



COUNTRYFILE MAGAZINE AWARDS 2012

the winners

Welcome to the second annual *Countryfile Magazine Awards* – it's prize-giving day.

We launched the awards back in April with 12 categories rather than the 10 we included in 2011. Each category celebrates an aspect of our countryside – from great landscapes and rural attractions to favourite country writers, conservation projects and even regional foods! As last year, we asked *Countryfile Magazine* friends and experts to draw up a shortlist of candidates. Then it was up to you, the readers, to vote for your favourites from those lists. Once again, you responded brilliantly and we'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who took part – these awards mean a great deal to the winners,

So, as all the thousands of votes have now been counted, let us announce the winners of the 2012 *Countryfile Magazine Awards*...





Most beautiful garden

*Great Dixter,
East Sussex*

Great country gardens offer another perspective on our landscapes and we asked *Gardens Illustrated* magazine editor Juliet Roberts to compile a shortlist. Great Dixter is celebrated for its flamboyant successional planting, ably maintained by Head Gardener Fergus Garrett.

- 2nd place – Mapperton, Dorset
- 3rd place – Audley End Kitchen Garden, Essex



Favourite nature reserve

*London Wetland
Centre (WWT)*

You chose this astonishing wildlife haven in the heart of the capital from a shortlist drawn up by naturalists Stephen Moss and Dominic Couzens. Superb viewing hides and a great family-focussed visitor centre make for thrilling nature-watching.

- 2nd place – Attenborough Nature Reserve, Nottinghamshire
- 3rd place – Farne Islands (National Trust), Northumberland



Favourite British holiday location

Cornwall

No great surprise here in this new category for 2012. From a list of 10 popular locations suggested by *Lonely Planet Traveller Magazine*, the land of magical coves, enchanting fishing villages, sandy beaches and many myths and legends came out on top. And, as our feature in March revealed, you can always find lovely, unspoiled corners away from the holiday crowds in Cornwall.

- 2nd place – The Peak District
- 3rd place – The Lake District



Best heritage attraction

Clovelly, Devon

Another fiercely contested category. Historian and *Countryfile* presenter Jules Hudson created the shortlist and this privately owned, but fully functioning, Devon fishing village took the honours. Cars are banned on the steep lanes and result is a charming, timeless scene of cottages and fishing boats hauled on to the shingle in light that artists dream about.

- 2nd place – Chatham Dockyard, Kent
- 3rd place – Beamish Open Air Museum, County Durham



Best conservation Project

*Great Crane Project,
Somerset Levels*

Bringing a large, emblematic bird back to the wild takes a great deal of courage and commitment – and can only be undertaken in partnership between big organisations. So hats off to the RSPB, WWT, Pensthorpe Conservation Trust and Viridor Credits who comprise the Great Crane Project (represented here by Damon Bridge).

- 2nd place – British Seahorse Survey
- 3rd place – Hen Harrier Conservation



Favourite country writer

Neil Oliver

A History of Ancient Britain

From our shortlist of top reviewed books in 2011, you voted for Neil Oliver's insightful exploration into the lives of ancient peoples, from the last Ice Age 12,000 years ago to the departure of the Romans in the fifth century AD. A great introduction to the subject – and encouragement to get out and see some of the key sites.

- 2nd place – Stephen Moss (*Wild Hares and Hummingbirds*)
- 3rd place – Jules Pretty (*This Luminous Coast*)



Favourite outdoor brand

The North Face

Compiled by outdoor kit reviewer John Manning, the favourite outdoor brand was the closest-fought of all the categories. Of the winner, John says "The North Face really is an 'every person' brand. Whether you're a world-class mountaineer or someone who enjoys a good Sunday stroll in the countryside, it offers well-designed and reliable gear."

- 2nd place – Regatta
- 3rd place – Berghaus



Favourite market town

Louth, Lincolnshire

There was stiff competition among the towns in this shortlist drawn up by writer (and former award winner) Candida Lycett Green and *Coast* presenter Nicholas Crane. Louth in Lincolnshire is a deserved winner. It has a thriving street market, livestock market and Georgian shopping streets lined with independent stores. Mayor of Louth Jill Makinson-Sanders (left) and Town Clerk, Linda Blankley accepted the award.

- 2nd place – Ludlow, Herefordshire
- 3rd place – Richmond, Yorkshire



Britain's favourite quirky event

*World Pooh Sticks
Championships*

Britain would be a poorer place without eccentric country pursuits. From a line-up including pie throwing and snail racing, you chose the classic game invented by Pooh Bear. The championships, organised by the Rotary Club of Oxford Spire, are played at Dorchester on the Thames.

- 2nd place – Worm Charming Festival
- 3rd place – Northern Ireland Bog Snorkelling Championship

Photos: Alamy, Rex Features, Sean Malynn, The North Face



Favourite countryside TV presenter

Matt Baker

We asked *The Radio Times* to provide a list of the top countryside TV presenters from all the channels. Perhaps unsurprisingly, *Countryfile* presenters filled the top places with Matt Baker (commenting on the Olympic gymnastics this year) storming to first place in our reader poll.

- 2nd place – Adam Henson
- 3rd place – John Craven



Favourite regional dish

Devon Cream tea

In a celebration of regional food chosen by TV chef and food adventurer Valentine Warner, you chose Devon cream tea – scones, jam, cream and a nice cuppa – as the perfect regional dish. Just a shame it hasn't been a classic cream-tea summer.

- 2nd place – Cornish pasty
- 3rd place – West Country cider



Reader photo of the year

Simon Auchterlonie

Coastal scene with lighthouse

Countryfile Magazine is lucky enough to receive thousands of reader pictures through the post and our website. We asked professional photographer Neil Ansell to whittle them down to a shortlist of 10, and this atmospheric shot by Simon Auchterlonie from South Shields on Tyneside was the overall winner.

- 2nd place – Heron at falls by Patrick Tully
- 3rd place – Lighthouse with wave by Raymond Hutcheon