



Welcome to the Gift to Nature Green Guide to the Isle of Wight. The Island is an amazing place to live and visit; this guide is full of our hints and tips to help you discover some hidden treasures on this special little island.

This guide has been produced by the Gift to Nature team who are working to protect and enhance the countryside of the Isle of Wight. Each conservation site has information highlighting the natural features special to each place; from tips on how to spot the elusive red squirrel to where to look for signs of water voles. We work with local artists to create seating and sculptures reflecting the sites' natural beauty.

Contact us for more information about the work of Gift to Nature or visit our website gifttonature.org.uk to find out how you can support the Isle of Wight's wildlife.



Gallivanting & Goggling

Squirrel Spotting

The red squirrel is perhaps the best known and most popular wild animal on the Island. The UK's only native squirrel has been driven out of most parts of the country, but still thrives here on the Island.

They can be hard to spot so here are some tips to help you:

- * Listen for a rustling in the treetops - you'll often hear a squirrel before you see it.
- * If you are being showered by paper-like pine cone seeds it is likely you have a squirrel munching high above you.
- * Look right up into the tree canopy - red squirrels can balance on very thin branches.

The Gift to Nature viewing hide at Parkhurst Forest was built specifically for red squirrel viewing, with a high sloping roof so you can get a good view of the canopy. Other good sites include Alverstone Mead Nature Reserve and Robin Hill Country Park, which also has a visitor centre with lots of squirrel information.



Fossil hunter's paradise

The Island is renowned for its fossils, with totally different types of species to be found depending on which bit of the coast you choose to explore. Hamstead on the north yields mammal, turtle and crocodile remains; Yaverland on the east has dinosaur bones and reptiles; Brighstone Bay on the south coast regularly reveals dinosaur footprints and there is a petrified forest nearby. Only fossils loose on the ground should be collected – it's unsafe (and sometimes against the law!) to dig into the cliffs.

You might want to join in with a guided fossil hunt. Dinosaur Isle in Sandown runs guided trips, led by local experts.

Isle of Wight Chines

Along the South coast of the Island are found the fascinating Chines, "steep-sided river valleys where the river flows through soft coastal cliffs to the sea". Each chine is unique, some have gently sloping vegetated sides, others experience frequent rock falls and feature quite stunning waterfalls. Visit chines from the top of the cliff or from the beach below but please take care. (Editor's favourite is Churchill Chine boasting a double waterfall).

See our Isle of Wight Chines book for an insight to their fascinating geological and archaeological history.

Cycle Isle

Whether you haven't been on a bike for years or you're welded to the saddle, the Isle of Wight has a route to suit you. There is a fairly flat, well surfaced cycle path following the old railway track from Cowes to Sandown (but watch out for the Troll at the Blackwater bridges). The Sunshine Trail is another specially signposted route in the south of the Island, a twelve mile circular route passing through beautiful countryside along bridleways, cycleways and quiet roads. These two routes and five more can all be found in the Rail Rides book. If you're feeling more ambitious you can tackle the Round the Island route which is clearly signposted and can be completed in a day, or at a more leisurely pace in stages.

The Isle of Wight Cycling Festival is held each year in September with a great variety of special events, guided rides and other cycling activities sunseaandcycling.com

Rambling? No I always talk like this

Whether you prefer a slow amble or an energetic hike, you'll have countless opportunities on the Island. There are over 520 miles of footpaths, bridleways and byways - take your pick from the coast, the forests, the Downs, and the town and heritage trails. Wherever you walk on the Island you're never far from an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - nationally important landscapes which protect and conserve the very best of the Island's countryside.

If you feel like joining in with a guided walk, the famous Isle of Wight Walking Festival takes place in May and October every year and offers hundreds of events to enjoy. Look out too for the Summer and Winter Walks programmes published by the Isle of Wight Council and available online at iwight.com

The Isle of Wight has had hundreds of scenic walks developed, available in a myriad of books and free leaflets. The County Press Shop (123 Pyle St. Newport) has a good selection of Island books.



Fort Victoria

This historic fort, built in 1855, now houses a range of attractions including a marine aquarium, underwater archaeology centre, a planetarium and a model railway. The aquarium displays a fascinating selection of the fish and invertebrates which are found in our local sea and on the seashore, while the planetarium uses no less than eight projectors to bring to life the night sky. The Underwater Archaeology Centre exhibits treasure from under the Solent and the Back of the Wight, from shipwrecks to military munitions. Outside there is a picnic area, a good fossiling beach and a large woodland to explore. fortvictoria.co.uk

Perfect Picnics

Time for nammet, with a nice lump of Chock-dog! Pack a picnic and set off into the great outdoors! Whether you choose to head north, east, south or west, you'll be spoiled for choice. But a few suggestions might include: St Martin's Down, Wroxall for breathtaking views; Nansen Hill at Ventnor, especially in the spring to see Violets and Cowslips; the beach between Redcliff and Whitecliff, with a walk along the cliff path afterwards to collect blackberries in late summer.



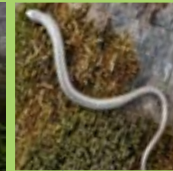
natural enterprise

Environmental Consultancy

Environmental Planning
Site Management
Habitats and Species

Archaeological Assessment
Interpretation and Green Marketing
Landscape and Heritage

Natural Enterprise offers the complete set of technical reporting you will need to see a project through from inception to delivery. Through our work with Gift to Nature we are able to support wildlife conservation projects and run events and activities to help people experience all the Island has to offer.



For more information on how we can help with your planning and development needs call Ian or Tracy on 01983 535888

Natural Enterprise
Innovation Centre, St Cross Business Park, Newport. Isle of Wight PO30 5WB
Tel. 01983 535888 e. info@naturalenterprise.co.uk

naturalenterprise.co.uk

Wonderful West Wight

The West Wight has a rich cultural heritage and has nurtured many influential characters, one being Robert Hooke. Born in Freshwater in July 1635 this great 17th century scientist, inventor and architect is arguably the Island's most influential son. To celebrate his association with the West Wight a booklet has been published providing a scenic circular walk around Hooke's Freshwater, and the chance to catch a glimpse of some of his early influences. The booklet is available to purchase from outlets throughout the Island. For more information on the work of the West Wight Landscape Partnership visit: wwlp.co.uk

Taste the View Walks

Three beautiful walks through the West Wight; developed by the team at Natural Enterprise on behalf of the West Wight Landscape Partnership, exploring the relationship between food and the landscape. The walks booklet is available from outlets across the Island including the Wightlink ferry terminals and Made on the Isle of Wight.



Fort Victoria Country Park

A great day out, come rain or shine!

Only a short walk from Yarmouth Harbour.

Attractions also include a cafe, restaurant and free parking. Open every day between 10am and 5pm, Easter to October.

www.fortvictoria.co.uk
PO41 0RR

The Old Mill Holiday Park

A small, relaxed park offering self-catering, centrally heated pine cabins, caravans and apartments. Enjoy a warm, sheltered location overlooking Bembridge Harbour and the Solent. An ideal location for exploring the Island or to just relax and watch the boats go by.

Open all Year
Car ferry included

Mill Road, St. Helens, Ryde, PO33 1UE 01983 872507 web@oldmill.co.uk
www.oldmill.co.uk

Island Art, Crafts & Gifts

The Island is bursting with talent when it comes to the arts and beautifully crafted items. So if you need to find that perfect treat or gift, be it for a birthday or souvenir then choose something showing a little of the Island's great skill.

To find that perfect item you can make a start at **Arreton Barns**; here you can find potters, and wood turners with items starting at just a few pounds made from genuine local wood. Alternatively head to **Made on the Isle of Wight** (Bullen Road in Ryde) a one-stop shop for all the best the Island has to offer from jams to jewellery.

The **Quay Arts Centre** in Newport has a stunning selection of local arts and crafts including jewellery, sculptures and textiles. You can also book a course here to make your own works of art.

The best places to pick up local gifts can be at any of the Island's shows and festivals - our favourite is the **Wolverton Manor Garden Fair** at the end of the summer (3rd and 4th of September 2011)

Image below is a rose created by **Dave Badman** using material reclaimed from an old VW beetle.





DISCOVER WEST WIGHT'S HIDDEN GEM!

Silver Glades Caravan Park

Solent Road, Cranmore, Yarmouth, PO41 0XZ

Get close to nature at Silver Glades



A spacious, eco-friendly site, surrounded by stunning walks and scenery. Nestled amidst Red Squirrel woodland, Silver Glades is ideal for a relaxing holiday or break. See for yourself by visiting:

WWW.SILVERGLADESIOW.CO.UK

01983 760 172

Diamond Isle Sculptured Glass

Proud to support Gift to Nature



01983 523618
www.sculptured-glass.co.uk

Open all Year at
Arreton Old Village

The only one-stop shop for everything Island made



Nothing in our shop
has travelled more than
21.7 miles

Bullen Road
(between Seaview and TESCO),
Ryde, PO33 1QE
01983 564949

Open Daily 9 - 5
Sunday 10 - 4



www.madeonisleofwight.com

Island Nosh

Food, glorious food

The Island has an amazing array of locally grown and raised produce. Whether it's bread and milk, fresh fruit and veg, meat, cakes or cream the Island has it in stock somewhere near you; many of the town shops will sell it, or you can try one of our local produce and farm shop such as:

Bridlesford Farm Shop, Wootton Bridge, PO33 4RY

Made on the Isle of Wight, Ryde, PO33 1QE

Farmer Jacks, Arreton, PO30 3AA

Godshill Organics, Godshill, PO38 3LY

Farmhouse Fayre, Newport, PO30 1LG

Dairy Deli, Shalfleet, PO30 4ND

Mottistone Manor Farm Shop, Mottistone, PO30 4ED

Kings Manor Farm, Freshwater, PO40 9TL

The Garlic Farm Shop, Newchurch, PO36 0NR

Farmers' markets are held in Newport every Friday and Ryde every Saturday). The majority of these businesses have received funding through LEADER to help them start up or expand. LEADER on the Isle of Wight is managed by Natural Enterprise, call us on 01983 535836 for more information.

Look out for "Oil of Wight" the Island's own rapeseed oil. If you fancy a tippie, all of **Rosemary Vineyard's** wines, ciders and juices are made from fruit grown on-site. **Afton Park** in Freshwater offers a farm shop, plant nursery, café, and even eco-friendly yurts available for hire amongst the apple trees. Most good pubs will stock a range of local beers from brewers such as **Goddards**..... a pint of Fuggle Dee Dum anyone?

Eating Out

If you'd rather avoid any washing-up, then the Island has no end of choice when it comes to cafes, restaurants and bars it's worth checking out who's using locally-sourced food and making the most of the tasty seasonal produce around.

Garlic Farm Cafe in Newchurch has some unusual garlic-flavoured delights and you can even watch red squirrels whilst you dine.



Godshill's Taverners is a popular gastro-pub with an enthusiasm for very local ingredients and a modern take on traditional cooking.

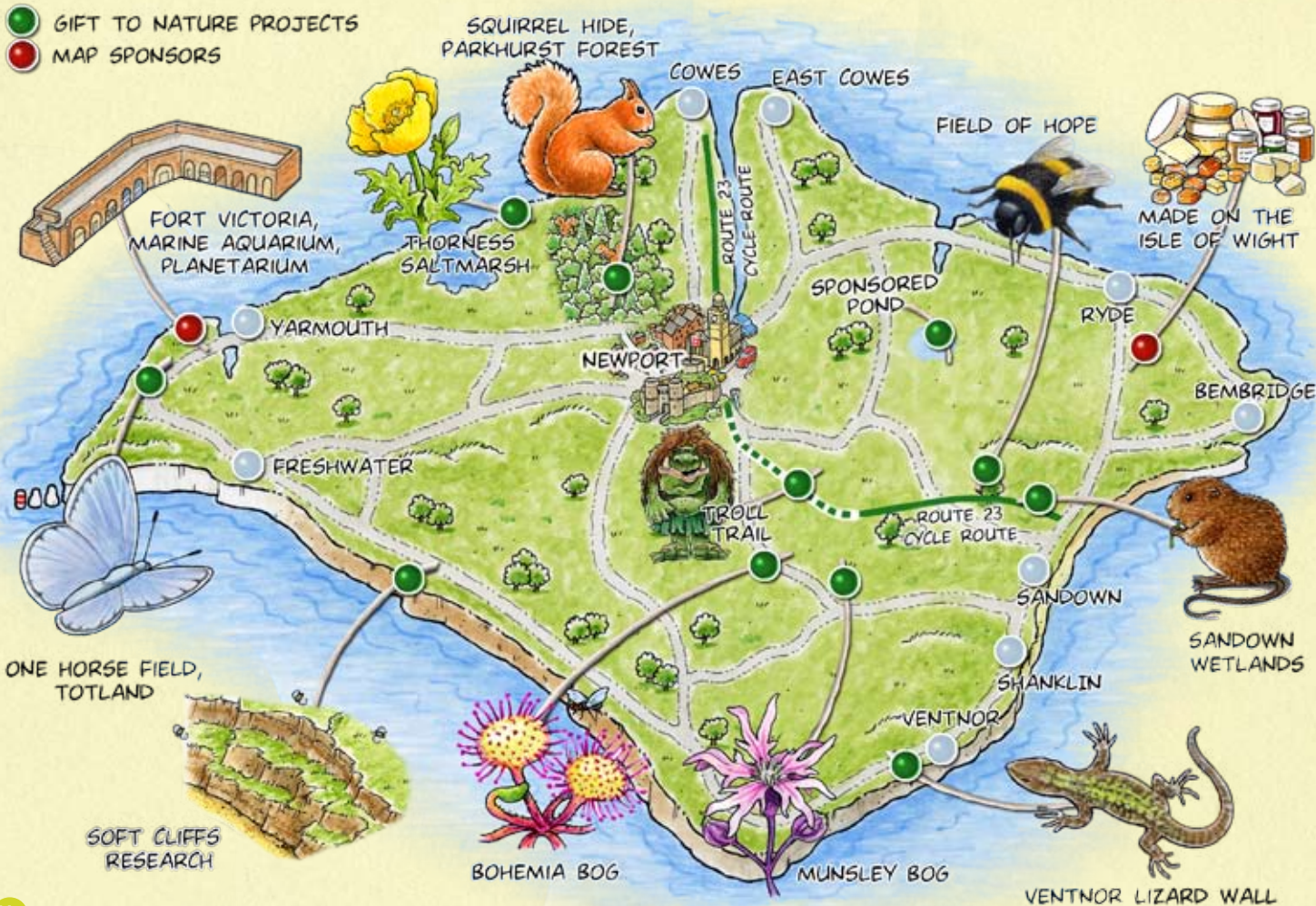
Newchurch, the **Pointer Inn**, so local that local gardeners bring their produce into the kitchen and you can read their names on the blackboard outside.

The recently reopened **Boathouse** in Springvale is serving a local menu, with great sea views too.

There's plenty of room at the **Chequers Inn**, Rookley, a big family pub that serves beef from its own Aberdeen Angus herd which can be seen grazing contentedly in the adjacent field.

Eating out suggestions come from our friends Matt and Cat, check out their website for totally independent Isle of Wight food reviews mattandcat.co.uk.

-  GIFT TO NATURE PROJECTS
-  MAP SPONSORS



Gift to Nature Conservation

Gift to Nature receives donations from the public, sprinkles in some grant funding to make them grow and then watches as they bloom into beautiful new projects which help Island wildlife and make interesting places to visit. The next few pages feature a selection of our projects. You'll find others mentioned elsewhere in the guide. If you would like to join us for a tour around the sites we lead guided walks throughout the year - all of our events can be found on our website. Most events will also be in the Wight Walks booklets or the annual Isle of Wight Walking Festival isleofwightwalkingfestival.co.uk

You can help support Island wildlife by making a donation to Gift to Nature either through our website or directly; either give us a call on 01983 535884 or write to us at Gift to Nature, Innovation Centre, St Cross Business Centre, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5WB, or email sam.buck@naturalenterprise.co.uk



Parkhurst Red Squirrel Hide

The Island is famous for its Red Squirrels and has one of the best and the last English populations of this shy woodland animal. Parkhurst Forest near Newport is one of the best places to search for them and you might be lucky enough to see some from the magnificent log cabin hide which Gift to Nature has built there with the help of the Forestry Commission. The hide is specially designed with a high roof to allow you to look up into the treetops to watch for a display of nimble squirrels. Look out too for the rare Pearl-bordered Fritillary Butterfly which likes the wide clear and flowery paths through the forest.

The car park PO30 5LZ SZ480900

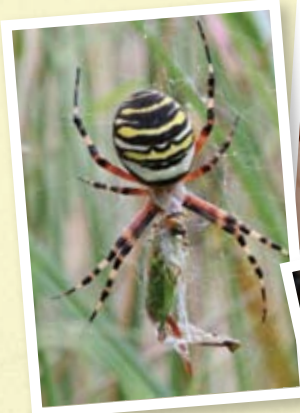
The hide PO30 5UL SZ476905.

Totland Wild Flower Meadow

Gift to Nature looks after One Horse Field, a beautiful wildflower meadow, and is working to encourage the great diversity of meadow flowers and grassland wildlife there. Look out for the spectacular Wasp Spider between July and October in the long grass where they spin their intricate webs (we keep the paths mown so you can avoid the insects if you prefer!). Later in the summer look for the delicate spiral of white flowers which is the Autumn Ladies Tresses orchid. In the summer the meadow is alive with darting dragonflies and butterflies.

Our Slow Worm refuge has been built to house a large existing population but is also useful for re-homing displaced and rescued individuals from elsewhere. There is hand-carved seating where you can rest your weary feet for a moment and let the wildlife come to you.

PO39 0AG SZ324873



Troll Trail

This project is full of bridges, and we all know that Trolls live under bridges, you're sure to see at least one! What many people don't know is that the Grey Wagtail is rather partial to nesting under bridges too, so we have installed special nesting boxes for them under some of the bridges that the path crosses. There is also a special 'terrace' of House Sparrow boxes in place at Blackwater to help this sadly declining species. The wildlife meadow at Merstone Station, with new wildflowers and hand-carved picnic benches alongside a chalk and turf maze, is an ideal place for a picnic or just a quick

pit-stop to catch your breath while admiring the rural views. The Troll Trail forms part of National Cycle Network route 23.

Merstone Station
PO30 3DQ SZ526845
Shide PO30 1HL
SZ503881



Sandown Wetlands

The Wetland Walk guides you through a section of the River Yar and along a network of waterways which we have made more inviting to water voles and kingfishers. Gift to Nature has created a community orchard on the site which you are welcome to visit and scump in the autumn - we have included Isle of Wight fruit varieties including the Alverstone Apple. There are picnic tables and benches where you can rest and enjoy the wildlife around you. Take a moment to visit the pond, restored in 2003 and now full of wildlife including the beautiful hairy dragonfly. Community Orchard
PO36 9PR SZ588850



Alverstone Marshes

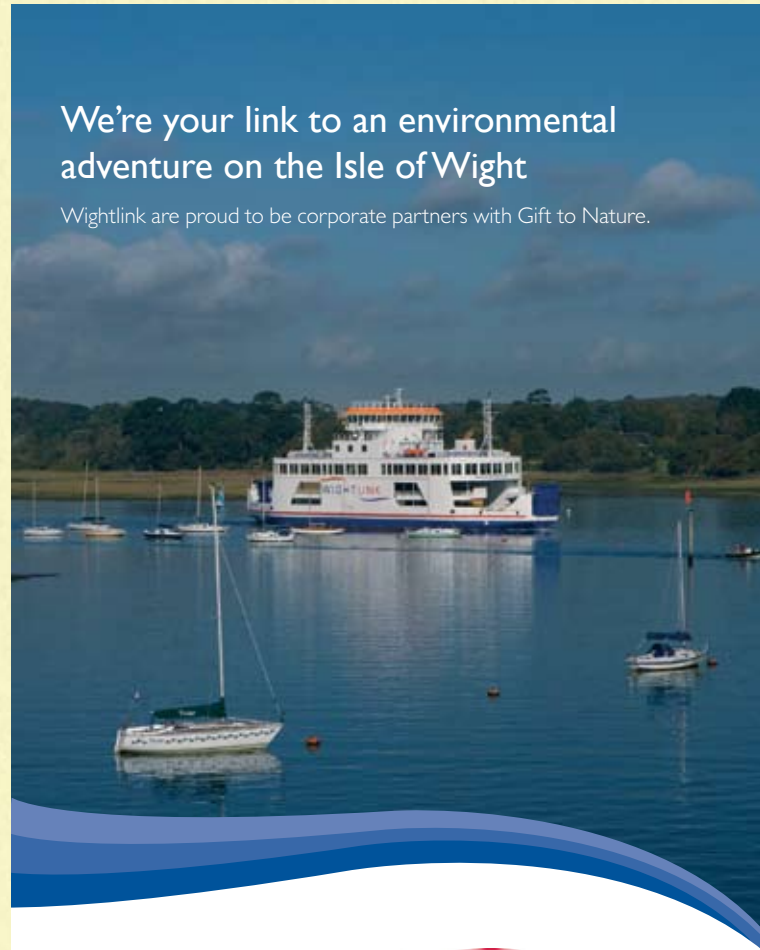
Next to Sandown Wetlands, a 200 hectare site nationally recognised as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. We have worked with the landowners to greatly improve the health of the wetlands.
PO36 0HS SZ572859

Conservation Reveals Roman Causeway

In 2005 we made an extraordinary and totally unexpected discovery while excavating a pond in Alverstone Marshes. The archaeological and palaeoecological find is still being investigated by the Museum of London and the Isle of Wight archaeology team. It is a nationally significant site with artefacts and structures linked to a tidal wharf, a mill and a river crossing.

We're your link to an environmental adventure on the Isle of Wight

Wightlink are proud to be corporate partners with Gift to Nature.



CALL NOW TO BOOK 0871 376 1000
Calls cost 7p per minute, plus network extras
www.wightlink.co.uk

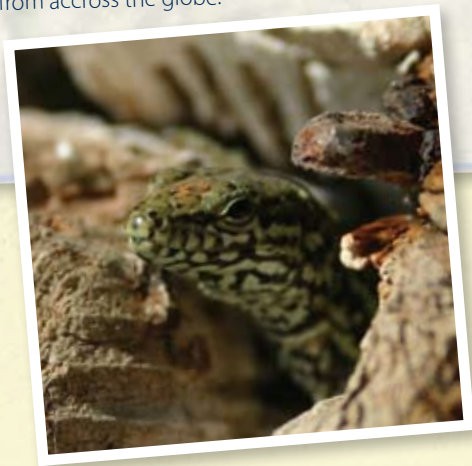
WIGHTLINK
PART OF ISLAND LIFE

Wall Lizards at Ventnor Botanics

A hotspot for plants, people and lizards! These very special reptiles are found nowhere else on the Island and in very few other places nationwide. In 2002 we installed a drystone wall for the lizards (near the Temperate House). Visit on a sunny day and you are almost guaranteed to see one either at our wall or any sunny rocky area, scurrying for cover or basking happily in full view.
The Wall PO38 1UL SZ546769

Ventnor Lizard Walk

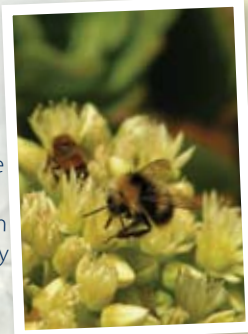
You can follow the Lizard Walk, which will take you along the coast into Ventnor, past lizard hotspots and lizard-inspired artworks. Just below the Botanic Gardens and a short walk away is the lovely Steephill Cove perfect for a paddle, an ice cream or a crab sandwich. The walk starts and ends in **Ventnor Botanic Gardens** which are within the Undercliff microclimate resulting in a glorious show of plants from across the globe.



Let it Bee and the Field of Hope

In partnership with the Isle of Wight Festival, Gift to Nature is running a project to support Bumblebees, Solitary Bees, Honey Bees and Cuckoo Bees. At the 2009 festival we raised over £3,000 to fund research into the nationally important bee populations living along the south coast of the Island. In 2010 we raised funds to protect an amazing new bee reserve where we have discovered a nationally important site for bees - the Field of Hope in Newchurch. Discovered by our expert ecologists in 2009 we funded more in-depth surveys revealing a spectacular array of bee species in this ex-arable field. This work is now complete and the results are staggering: so far we have 96 species of bee and wasp of which 23 are nationally rare and 3 are completely new to the Island!

Field of Hope PO36 0NL SZ565855



Island Climate Care - Green Bogs

Better management of bogs can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Bogs store carbon and prevent it entering the atmosphere as carbon dioxide, but they need to be managed well to increase the carbon storage potential and minimise emissions of methane. At Gift to Nature we are working to restore and manage bogs and other freshwater and tidal habitats across the Isle of Wight as part of our Island Climate Care programme.

The Island is also leading the way in assessing its vulnerability to climate change. We want to ensure that whichever way climate and weather changes we aren't swept off the map (or swamped under the sea). Check out our climate website (changingclimate.org.uk) to find out how the Island is preparing for change and for tips on what to do in your own home or business.



Did you throw away £100 last year?

Free Guidance on saving energy.

Free home visits.

Free or cheap Cavity and Loft insulation.

ENERGETIC

FUELINE FOR FAMILIES 82-22-82

The Footprint Trust charity - reducing energy bills... and helping the environment...

BEDFORD
LODGE



Traditional B&B with 14 en suite rooms
Silver Award Winner Green Tourism Business Scheme

Open all year

Chine Avenue, Shanklin Old Village,

Isle of Wight PO37 6AA

01983 862416

www.bedfordlodge.co.uk



**Brookside
Cottage,
Shorwell**



Self-catering. Sleeps 6.

Email: brooksidecottage@ntlworld.com

Web: www.brooksidecottage.info

*Wight
Locations*

Coastal & Rural Holiday Cottages

100+ properties on the Isle of Wight

★★★★★★ 

www.wightlocations.co.uk

Call for a brochure on

01983 811418

or enquiries@

wightlocations.co.uk



What lies beneath?

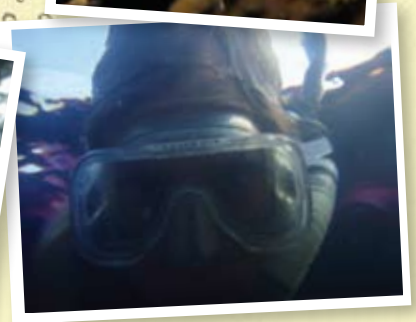
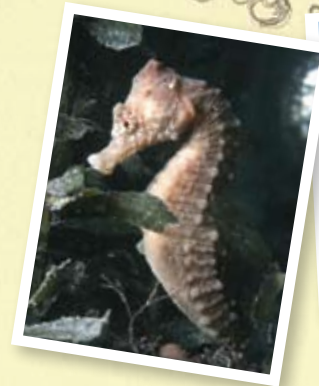
The Island is fortunate to have an extraordinary range of habitats and marine species along its shoreline. There are fantastic opportunities for snorkelling and rockpooling, from the kelpy depths of **Freshwater Bay** to the rocky ledges at **Bembridge**. Gift to Nature have produced a waterproof snorkelling guide which is available from outlets across the Island or direct from Gift to Nature. It is packed with information on what you might see and where to go.

Branching out

A novel way to get closer to nature, Goodleaf Tree Climbing will help you climb trees using ropes and harnesses. Hang around for a while in the tree tops or walk out on a limb while enjoying views of the Solent and South Coast from a totally new perspective. Goodleaf help support Gift to Nature's conservation work by collecting donations from climbers and promoting our conservation sites.

Scenery from the Saddle

Another great way to see the Island is on horseback. Wildlife treats you as one of their own and you can cover more distance when your legs aren't doing all of the work. There are some great places to ride all over the Island and beach rides in the winter are fantastic. Sally's Stables at Bembridge offer beach rides and Allendale - outside Rookley - offer a variety of rural rides.



Island Trails and Guides

Our guides and leaflets are available from shops across the Isle of Wight or you can contact us to buy direct. Some of our free leaflets are available to download from gifttonature.org.uk

Map Pack - Five short circular walks featuring our conservation sites. Each hand-illustrated map is also a postcard.

Snorkelling Guide - Details six excellent sites and includes a spotters' guide to help you find some fascinating sea creatures.



Boat Trail - Tour around Cowes and East Cowes highlighting the varied industrial and sporting heritage.

Rail Rides - Features seven short to medium-length cycle rides all accessible by train.

Yar River Trail – Source to Sea - Details a 19 mile trail following the Eastern Yar River via five scenic trails.

Mill Trail - Choose between an eight mile town and country walk or a four mile Newport town route.

Children's Guide - Written and edited by local children to help give an insight into the best things to see and do on the Island.

Taste the View - Three beautiful walks through the West Wight exploring the relationship between food and the landscape.