

Countryside creatives



Woodland Walk by Alix Baker

The Commission for Rural Communities has published a report looking at ways micro-businesses in rural areas thrive despite challenging economic conditions.

Numerous creative businesses can be found in isolated parts of Dorset and Hampshire. Ann Wilson at Cherry Orchard Farm, Shaftesbury is a ceramicist and one of

the founding members of the Cygnet Gallery in Swans Yard. 'I've become a professional artist since being here, had my first exhibition - and my first studio space,' she says, adding that her broadband connection is 'good' but mobile phone reception is 'a bit limited'.

Renowned military artist Alix Baker lives at Goodworth Clatford which is 'great for inspiration'. While she enjoys fibre optic broadband 'mobile phone coverage is often weak and radio reception is nil in parts of the house'.

Artist Clare Shepherd has lived in Cranborne Chase for 26 years. 'I've always known I needed to live in an isolated and rural place for my painting,' says Clare, who runs courses in Blandford.

Wanted – wildlife volunteers



The Rangers at Moors Valley Country Park and Forest are looking for volunteers to help record the vast array of plants and animals in the 800-acre Park.

'We are organising a 24-hour Bioblitz at Moors Valley on 24th July and would love to bring some new volunteers on board to help discover and record particular species,' said Countryside Education Ranger, Katie Davies. 'We are hoping lots of members of the public will also want to join in, but obviously they will need guidance, so knowledgeable experts will be welcome.'

'We are also keen to increase the scope of our regular surveys, so we would also welcome support from volunteers who can't make the Bioblitz but would be keen to get involved with regular survey work.'

Contact Katie Davies on 01425 470721.



Master Shipwright 'Henry Adams' from Buckler's Hard, John Lynn, New Forest National Park Authority, and Victorian cyclist 'Hawkins' from the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu.

New cycle route from Beaulieu towards Buckler's Hard in the New Forest

Families can enjoy a new bike ride, thanks to a 10-year agreement between the New Forest National Park Authority and the Beaulieu Estate.

Cyclists are now able to ride on a two mile track along the Beaulieu River from the picturesque village of Beaulieu towards Buckler's Hard, where ships for Nelson's navy were built.

The scenic off-road track was recently opened by John Lynn, cycling projects manager at the New Forest National Park Authority, along with some historical characters including 'Hawkins' the Victorian cyclist from Beaulieu and 'Henry Adams' a Georgian Master Shipwright from the nearby Buckler's Hard Maritime Museum.

The route has been repaired and resurfaced by the Beaulieu Estate as part of the £3.8m Local Sustainable Transport Fund from the Department for Transport. The fund is shared between the New Forest and South Downs National Parks with the aim of encouraging 370,000 visitors to switch to car-free travel at each park by March 2015.

● www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/cycling

LANGHAM WINE ESTATE WINS JUDGEMENT OF PARSONS GREEN IV

Dorset-based Langham Wine Estate, has recently won the highly acclaimed Judgement of Parsons Green IV with its 2010 Classic Cuvee, a sparkling wine made in the vineyard's first year of production, beating 93 other English sparkling wines from 47 different vineyards in a blind tasting. Its 2010 Blanc de Noirs also finished in the top 10.



Creating greater expertise in the rural economy

The UK200 Agriculture Group has linked up with the British Institute of Agricultural Consultants in an information sharing arrangement. As part of this arrangement, the two groups are holding a series of regional workshops to discuss key issues in the rural economy.

The UK200 Agriculture Group is a specialist group of accountants and lawyers who support farming and the rural businesses.

● www.uk200group.co.uk