

JON BARRETT



I was alerted to the sudden and sad news of Jon Barrett's death on the day of his funeral in Brittany. Since 2006, this has been the home of Jon and Louise's eco-restoration project at Goastelliou. IOL members (Institute of Outdoor Learning) may well have known Jon more for his work with young people at risk and in trouble in the 1980s and 1990s at Basecamp.

I first met Jon in the 1980s through the Basecamp Trust which he and his wife Louise set up in the heart of Mabie Forest, Dumfriesshire. Jon wanted to do more than provide direct services for troubled young people. Through Basecamp Jon joined forces with NAOE (forerunner to IOL) to organise a national conference on *Adventure-Based Interventions in 1994*. This event attracted over 100 delegates growing to over 150 for the packed out study weekend on *Enabling Troubled Youth*. This national event attracted people from Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the USA and resulted in a comprehensive 200 page report. The whole event was a significant milestone for many and a considerable contribution to the field, inspiring the first International Adventure Therapy Conference in Australia three years later.

I worked closely with Jon when we co-authored a research review for the Foundation for Outdoor Adventure. The fruits of our work together were published as: "*Why Adventure? The Role and Value of Outdoor Adventure in Young People's Personal and Social Development*" (1995). This was before the world of web publishing and search engines, so tracking down relevant research involved a lot of detective work by letter and by phone. Many people we contacted were surprised to learn that their dust-gathering research projects were of interest to a wider community. '*Why Adventure?*' was well-received and has been in continual demand ever since, despite the huge increase in research activity in this field since 1995.

When Jon's career took a change of direction, it was a great loss to adventure education. But it was also a significant gain for sustainability. Jon turned his passion and skills to furniture restoration and then scaled up into making eco-conversions of old buildings, first in Scotland, then in France. Jon became increasingly immersed and engaged with sustainability at all levels. While restoring a derelict farm in Brittany, he was also writing a novel about sustainability and, on a good day, might be enjoying a shower with water warmed by leaving a hosespipe snaked out in the sun.

Jon's example, energy and commitment to sustainability has already influenced many people. That influence is bound to increase with the publication of his latest multi-authored book '*Sustainability for Real*'.

Jon had almost brought this project to completion before he died. He has brought together a wide range of current authors in the fields of sustainability and experiential learning (including some IOL members). Jon had spotted the many crossovers between the two fields to which he had given so much of his life. The publisher is already committed and the final editing will now be in the very capable hands of Jon's son Tristram who is well qualified to complete '*Sustainability for Real*'.

I was honoured to have had the opportunity of working closely with Jon on '*Why Adventure?*' He set an ambitious pace. Once committed to a cause he would always give his best and see it through. I am now looking forward to the completion of Jon's latest gift to the world. I only wish that he was still around to celebrate that important moment with his family and friends.

Words by Roger Greenaway, published in Horizons IOL magazine in 2013.

Pictures from Tristram Barrett <tristram.barrett@cantab.net> and <http://goastelliou.wordpress.com>

