

DISCOVERING LANDSCAPES

— A PROJECT OF NATURE CONNECTION —



with StoneCrabs Theatre, Independent Arts
& Creative Ways Outdoors

— Funded by Isle of Wight National Landscape —

“ Research by the National Trust and University of Derby found that only a minority of people take the time to watch birds, bees, butterflies or other wildlife, smell wildflowers, listen to bird songs, pay attention to clouds or the moon and stars, and draw or take photos of nature. Many of us are missing out on these simple activities that increase our feeling of connectedness. ”

Dr Carly Butler, Nature Connectedness Research Group (University of Derby).



An Invitation

Over three seasons, three Island groups invited local residents to engage with the natural world. Born from the research produced by Dr Carly Butler of the Nature Connectedness Research Group and objectives set out in the 2025-30 Isle of Wight National Landscape management plan, 'Discovering Landscapes' was a collaboration between Isle of Wight National Landscape and arts and outdoor organisations. Over seven months, the project sought to help participants connect with nature both physically and emotionally.

StoneCrabs Theatre, Independent Arts and Creative Ways Outdoors worked with a number of practitioners and artists to improve group members' relationship with the landscape found on the Island and inspire their levels of 'nature connection'. Differing from the physical access to nature, nature connection is our psychological relationship with nature - how we think, feel and experience the natural world around us.



A STORY OF NATURE CONNECTION



Connection is about moments, not minutes.

Connection is about feeling, not knowledge.





STONECRABS THEATRE

Force of Nature

StoneCrabs Theatre split their sessions into two celebrations of the seasons focusing first on the lead to Spring Equinox in the Bay Area and the latter half on the run up to Midsummer in West Wight.

Over the ten sessions participants sketched, talked and walked in the landscape experiencing the misty skies of Brading Down, brisk beaches and rugged cliffs of Yaverland, serene gardens of Farringford and Ventnor Botanic Garden, culminating in a Midsummer celebration of song, sound and supper in the meadows surrounding the Longstone.

"Being in the elements, it just resonates this healthiness and oxygen, and this ancientness of humans being in nature" - StoneCrabs participant

Rebecca Tremain alongside Katy Suggitt co-lead sessions encouraging the group to explore the landscapes through their 'senses, voices and bodies.' The group continues to connect via Whatsapp since the project has ended where they share photos, questions and knowledge about the Island's wildlife and organise walks in yet unexplored areas.

"What I've most enjoyed about the project is the people I've met along the way" - Katy Suggitt





*"I've spent a lot of my time
working 9-5 in an office and for
once I could get outside" -
StoneCrabs participant*



"It was quite healing" - Stonecrabs participant



*"Literal and metaphorical fresh air"
- Stonecrabs participant*



*"Nature is the ultimate medicine,
it gets you out, it gets you feeling
better about yourself" - Rebecca
Tremain*





"It's made quite a difference for me. Since joining the Force Of Nature project, I've gotten a small job with a local nature reserve, so that's been really quite something! I never would've thought of it before." - StoneCrabs participant



CREATIVE WAYS OUTDOORS

Heritage Coasts

"Really enjoyable project linking creativity, nature and culture together on one of the most beautiful places on the Island" - Equals member



Creative Ways Outdoors worked with two distinct community groups whose membership identified as rarely engaging with areas within the Isle of Wight National Landscape. The project sought to introduce members of both groups - IW Equals and VIVA / Yes! Creative Beats CIC - to the two defined Heritage Coasts on the Island and to develop a sense of 'nature connectedness' with their 'adopted' coast that would ensure they continued to visit and enjoy these areas in the future.

IW Equals elected to explore the Tennyson Heritage Coast around the Compton Bay area whilst VIVA chose the Hamstead Coast in the Newtown area.

In addition, Creative Ways Outdoors sought to further highlight the two locations by devising and leading a new Isle of Wight walking trail – the Heritage Coast to Coast Walk as part of the IW Spring Walking Festival programme linking the two projects in a showcase of both groups creativity and cultural celebration.

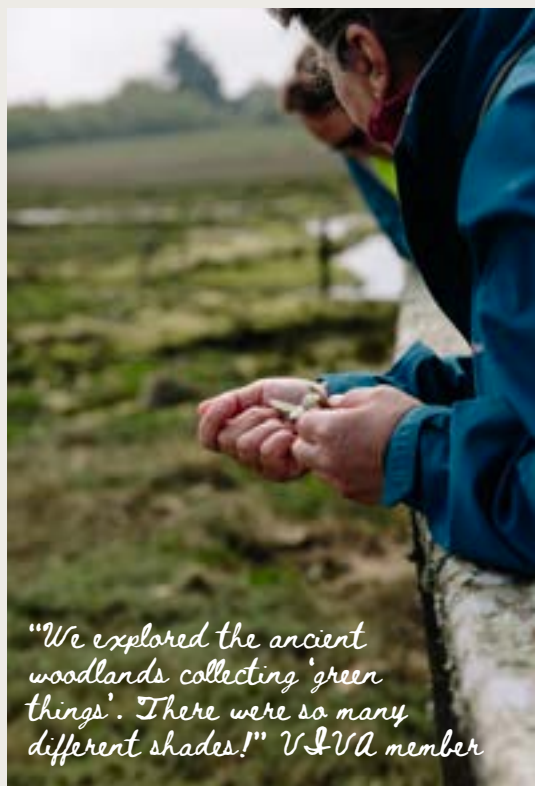
The groups attended nature walks guided by Kathy Grogan of Wilder Learning, blending local history and a knowledge of the natural world through foraging, enjoying wild food and nature identification. Artist Gina Myers then worked with both groups to make flags distinct to each coast's wildlife which were paraded onto Compton beach to mark the opening of the new walk.

"I have worked on many different projects over the years with the broad aim of supporting nature connection. This project is one of the few that has actually brought communities out into nature who would not normally be there." Kathy Grogan, Wilder Learning





"We saw some crabs and done some listening." V&VA Member



"We explored the ancient woodlands collecting 'green things'. There were so many different shades!" V&VA member



"I loved leading the walk and I'd do it again. I talked about the plants and nature and the bird hide. It's a good spot for bird watching" Marcus Elms, V&VA member.

*"I could never have imagined myself doing the batik work and painting from the pictures we drew on the beach. I now want to go to the beach even more and I see things so differently".
Equals member*







"Many group members report a greater appreciation for the wildlife, natural plants, geological environment and heritage with a change of mind-set through newly acquired knowledge. Visiting Compton Bay, exploring the natural habitat, seeing and hearing wildlife and touching the natural habitat has increased nature connectedness very successfully." Mark Cox, Equals Group Leader.

INDEPENDENT ARTS

Earth Star



Project 'Earth Star' saw Independent Arts work with the home educating community on the Island in a thematic, loose framework melding the Island's landscape and built heritage with the children's own creativity and originality to create a series of 'reimagined' landscapes.

The sessions began in January by looking at 'way-finding' and how humans and other species experience the landscape and move through it. The children created various artworks taking inspiration from the journeys of migrating birds, their own daily journeys and the adventures of Newport-born arctic explorer Edgar Greenshield.

As the project developed, built heritage of the landscape (both existing and lost) was introduced, particularly through exploring the

local, walkable and accessible areas surrounding Carisbrooke: the castle, paper mill & water meadows. These field trips became the starting point for creating their 'reimagined' landscapes through textiles, collage and site-specific soundscapes made with sound artist Noah Johnson.

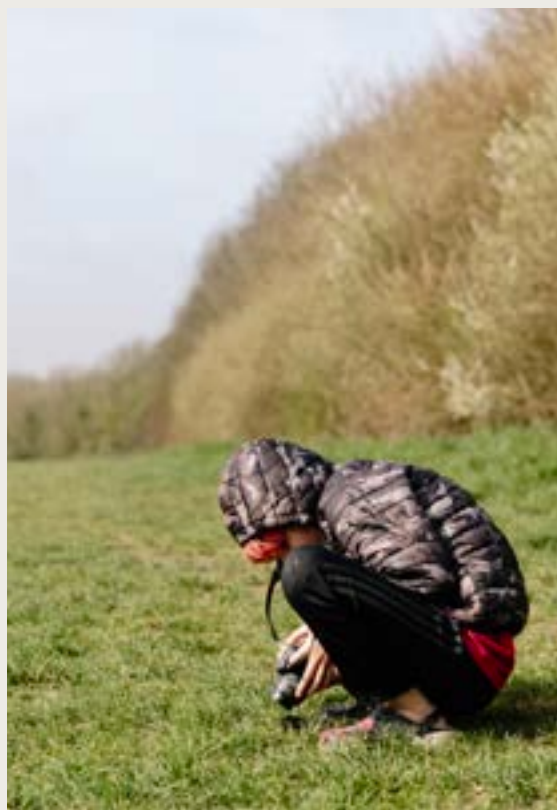
The location of their final field-trip was Newtown Creek. Taking photographs of the natural environment and rubbings from mixed surfaces they worked with artist & educator Teresa Grimaldi to create underwater worlds for Newtown's wildlife, experimenting with salt, acids and copper materials inspired by the history of salt making and mix of freshwater and saltwater environments found there.

"We visit (Carisbrooke Castle) a lot but we've never spent time in the county side around the castle mostly we come to see the donkeys or to see a joust. I've enjoyed using the camera's and looking at the mosses on the castle walls"
Independent Arts participant





*"Are these Cowberries? Are
adders the most venomous
snake? Can I use these grasses
to make some string?"
Independent Arts participant*





*"I liked the bridge
(boardwalk) at Newtown. I
saw a fish under the bridge
and I saw another down by
the sea."*

*"I liked searching under rocks
for insects at the start of our
walk."*







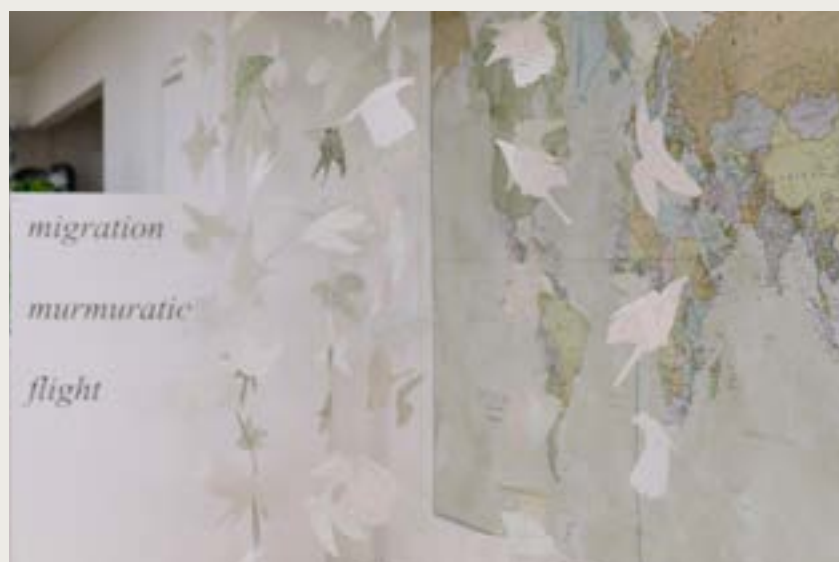
SEE the CREATIONS MADE

“When we feel very close to nature, we recognise ourselves as part of the natural world, and value our relationship with it. We notice nature, seek it out, and feel happy when we are in it.”

Dr Carly Butler, Nature Connectedness
Research Group (University of Derby).















WITH THANKS To...



Creative Ways Outdoors, Independent Arts, StoneCrabs Theatre, VIVA, Yes! Creative Beats, IW Equals, The National Trust, Gina Dyers Arts, Alison Knapman, Cathy Ody, Teresa Grimaldi, Noah Johnson, Rebecca Tremain, Katy Suggitt, Ventnor Botanic Garden, Dimbola, IOW Rare Breeds, Faringford, Boojum & Snark, Kathy Grogan Wilder Learning, Maria Bell, Sam Lapham.

Funded by Isle of Wight National Landscape.



