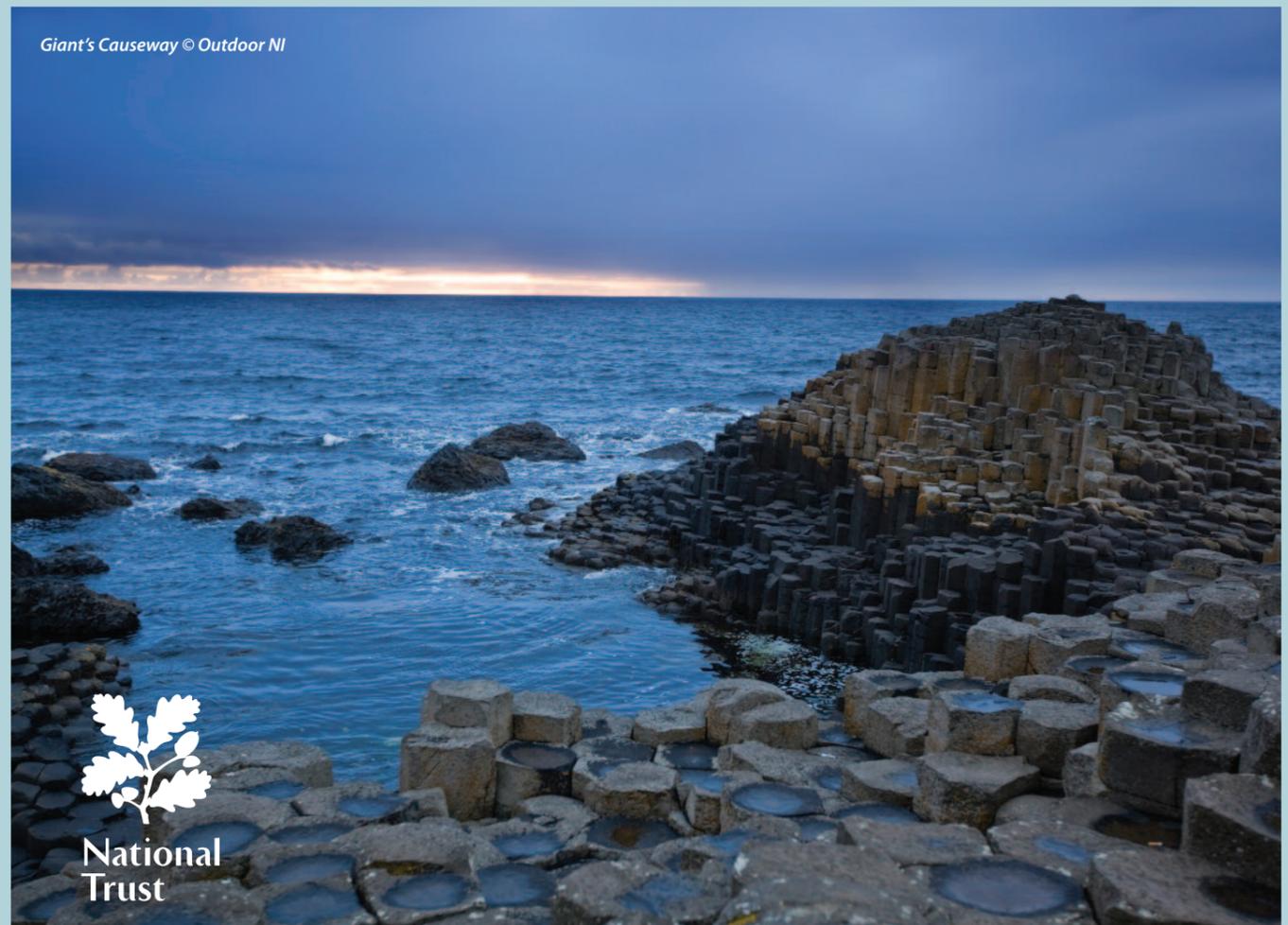
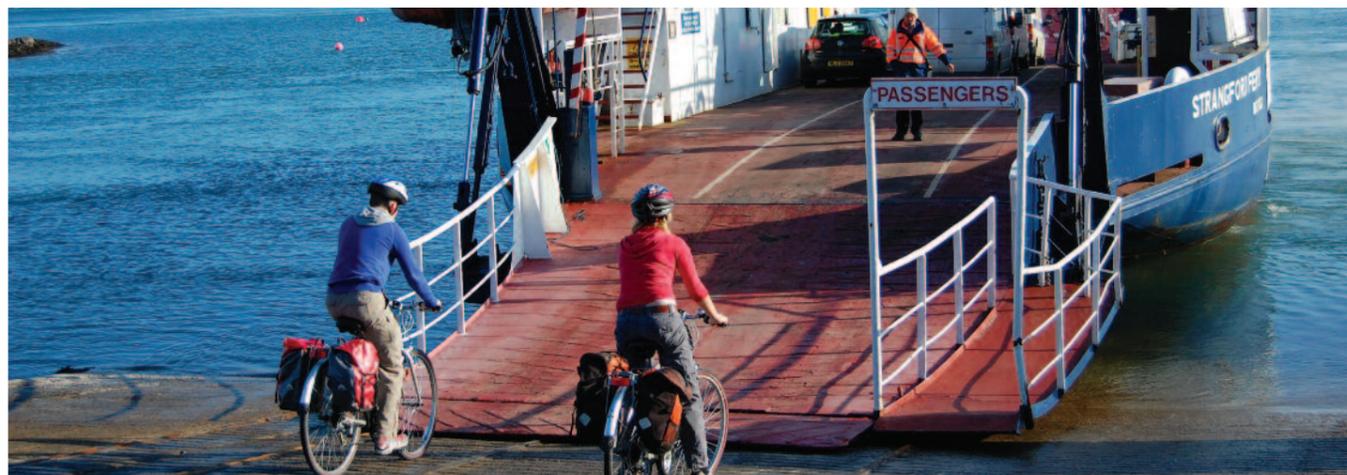
- 1 Complete and return this form with payment
- 2 Complete and return this form with a PO Number. We will invoice you.
- 3 Visit www.countrysiderecreation.org.uk, where online booking will open soon.

Payment Cheques should be made payable to: **Outdoor Recreation NI**
Please return this booking form along with your cheque to the following address :

Outdoor Recreation NI
The Stableyard
Barnett Demesne
Belfast BT9 5PB

PO Number

Further Information Please email crn@countrysiderecreation.org.uk or call 028 9030 3937



Member Profile

National Trust by Tony Flux

The National Trust is Europe's largest conservation charity with four million members, more than 17 million visits to our places every year and over 715 miles of coastline in our care.

A large proportion of this coastline was acquired with funds from the 'Neptune' Coastline Campaign. This endeavour, specifically about raising funds to acquire precious lengths of coast in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, is the most successful (£64m) long running campaign (1965) the Trust has ever had and its success clearly reflects the deep affection and support that most Britons have for the coast and seas. 2015 will mark the 50th anniversary of 'Neptune' and plans for its celebration are well underway.

While the vast majority of our resources are used for conservation and to manage our coastline in a sympathetic and sustainable way, now, and for years to come, we also recognise the value of the great outdoors as a visitor attraction.

Our Natural Childhood report and 50 Things to do before you're 11 ¾'s campaign show how seriously we are attempting to play a part in addressing the problem that the nation has become disconnected from outdoor spaces.

The 50 Things campaign contains around 15 activities that children can do at our coastal places from hunting for treasure on the beach to having a go at bouldering and rockpooling.

Our coastal places and Ranger teams are geared up to offer advice and support to these visitors taking their first tentative steps in the great outdoors and to those who regularly use our coastal places for recreational purposes.

The team in the south west in particular, is a leading light in this field for the National Trust with ex-champions and prominent British surfers recruited as 'Surf Ambassadors' to support and promote the conservation work carried out by us in the surfers' playgrounds along the Devon and Cornwall coast, a fantastic partnership with the British Longboard Union and employing a Water Sports Co-ordinator to help bring our coastal places alive.

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