

## YOUR VIEWS & Letters

# Seaton labyrinth - classless and ageless for all to enjoy

ON BEHALF of The Spiral Centre, based in Axmouth, I would like to thank everyone who came to the opening ceremony of the Seaton Millennium labyrinth last Sunday and everyone who has been involved in any way in supporting the project.

Because of the showery weather some may not yet have had the chance to walk the labyrinth but it is now open for all to use at any time. We have already noticed that children particularly seem to enjoy it but it is an ageless, classless, inter-faith and no faith sculpture, for all to enjoy. The Spiral Centre will be maintaining the labyrinth to as high a standard as we can.

Although the design is based on the labyrinths at Chartres Cathedral in France and the more ancient one at Saffron Walden in Essex, our labyrinth is unique - particularly with its connection to the rocks of the World Heritage Coast. There are seven different types of rock - from the oldest Triassic Buddleigh Pebbles near the middle to the youngest Cretaceous chert in the outside ring. In Seaton one can now "walk through time" - 185 million years of it, all within a 60 foot diameter spiral. The walk has been measured as 453 yards long from entrance to centre and twice that if you follow the same route out again. There is only one route and there are no dead ends. You cannot get lost if you just follow the grass pathway.

The project is not quite finished in that we hope to lay two blocks of Beer stone to mark the entrance and we have funding to erect a high standard interpretation board explaining how the World Heritage Coast and the labyrinth can be understood in terms of geological and human evolution. The present explanation board is only temporary until the professional one is made, probably in a few months time.

There are many who we would like to thank for their support for the Seaton labyrinth; financial, design, construction or otherwise. In no particular order they are: Seaton Town Council, The Conservation Foundation, East Devon District Council, Michael Fairfax (sculptor), Seaton Millennium Committee, Jane Sunderland (designer), Caroline Hoare (dowsers), all who attended the St Clare's course on labyrinths, Joy White and crew (photographers), Bradley Dare (cabinet maker), Tony Benger Landscaping (particularly Tony himself and Jeff Hazell), Seaton Phoenix, Charlie Zeaman (geometry in Nature), Showcase magazine, Manataka Tipis (opening ceremony), Devon County Council, the Devon and Dorset County Councils' World Heritage team,

Community Service people (labour and service), Charmouth Fossils Ltd, Stone Firms Ltd (centre stone), the Right Reverend Michael Langrish - Bishop of Exeter, various quarries along the coast, The British Geological Survey, local people who laid stones (I wonder who put the blue marble in ?), Rosemary Partridge-Hogbin, Jim Knight, Alan Bibby (distance measurer), Barbara Deardon-Potter, Steve and Dawn Potter, David Bellamy, David Shreeve, Chris Pamplin, Lesley Garlick, Sam Rose and most importantly our main funders - The Local Heritage Initiative which is a national grant scheme that helps local groups to investigate, explain and care for their local landscape, landmarks, traditions and culture. The Heritage Lottery fund provides the grant but the scheme is a partnership administered by The Countryside Agency with additional funding from the Nationwide Building Society.

Thank you too to all the people who have contributed in unknown ways, all who have provided advice and all who have walked the labyrinth for the first blessing or under the beautiful July full moon, in groups or on their own. I am hoping that many will benefit from it and enjoy it and that it makes a contribution to togetherness in Seaton and beyond. Being a metaphor for life's journey, it is encouraging that arrival at the "quiet centre" is assured if we persevere with our explorations. We intend to hold an exhibition of labyrinth documents and photographs later in the year and I am hoping that many creative projects will arise from this environmental sculpture. I would be most interested to receive accounts of people's experiences with the Seaton labyrinth or news of creative work arising from it.

*David Kelf*

## Beer housing

HAVING been a regular visitor to Beer over the years, I was amazed to read the comments re the steps being too steep at their affordable housing site.

They should be grateful for having any affordable housing at all as many rural places larger than Beer don't have any.

However, the council should consider good evergreen landscaping this autumn as it certainly is a 'blot on the landscape'.

The hills with the sheep on them around the village used to make it so special. The houses certainly 'glare' at you.

*Mrs Winstone,  
Romsey,  
Hampshire.*