

# Isle of Wight Society Newsletter

May 2016

Issue No. 119

## *The Bandstand, Sandown takes the top Conservation Award*



The Isle of Wight Society Awards together with Awards made by RIBA(IW) were presented at a ceremony at the Royal Yacht Squadron, Cowes on 20th May.

### **The winner of the 2016 IWS Conservation Award is The Bandstand, Sandown Esplanade**

The owners, Mr and Mrs Paul Rowling, bought the old bandstand which was in a state of dereliction and have completely renovated it themselves, helped by local craftsmen. The articulate design, by Colman Cotter, RIBA, of Modh Design, is pure and simple. The building enhances the street scene and now provides excellent dining and café facilities with 360 degree views. Great attention has been paid to detail and this building is an excellent example of renovation that we hope will inspire others to undertake similar projects in the Sandown area.

As well as the Conservation Award, four entries were awarded a Certificate of Merit, and a further two presented with a Small Project Award and a Landscape Award. RIBA (IW) made a New Build Award and two Highly Commended Awards.

### **Certificates of Merit were awarded to:**

#### **All Saints Church, Ryde**

The PCC asked **Geoff Banks Ltd (IW)** to create a double dais in front of the Chancel. This is used during services and instead of temporary staging for performances. This clever adaption to the listed building enhances the church facilities with an excellent use of material. Tiles and stone have been sourced both in this country and France to obtain an excellent match with the existing materials. The extended dais now provides permanent performance staging for the numerous concerts held in the church and effortlessly blends into the fabric providing a natural transition from nave to chancel. The

subtlety of the design is exemplified on entry through the west door as the eye is led towards the chancel and reredos. Jill Banks was the project manager and the whole team of craftsmen are complimented on their efforts. We feel that the renowned Victorian architect, Gilbert Scott would have approved, which is praise indeed.



---

### **Pondcast Farm, Havenstreet**

The owners, Mr and Mrs Dave Goodey, asked architect Henry Murray Smith, RIBA, to plan how they should extend and restore this old farm. Using the footprint of an old barn, the farmyard complex has been reinstated and the old building flows seamlessly into the new via a glass fronted corridor. Much excellent conservation work has been carried out on the house, from completely re-roofing and sourcing tiles to match, to the walls, where the Tudor bricks on the original house were each turned to present their un-weathered side to the front. The existing old farm buildings have also received sympathetic restoration and there has been great attention to detail and recycling of materials.



---

### **The Ark, Embankment Road, Bembridge**

The owner, Mr Andreae, bought a set of derelict cottages and workshops that had for long been an unsightly eyesore on the Bembridge embankment. Michael Cartwright of MG Architects Ltd has created a building that houses three work units beneath three apartments. The development enhances the local character of the area, taking features from the yacht club and stores on the opposite side of the road and giving an excellent low impact on the harbour scene. Bricks from the old building were saved and cleaned to be used again in the building of the ground floor, with recessed mortar giving attractive detail to the brickwork. The building is a great visual success.



---

### **Nos. 1-9 St Nicholas Place, Newport**

The owners, Barnes Edwards Properties, bought an Edwardian house on the edge of the Conservation Area that had been very poorly extended to provide offices for Southern Water, and latterly the IW Fireservice. They retained the coach house to the rear, turning that into a bungalow. In place of the conglomeration of buildings on the roadside, architects Clutterbuck Edwards created four pairs of three storey semi-detached properties. The new houses carefully pick up details from adjoining houses in the road, such as the brick colour, sash windows, corbels made to match the eaves treatment, and glass entrance porches. The scale and massing of the building, and the careful treatment of the exposed rear of the building, make this development an asset to the street scene.



---

### **The small project award – The Sybil Bodycomb Award.**

**This is presented to a small gem of a restoration that is eclipsed in scale by the other nominations, and was awarded to:**

### **The Boathouse, West Bramble, Cowes**

This Victorian boathouse was disintegrating, but has now been sympathetically restored by the owner, keeping the original fittings throughout. It has been adapted for modern life, but has retained and restored all the boat shed features, saving an important part of the Cowes Victorian heritage. The builders and carpenters were Bill Brand, Jamie Brand and Dave Tasker.



---

**The Jo Mitchell Landscaping award is presented for landscaping associated with one of the nominations, and this was awarded to:**

**The Dairy and Studio, 196 Carisbrooke Road, Newport.**

Owners David and Luisa Kilpack converted a very old cowshed to a modern home with great verve and attention to detail, retaining the external appearance where possible and enhancing this prominent site beside the road. A stone built studio in the garden has been built in keeping with the original shed. Extra land has been bought and many new trees planted to complement their protected woodland by the stream. The nominator was John Langley, the CPRE Chairman at the time.



---

**We wish to congratulate all the other entries on their considerable efforts, but unfortunately we can only award a certain number of certificates. The other entries were:**

**The Stables, Quarr**

Excellent work has been carried out to renovate the Victorian stabling and carriage house to create a much needed Visitor Centre and shop. The careful conversion by Stoneham Construction for the Quarr Abbey community included a completely new roof structure with Welsh slate, new windows and doors to replace the originals and new granite sets in the courtyard, which look as if they have always been there.



---

### **The Dolls House, 6 Wood Street Ryde.**

The owners, Mr & Mrs Michael Riley, saw the potential in a run down 1830s house in the Ryde Conservation Area. They renovated the frontage to produce a more harmonious whole and the discovery and restoration of the stone built rear façade has greatly improved this old much extended house. This is a prime example of the consideration and effort needed to bring a typical Victorian house into modern living standards without compromising the integrity of the original and Mr & Mrs Riley are to be congratulated.



---

### **Upper Bath Road retaining wall, Ventnor**

Island Roads and the Isle of Wight Council found that this wall was suffering badly from cracks and degradation, and was also unsafe due to its low height. Melbury stone was sourced from the mainland to match the existing Island stone and an excellent restoration job was carried out, using lime mortar. It now presents an attractive safe feature beside the road.



### **The Old Dairy, Salterns Road, Seaview**

Colman Cotter for Rainey Petrie was called in by the owner Mr Henderson to plan a replacement for an old dairy cottage that had to be demolished as it was impossible to restore or extend it. The new cottage tries to be a good neighbour, picking up the local red brick work, and has numerous ecofeatures and flood defences



---

## **RIBA (IW) AWARDS**

The Royal Institute of British Architects is one of the most influential architectural institutions in the world, and has been promoting architecture and architects since being awarded its Royal Charter in 1837. The 30,000-strong professional institute is committed to serving the public interest through good design, to advance architecture by demonstrating benefit to society and promoting excellence in the profession.

The RIBA Isle of Wight Architecture Awards are an important way in which architecture of the highest quality can be recognised and design excellence acknowledged. This is the ninth year that RIBA(IW) have joined with the Isle of Wight Society in presenting their awards. The judges awarded the winning scheme to Woodlands, Freshwater with two commendations made to Pondcast Farm in Havenstreet and The Bandstand in Sandown.

### **RIBA Winner**

Woodlands is an extraordinary new home tucked way close to The Causeway across the river Yar in Freshwater. The building of extreme simplicity and clarity comprising two crisp boxes, one clad in a deep rich timber accommodating the bedroom and the other a long pale volume that houses the living areas. Rusted steel decks and landscape arbours connect the building to an exquisitely designed landscape of equal simplicity which creates a transcendent setting for this elegant home. To achieve such refined minimalism requires a special attention to detail and lancet windows dramatically frame the surrounding landscape and receive mirrored shutters which achieve a beautiful play of light to the interior. Woodlands demonstrates how the highest standards of design have been employed to create a masterpiece of architecture and landscape in this sublime home.

Sharon Grock & Barry Litschultz commissioned this New Build replacement at The Causeway, Freshwater. The Architect was Chris Medland, RIBA, of One World Design, and the work was carried out by the Builders, Stoneham Construction.



### **RIBA Commendation**

Pondcast Farm in Havenstreet comprises the refurbishment of a fine existing farmhouse and the re-use of existing agricultural buildings. The quality of the conservation work is exceptional and great care has been taken to retain the character of the existing buildings whilst introducing contemporary architectural elements. This is most notable at the junction between the two main buildings where a delicate glazed link has been made that in practical terms connects the existing house to the new kitchen area whilst maintaining the identity of each. The buildings unite around a courtyard which evokes the previous farmstead and takes the form of a beautifully grassed and paved square which is at the heart of the composition. The scheme has been a labour of love for the owners and both the architect's concept for the regeneration of these fine buildings along with the exceptional craftsmanship of the construction work show what can be achieved when beautiful architectural ideas and a love for historic buildings are united.

This Renovation & Extension at Havenstreet was commissioned by the owners, Mr & Mrs Goodey. Builders IMP House carried out the work to the designs of Henry Murray-Smith, RIBA, of HMS Architects.

See picture earlier.

### **RIBA Commendation**

The RIBA judges commended The Bandstand in Sandown which has brought new life to the derelict bandstand with a new restaurant and café. Great care has been taken to retain the architectural qualities of what was once a focal building along the seafront. The architect has introduced a new steel structure which allows the roof to float above a panorama of glass which affords wonderful seaward views. The judges saw the courage and vision of the owners in seeking to bring not only a new and vital use to the building but also the potential impact of this exceptional design in regenerating the surrounding area. It is only hoped that this vision will permeate along this area of the promenade. Architecture might here be seen as a catalyst and the judges felt that this exceptional design augured well for the future of the surrounding environment.

This Renovation at Culver Parade, Sandown, was designed by the architect, Colman Cotter, RIBA, of MODH Design, for the owner, Paul Rowling, who carried out the renovation.

The Bandstand is featured on page 1 and below is an image from the 1930s.



---

RIBA judges also looked at the following New Builds and works to existing buildings and visited separately from the IWS judges:

Skyfall. A New Build at Steephill Road, Ventnor, for Mr & Mrs R Wood. The Architects, were Clutterbuck-Edwards and the builders, DN Associates.



---

Seagrove House. A Contemporary renovation in Seagrove Farm Road, Seaview. The Architects were Mattinson Associates Ltd. for the owners, Mr & Mrs Smith, and the builders, G.W.Mattinson Construction Ltd



---

Hill Place is a New Build at Hill Place Lane, Thorley. Architect: HMS Architects for Mr & Mrs Davies. Builders: JR Bucket & Sons.





Ranleigh: A Modernisation of a block built bungalow. Seagrove Manor Road, Seaview. Architect: Mattinson Associates Ltd, for Mrs Hounsfield. Builder: Jon Brown Ltd.



---

10 Beatrice Avenue: A Replacment of a 1910 bungalow in Beatrice Avenue, Shanklin. Architect: Wight Architecture for Dr. & Dr. Turk. Builders: Round the Island Builders.



---

Crumwell. A Renovation at Church Place, Freshwater. Architect: Rainie Petrie. for: Mr & Mrs Evans. Builders: WH Brading & Son.



---

RIBA judges also looked at the following entries which were visited by the Isle of Wight Society.

The Old Dairy. Salterns Road, Seaview.

St Nicholas Place. New Build & Renovation. St. Johns Road, Newport. and

The Ark. Embankment Road, Bembridge.

---

# **The need for the Royal Naval College Osborne in** **1903**

*from David Burdett*

The Isle of Wight has a rich military history. Part of this is the training of nearly four thousand Royal Navy Officer Cadets. Originally boys as young as ten would be put into the care of a ship's captain to be taught the trade and skills of seafaring and the art of fighting using a ship. In the 1700s the Navy set up a shore establishment in Portsmouth, the Academy, for the training of youngsters. However Portsmouth was both a naval port and a military barracks with its associated social life. The city was also crowded and unhealthy. In the early 1800s the Academy ceased training youngsters and became a college for the further training of commissioned officers.

Once again the boys went to sea for their initial instruction in wooden ships powered by wind and human muscle power. However the early 1800s saw the start of the Industrial Revolution. The Royal Navy experimented with steam power on board their ships, initially as auxiliary engines to do the donkey work of hoisting anchors and handling sails. Later they used steam propulsion as a secondary means of movement. They lagged behind the commercial use of steam so they employed civilians to run the machinery. As the steam engines became more numerous and powerful, seamen became stokers, and petty officers operated the machinery. Between 1849 and 1859 the number of steam powered vessels in the fleet increased from 151 to 218.

The discussion on the merits of training officer cadets ashore or afloat continued. In 1857 HMS *Illustrious* was anchored in Portsmouth harbour as a training vessel. Two years later she was replaced by the larger HMS *Britannia*. In 1863 she was moved, first to Portland then to the River Dart. In 1875 the Admiralty again discussed establishing a shore establishment to replace *Britannia*. 32 possible sites were surveyed. Finally the choice was made between Mount Boone Farm on the banks of the Dart and a site at Fishbourne on the Isle of Wight. Mount Boone was chosen but nothing happened. It was not until 1896 that the Admiralty decided to proceed with the purchase of Mount Boone Farm and the erection of a large brick-built college to meet the training requirements of a traditional curriculum. Progress was still slow. The farm was purchased in 1898 but it was not until 1900 that the contract was awarded to construct the college. King Edward VII laid the foundation stone in in 1902.

During the later part of the 1800s, the Royal Navy's ships had changed out of all recognition. In 1881 Captain John Fisher was in command of HMS *Inflexible*. She had an iron hull 24 inches thick, powered by 8,400 horsepower engines that gave her a speed of 14.75 knots. She was armed with four 16-inch guns weighing 80 tons, each muzzle loaded by hydraulic machinery, and two bow-mounted torpedo tubes. She was equipped with electric light and was fitted with separate water tanks to improve her stability. She reflected the latest technology but was also fitted with the traditional masts and sails! The engineer officers were not regarded as being equal in rank to the other officers and had to eat in a separate mess.

In 1900 Lord Selbourne, the civilian First Lord at the Admiralty, set about developing a revolutionary new training scheme for the whole navy, to ensure that the men could make the ships the Admiralty provided into the most efficient navy in the world. He appointed Admiral John "Jacky" Fisher as Second Sea Lord in charge of naval personnel and gave him the job of implementing the new training regime.

In 1902 King Edward VII gave the Osborne Estate to the nation. The House, apart from the royal apartments, was converted into a convalescent home. Admiral Fisher was anxious to implement the Selbourne Scheme as rapidly as possible. It was decided to anchor a ship in Osborne Bay or off Cowes and use the Osborne Estate for sport and recreation and build an engineering workshop on land at Kingston Farm, owned by the crown, on the banks of the Medina. It was decided that this scheme was not practical. The final decision was to use

the Stable Block at Osborne as the core of a temporary shore establishment until the Britannia college was due to be finished in 1905.

In March 1903 the government approved £40,000 funding for the conversion of the Stable Block. To achieve the rapid result that Fisher demanded, dormitories were built of a thin American material called Uralite covering timber framed structures. The stables within the original building were converted into classrooms, and the carriage house became the dining hall. Accommodation for the officers was built overlooking the playing fields. A large gymnasium was constructed to the south of the Stable Block. The first cadets joined the College in September 1903. Even as they joined, decisions affecting the college were still being taken. It was realised that when the Britannia college was completed it would not be able to educate enough cadets to get officers trained under the new regime out into the fleet as rapidly as needed for the new Dreadnought battleships. When the plans for Britannia were drawn up, it was to continue the traditional training. No engineering workshops were included. The decision to make the Royal Naval College Osborne a long-term part of the training establishment was taken. From that time all the new buildings apart from the additional dormitories would be permanent brick structures.

From 1903 all youngsters wanting to make the Royal Navy their career had to spend two years at Osborne. It was the gateway to the Navy and the starting point for the greatest change in training that had been undertaken in the Royal Navy. It was the first naval college to teach basic educational subjects, seamanship, navigation and practical engineering to all officers regardless of which Branch of the Navy they would specialise in after being commissioned. It was another World First for the Island.

Admiral Fisher was determined to make this revolution a success and ensured that some of the best academic teachers were employed. A naval Captain was in overall charge with a headmaster leading the academic team. Each term of cadets had a naval officer assigned to them and engineer lieutenants ran the workshops with Petty Officers carrying out the training in both carpentry and metalwork. A training ship HMS Racer was moored off the workshops for practical engineering. The cadets were taken to sea on training cruisers based at Portsmouth, shown around the John Samuel White shipyards in East Cowes and introduced to the Portsmouth naval dockyard. The cadets joined at the age of twelve to thirteen and attended six terms over two years before moving to Britannia at Dartmouth.

In an attempt to keep life at the college as close to Service life as possible all the naval staff and cadets lived within the college grounds for the whole term. There was the daily march during weekdays from the Stable Block down Cadets Walk across the fields to the workshops and for activities on the river. The only real escapes from the college were sporting activities such as cross-country running and away football, rugby and cricket matches. The daily routine was laid out so that the cadets activities were roughly divided into three – academic education, practical engineering and physical recreation, all the main aspects of the Selbourne scheme. The training paid no regard to social status. Prince Edward, Prince Albert, Prince George and Prince Louis, two future kings and an Admiral of the Fleet, underwent the same initial training at East Cowes as three thousand nine hundred and sixty three other cadets. By WWII many of these were in senior positions in the Royal Navy ensuring that we were not defeated.

This story is just another example of why residents of the Isle of Wight should be proud of our rich history.

---

## A few words from the your Chairperson, Helena Hewston

The weather blows hot and cold and so do the fortunes of each of us and groups to which we belong. On the one side the Society is busy with events and on the other it is watching the changes to the Island.

Having architects on the committee is a real help when building alterations are discussed so pertinent points can be brought to the attention of the Island Council's Planning Department. It is uplifting to see historic buildings and places being cared for and sad to see

them in decline, earmarked for demolition. Anyone of over 60 years has memories of a 1950's Britain and how acceptable it was to be in run-down, damaged and deprived areas. There was the positive side that coloured it all, that things were changing and changing for the better. Now there are pockets of buildings and places where change is needed but is a long time coming. Decay seems to take forever and is not a pretty sight.

The Society will metamorphose. There is a need to update and revive. The web site is one area. I am not sure what developments will result from the new look but staying muddling along and making do will bring decline. We will also do a reshuffle of tasks as John Barnes, our treasurer, needs to make changes to his many commitments. He will be greatly missed. His knowledge and skills in keeping us legal and solvent are invaluable. I will miss his cheerful patience. We all wish him well.

Who would have thought even ten years ago that there was a point in making a fuss over whether one could look up and see stars at night? Now there are Dark Skies policies for County Councils. The Island is joining in supporting this initiative. Like the coverage of the AONB there is a good spread of Dark Sky area, but it could be more. Being over 60 is not a bar to appreciating and helping to achieve this.

After the AGM and the Conservation and Design Awards there is the subject of Island Devolution of Services to consider. Changes in the way planning is done and achieved brings along new understanding and worries. As you know it's not just planning, it's how we want and expect to live and what we want for others. Do come to our Public Meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> June in Newport to join with other thinkers on this subject.

As a final few words I wonder if there is any correlation between the time it takes for something to decline and the time it takes to notice a change for the better.

Best wishes for you all in the changes you instigate or experience.

---

## **A Gateway to the Island?**

A little while ago, Paul Martin, one of our members from Ryde had a letter published in the County Press outlining his thoughts on a ferry terminal and subsequent traffic. Paul has aired his ideas before, and they can be consolidated as follows:

There is much disruption at both East Cowes and Fishbourne due to ferry traffic, causing a headache to both residents and those who work in the vicinity. His solution is to build a new terminal on each side of the Solent to cater for both Wightlink and Red Funnel. The Island terminal would be between Kings Quay and Wootton, and a new road from the ferry terminal would be built to join up with the roundabout near the crematorium, and have minimal effect on residents.

This would allow both holiday and commercial traffic to proceed to their destinations with ease.

Paul sent letters to this effect to both Wightlink and Red Funnel and to Andrew Turner MP.

Wightlink replied that although this suggestion may be welcomed by some people, they cannot see it happening in the near future. Both companies have spent a great deal of money developing their own shoreline facilities to suit their own businesses. Wightlink are presently investing £45 million in port works at Fishbourne and Portsmouth. Red Funnel have plans for East Cowes. They cannot believe that at present, either company would welcome sharing a facility.

If we were all starting from scratch, it may make sense to build one port for all companies, but Wightlink believe that major construction works in areas of great beauty would be unpopular with the majority of local people.

Andrew Turner replied that he was concerned about the high costs and connectivity difficulties which many experience when using the ferries, and that he believed that the economic impact of the Island's dependence on the ferry companies impacts on Islanders and

their families, and restricts the tourist market. He feels that we must take great care to preserve the unique environment and way of life on the Isle of Wight. There are also dangers regarding any fixed link, and many questions still need to be answered before there could be any progress.

Andrew Turner states that he has long campaigned for a detailed independent appraisal of the Island's transport infrastructure and services with a particular, but not exclusive examination of the ferry services.

Then there is the future of the Island Line!

---

## **Red Funnel redevelopment plans in East Cowes, Spring 2016**

*From Sarah Burdett, Chairman, East Cowes Group*

The East Cowes Group of the Isle of Wight Society had been closely monitoring the Red Funnel plans and had been involved in consultation with Red Funnel and statutory bodies since 2014, chairing a public meeting in Autumn of 2015 when local businesses were able to explain their case.

The Isle of Wight Society objected to the plans as they felt that the opportunity was being lost for riverside access by the public, the marine industry would lose a deep water berth, and insufficient attention had been paid to the traffic arrangements. When the planning application was brought before the IWC Planning Committee, Sarah Burdett was given one minute 40 seconds to speak, so along with one of the residents of Dover Road we gave our time to Martha James, Planning Consultant, who then had 5 minutes to put our case, which she did excellently. Glen Hepburn spoke for the Town Council, a few key points against the plan such as traffic management, and then Kevin George CEO of RF spoke. Our local Councillor then spoke with feeling about the loss of highly skilled jobs that would ensue if this development was given the go-ahead. Council Officers then gave a presentation in favour of the application to vastly extend the Red Funnel marshalling yard and demolish several houses and businesses.

Prior to the meeting, when we collected at County Hall, East Cowes people had been downhearted – several had not come because they thought it was bound to be approved. Red Funnel personnel were bright and breezy and expecting success. Gradually up in the gallery, body language changed as Councillor after Councillor asked questions, and then made comments that suggested they were going to refuse the application on the loss of jobs and industry, which they did, having asked the Officers to work out an rejection based on SP3 and DM8, both relating to industry and marine industry by deep water. We were amazed, so it is now back to the drawing board. Will Red Funnel appeal?

Discussions have been asked for with Cllr Ian Stevens and CEO Red Funnel, whom a representative will be meeting before this Newsletter goes to print. We feel that David Burdett's plans for town out skirts marshalling, then sending down a ferry load at a time when the previous ferry has left, is the answer to the requirement for a larger marshalling area. Traffic separation and interchange needs consideration. Homes and Communities Agency have given Red Funnel first option on the land that is required for marshalling, but they can still eject the marine businesses at the end of their short term leases. Will they have to keep the industry there now?

The Isle of Wight Society Executive contributed towards the cost of Martha James, planning consultant, which I feel was money well spent. It is the first success at Planning that we have had for a long time.

What ideas are there now for East Cowes? Some East Cowes Town Councillors are annoyed at the refusal, but this would not have been regeneration, just demolition for marshalling. There is nothing in the outline plans that would have been definite for East Cowes – just hoped for. If housing was the most profitable then that is all we would have got on Trinity Wharf. The recent IWS East Cowes group meeting agreed that hybrid plans such as this recent Red Funnel plan, with some detailed uses and other parts only in outline, make

it very difficult to reach a firm conclusion on the way forward and the eventual outcome of a plan.

---

## **Where are the decisions made?**

*from David Burdett*

We all like to feel that our way of life is in our own hands. In the earliest days land owners who charged us rent were the people who decided how we lived. Governments decided how much to tax the land owners. Parish priests levied tithes so that they could take care of the poor. As communities developed the layers of bureaucracy increased. In the mid 1800s communities were allowed to set up Boards of Health. Local residents offered their services to sit on the Board. These undertook to improve services such as water supply and drainage. Then came the public maintenance of the highway. Taking on these responsibilities required increased local taxes.

In 1895 the Island gained the status of a County in its own right, bringing wider decision making to the Island community. At the same time central government replaced the Boards of Health with compulsory Urban and Rural District Councils. Residents stood for election to the local council. The areas covered by these Councils was comparatively small so most people knew each other and the councils made decisions to meet local needs.

In the 1930s central government decided to reduce the number of local councils by making them cover larger areas. The councillors came from the areas of largest population so those areas with a small population did not have representation in the decision making. In 1974 the Island's district councils were abolished and replaced by two Borough councils, Medina and South Wight. This move centralised the decision making powers on local matters to the larger towns. The County Council dealt with such matters as health, highways and education.

Then in 1996 further government legislation led to the Borough councils and County Council being replaced by an Isle of Wight Unitary Authority. The result of this was that no one area could outvote the others so decision making became more of a party political matter. The legislation that brought about the Unitary authority expected parish and town councils to be reformed but it was not until 2010 that this became mandatory for the local communities. However these councils had no money for projects so had to start charging a local precept if they decided to do anything for their residents.

As the County Councils and Unitary Authorities carry out the work of central government in its responsibilities for health, education and highways, the government pays the counties a Rates Support Grant. This was sufficient to allow the counties to spend their local rates income as they saw fit.

In recent years central government has decided that it needs to reduce its expenditure. One of its savings has been in the reduction in the Rate Support Grant, leaving the County and Unitary authorities with some difficult decision to make. Those counties with smaller populations paying rates are finding that there is only enough money to carry out their statutory duties, leaving many community activities unfunded. The Isle of Wight Council is seeking to pass on these tasks, such as the provision of public toilets and the maintenance of public spaces, to the Parish and Town Councils. So the local residents who volunteer to stand for election are being faced with some difficult decisions. It looks as though we are returning to the decision making of the late 1800s.

Will we also return to many decisions affecting the Island being taken in Winchester?

---

# Presentation about Norris Castle plans - 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016

*from Sarah Burdett*

The Isle of Wight Society was asked by Michael de Courcy (of Bell Cornwell ) if they would like to be involved in discussions as to the proposals for Norris Castle. The developers had started by talking to IWC planners who suggested that they asked us and the Isle of Wight Gardens Trust. I mentioned that it might be diplomatic to involve the East Cowes Town Council, which they did, so it was a fairly packed meeting. Five consultants in various fields gave presentations.

Norris Castle and the Farm buildings and walled gardens are Grade 1 listed. The grounds around the castle are grade II Historic Park and Grade II\* over towards Osborne. The whole estate is untouched, and possesses all the original features, making it nationally important.

The Developer wants to create a 5\* hotel/resort and an enabling development. This will be a quality restoration. They have a reasonable track record of previous developments in Grade I Listed buildings. Historic England are monitoring the development plans.

The HOTEL - This will be on a split site. Reception will be in the Baliff's House, with facilities and smaller suites / rooms utilising the old barns and stables. A restaurant facility will probably be in the main central barn – perhaps with full glass in the doorway. Everything necessary will be conserved.

In the Castle itself there will be 16 suites and a fine dining restaurant. The presence of a 5 star hotel will give a boost to East Cowes. It will be an International operator e.g. Four Seasons or Rosewood. B&B could start at £500 a night!

Mention was made of the need for a bowling green in East Cowes – “yes we'll do you one.” Local people can use the facilities of the whole hotel. An enabling development centrally, where old workshops used to be, and now modern barns exist, is envisaged.

The TIME LINE – the developers are hoping to go public with plans in July 2016. They hope planning permission will be through by Christmas and they hope to be on site to start in January 2017. They have a 40% contingency fund on historic work. The whole cost of the development could be £26 million.

The TRAFFIC - They are aware that this will be a problem. At present they are looking at guests arriving via Newbarn Road, and exiting via Millfield Avenue. The various problems associated with this are known and they will be shortly discussing it with local residents from both roads. But their thoughts are that anything is surmountable.

The CONSERVATION - The sea wall will be re-instated/protected to ensure the coast will not work back towards the castle. Ancient woodland will therefore be saved. The walled garden will be reinstated, and the terrace beyond it. The structure, fixtures and fittings of the castle will be preserved. Members feel that, subject to the enabling development being suitable, this plan will conserve Norris Castle for future generations to appreciate.



The Norris Garden gate from inside the garden



The Norris Estate in 1980, farm and kitchen garden complex to the left

## VALEDICTION

*from John Barnes*

As you may be aware, I have been advised to cut down on my commitments, and as such, I retired from the Executive Committee, following the AGM. I have served on the Executive Committee for over 20 years, four of which as Chairman.

I shall also be retiring from the various positions that I seem to have gathered in the Society. These are as follows: Treasurer, Minutes Secretary, Membership Secretary, Newsletter Editor, and member of the Design & Conservation Awards Committee. However as the next Newsletter would be published at the Awards Evening which would be after the AGM, I will continue with the latter two positions until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

If any member feels that he or she could manage one or more of these positions, please let the Chairperson, Helena Hewston, know. Her contact details are: telephone (01983) 555099, email: [sybug@aol.com](mailto:sybug@aol.com)

I wish the Society good fortune in the future, and that it keeps up the good work.

---

## Society Information

Chairman: Helena Hewston,  
3 Sunnyside, Main Road, Newbridge  
Tel: 555099. e-mail: [sybug@aol.com](mailto:sybug@aol.com)

Treasurer: Paul Martin,  
4 Barfield, Ryde, PO33 3JP

Tel: 562389, email: [paulmartin313@btinternet.com](mailto:paulmartin313@btinternet.com)

Executive Committee: Chairman, Treasurer, Colin Arnold (Ryde), David Burdett, Sarah Burdett, Wilf Curtis (East Cowes), Newman Smith (Cowes)

Monthly meetings for members are held at the East Cowes Heritage Centre at 7.30 pm on the fourth Tuesday of each month except August and December, chaired by Mrs Sarah Burdett, Tel: 296718. e-mail: [burdett.sd@gmail.com](mailto:burdett.sd@gmail.com).

The contact address for the Society is:

East Cowes Heritage Centre, 8 Clarence Road, East Cowes, P032 6EP. Tel:(01983) 280310.  
e-mail: [eastcowesheritagecentre@onwight.net](mailto:eastcowesheritagecentre@onwight.net). Web site: [www.isleofwightsociety.org.uk](http://www.isleofwightsociety.org.uk)

---

## Subscriptions

Isle of Wight Society subscriptions became due in January 2016, and should have been paid by March 31st, 2016.

The rates are:

Full Membership	£8.00
Joint Full Membership	£15.00
Senior Membership	£7.00
Joint Senior Membership	£13.00
Corporate Membership	£20.00
Junior Membership	Free

Subscriptions should be paid direct to the Society Treasurer, or by bank transfer to the Society account:

Name: Isle of Wight Society

Bank: Lloyds

Bank Code: 30-95-99

Account No. 00331217

These rates will be maintained for 2017.

---