



Isle of Wight Society Newsletter

April 2019

Issue 125



Island Buildings Restored

The Isle of Wight Society Celebration of Conservation at Quay Arts Centre Newport in November 2018 was well received.

One commentator in the visitors' book wished that the exhibition could be on all the time!

Entries in our Conservation Awards over the last 45 years were divided into various categories, such as good farm building restoration, pure conservation projects, extensions to old buildings, new uses for old buildings, church restoration and new buildings that fitted into the character of an area.

Shown here are the stencils used restoring Whippingham Church plasterwork.

DATE for your DIARY - AGM

Our Isle of Wight Society AGM will take place on Tuesday 14th May 2019.

This will be at Whippingham Church Hall at 4p.m., preceded by a Cream Tea at 3.15p.m.

Following the AGM there will be a talk in the church on "Queen Victoria and Prince Albert's Church" – to celebrate the Bi-centenary of the births of Victoria and Albert.



CONSERVATION AWARDS

IWS Conservation Awards are going to become Biannual. Members RIBA, the Royal Institute of British Architects, on the Isle of Wight, decided to take this step to increase the availability of their new build projects that could be entered.

The Isle of Wight Society has been working with RIBA for several years, so agreed to do the same. So look out for properties around the Island that should be entered for our Awards in 2020.

Northwood Cemetery Chapels won in 2018.



Update on Norris Castle and Springhill

Since last year everything has gone very quiet. The grounds are now upgraded to the highest Listing category. The developers still need to consider their access problem. The adjacent Springhill estate has been considered by them as possible housing and a route through to Norris Castle along the seafront at East Cowes. However, local people fear this will greatly increase traffic to the detriment of the seafront.

The Isle of Wight Society members felt that we should try to inform the public of the value of the Norris Estate, and to this end booked East Cowes Town Hall and held two talks, one in the afternoon and one in the evening at the end of November. Over a hundred people attended, and hopefully went away more fully informed.

In December, Isle of Wight Society members and Isle of Wight Gardens Trust members were invited to look at the many features of architectural and archaeological merit at **Springhill**. It was supposed to be a morning visit, but they were still there when it became too dark to see! There are features on Springhill land that are identical to those which have been listed Grade 1 on Norris.

Since then, Dr Vicky Basford of the IW Gardens Trust has produced a report on Springhill and submitted it to various authorities.



Norris in about 1900.

Dinnis Family archive

This is a copy of our IWS submission to the Isle of Wight Council on 23rd February 2019 following discussions at both the IWS meeting in East Cowes and the IWS Executive Committee.

The Isle of Wight Society wish to make the following comments about the Island Strategy Plan. Members found this draft to be a readable document, for which the council should be congratulated. However, picking out the various overlays on the map was at times very difficult, even using one overlay at a time!

- 1. Policy DHWN4:** the Society object to the proposal that two areas of “**garden communities**” should be centred on Arreton and Wellow. The roads and other infrastructure are unsuitable in both locations. Wellow has no sewerage system. Both areas would be taken up by retirees and second home owners. No services such as doctors are available. Affordable housing would not be sustainable on these locations as transport difficulties would arise regarding work. There would be increased road usage negatively impacting on the environment. No gas is laid on to the Wellow area. The Wellow area is adjacent to and viewed from the AONB, and therefore any development there could have a detrimental effect on the AONB.

Should the decision to impose these garden settlements remain in the strategy plan, then tight restrictions should be enforced that all infrastructure must be in place when work commences, and this should include availability of additional schooling and medical facilities etc.

We feel the plan is suggested simply as a way of reaching the housing targets imposed by the government. Brown field sites and infill should always come first, however much developers prefer to use greenfield sites. Affordable housing should in every case be sited where there are work opportunities.

Could the government realise that with almost half the Island AONB, development opportunities are restricted to the other half, therefore our expectation of an increasing housing provision should be reduced.
- 2. Policy DHWN5:** The Society agrees with the policy that states that **small infill sites should be used within towns**. We are pleased to see that the character of the area and important areas of open space will not be damaged.
- 3. Policy DWHN7:** Exceptional areas of **affordable housing within villages within the AONB**. This policy could be good for local young Islanders where work exists in the area, but local housing has gone into the holiday market. Work opportunities in ANOB are probably a rare occurrence. Any enabling development to facilitate the affordable housing should be strictly controlled if this situation arises. The in perpetuity clauses for local need usage need to be very strictly legally worded. The suggestion may be a way of keeping small villages viable, but at the expense of affecting the AONB because of the enabling development. It should only be enacted in the rarest of circumstances.
- 4.** The Society is very concerned that the **affordable housing figures are not being met**. Too many developers are being given the option of giving cash alternatives, which it appears are not being passed on to housing associations to use to build or convert older properties to affordable units. If it had been there would not have been the distinct lack of affordable units brought on stream over the last three years.
- 5. Policy CSSHC 10** We are pleased to see this states that sites above 250 houses should incorporate **community district heating systems**. However, we are worried that **no emphasis is being placed on the use of grey water systems**.
- 6. HQE1** We are pleased to see that the impact of developments on **Heritage assets and their settings** will be strictly controlled.

7. **HQE5 Local Green Spaces** The Isle of Wight Society is concerned that Appley Park Ryde and **LGS/19 Springhill Woods East Cowes** have been refused LGS designation. Both these areas are very important to their communities and to the wider Island. LGS/19 has a wealth of background information proving the wildlife value, including the SINC, Conservation Area and Ancient Woodland. LGS/19 has views of Heritage assets and is in itself an historically important site as it was created through a scheme for the unemployed shipyard workers in 1923/5 building the esplanade and the first paddling pool on the Island. It is used by hundreds of people on a regular basis, promotes wellbeing, and presents the character of East Cowes as seen from the sea, (**HQE 6.**) It is also vital for the tourism industry, viz. UKSA using it for their training throughout the season and an excellent attraction for the popular Waverley Holiday Park. LGS19 is demonstrably special to the community and should be given Local Green Space designation.
8. **HQE7** We see from the overlays on the Island Strategy Map that Crossways Field East Cowes is included in the **Settlement Gap** between East Cowes and Whippingham. We asked for this in the AAP recently. However, Crossways Field has been included in generic housing item **HA046**. We would prefer it to remain as a settlement gap and not allow the coalescence of East Cowes and Whippingham. Only one agricultural field and one playing field separate Whippingham and East Cowes on the western side of the main road. The recent CECAMM building and Whippingham Technology Park have reduced the Settlement Gap. Should some of Crossways field have to be developed, then due care must be taken that not only the roadside hedgerow is maintained, but also a wide adequate green buffer must be kept behind the eastern hedge, opposite the Osborne House fence. This Osborne perimeter fence encloses Historic Parkland. Housing or any other building or tarmac on Crossways field will affect the setting of Osborne grounds
9. The Isle of Wight Society support the policy **HQE9**, the creation of a **Dark Skies Park** and welcome its inclusion in the Island Strategy Plan.



A postcard of East Cowes Esplanade around 1930. The sea wall, with only a railing, was built as a project for the unemployed in 1924, and the paddling pool in 1925. There is a pierrot stage surrounded by sacking on tall posts beyond the paddling pool shown in this picture. It was popular during the summer. Dog walking and sitting looking at the view have always been enjoyed since the esplanade was constructed.

What is the future of the Isle of Wight Society ?

By David Burdett

Nothing stays the same. On the 19th of February 1969 The Society was formed and adopted a constitution recommended by the Civic Trust. **On the 9th of May 1969 the Society held its first public meeting** at County Hall, Newport. Now it is fifty years old and the passage of time is making its mark. The circumstances that led to the Society's formation have gone. Membership has declined and the Executive committee struggles at each Annual General Meeting to fill the officers' posts. **The next AGM will be critical** if the Society is to continue as it has done. It is time to assess our position in the community.

The Society was created to fill a need in the Island community. It may pay to look at history to see how community management has developed to judge the role that the Society might fill in the changing world. **Can the Society still operate in a way that will achieve a community benefit?**

In very general terms, prior to the 1800s, communities used to manage their own affairs locally through the church parishes and estate owners. In the 1800s the first additional form of community management was the Local Board of Health made up of local residents. In 1890 the Island broke away from Hampshire and became a county with its own County Council. In around 1895 Local Boards were renamed Urban District Parish and Town Councils.

In the 1930s central government began to make a greater impact by amalgamating smaller councils into larger ones managing wider areas. In the 1950s the Urban District and Town Councils were merged into larger Borough Councils for Medina and South Wight Districts, working under the County Council. It was with this system that **there was a feeling that smaller communities had lost their representation.**

In 1969 the Isle of Wight Society started by having meetings in Newport. Soon representatives were appointed for a number of communities. The representatives reported back to the Executive committee. Next the representatives started to hold meetings in their own areas and **five Groups of the Society were formed** with their own chairmen and committees.

These Groups looked to the Executive for support in putting their views forward on planning matters.

Initially the meetings of the Groups of the Society discussed local planning applications and local affairs. Local representatives were elected to represent each Group and became part of the Executive Committee who, in addition to commenting on individual planning applications, also commented on each County Structure Plan that was produced roughly every ten years.

In 1996 Medina and South Wight Boroughs were dissolved and the Island became a Unitary Authority. All this was in the name of more efficient central management. However it was realised that local communities had lost their voices so they were encouraged to recreate the town and parish councils. By 2010 **the Island was once again emparished.**

As the decades passed technology gave us computers and **the internet.** **This allowed anybody to view planning applications and to respond on line.** This took away the need for the IoW Society branches to discuss planning matters at every Group meeting so the chairmen regularly included a speaker on some Island topic. Gradually this became the main agenda item. Membership started to decline. Group committees found it increasingly difficult to find replacement officers so that, after extended periods of service, they stood down. Without the officers to organise them, the Group meetings stopped.

Individual members did continue to take on the role of representing the Group area. These continued to be part of the Executive. As time passed the number of representatives declined thus reducing the size of the Executive.

Since the Society was formed there has been continued **co-operation with the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE).** For the last decade there has been an agreement that CPRE will monitor rural planning applications while the Society monitors urban applications.

The East Cowes Group was formed in 1976. In the 1990s the officers of this group became the senior officers of the Executive and continued to organise the annual Conservation Awards that

had been inaugurated in 1973. The Conservation Awards fulfilled the Society's constitutional aims, not only of promoting high standards of planning and architecture, but also the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic interest. The Society's interest in historic matters was further enhanced when the East Cowes Group obtained a 125 year lease of the old library in Clarence Road and **set up the East Cowes Heritage Centre in 1992**. The Heritage Centre became the office of the Society and its public contact point.

The Heritage Centre is manned by volunteers. In order for them to be covered by insurance while helping at the Centre they are required to be members of the Society. The Centre also provided a free venue for meetings of the Society so Society members continue to hold monthly meetings there. However these have tended to concentrate on East Cowes affairs. Thus **in 2019 Society activity is generated by those running the Heritage Centre**. For the past few years the Burdett family have been the main drivers of this activity so there has been a certain amount of personal preference in this. Their activities have tended to concentrate more on Island history than commenting on planning applications. One activity that has continued is that of **networking with other organisations**. This has helped the reduced Executive to keep informed of activities across the Island.

However the Burdetts are concerned that the Society should not become a "family empire". Therefore they were delighted when Mrs Helena Hewston, a member of the now defunct Cowes Group, took on the Chairmanship of the Society in 2014. As a local councillor in the West Wight she is well informed about activities across the Island. She is very energetic and encouraged the Executive to take active steps to promote the Society by setting up stalls at a number of shows across the Island. She also encouraged an active Ryde member to join the Executive. It was a breath of fresh air having new input in the Executive meetings. Helena's interest in parish affairs has led her to become the chairman of the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils. The Ryde member has also become a local councillor. For both of these ladies the additional duties have caused them to concentrate their energies on council matters. At the last AGM the Chairmanship of the Society reverted to Sarah

Burdett. At the next AGM both the Councillors will resign from our Executive.

The Executive is proud of its record in maintaining its **annual Conservation Awards**, especially since we joined with the Island Branch of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in a joint awards presentation. The joint RIBA and IoW Society committee invested a lot of energy into this event and raised the quality of presentation so that the Lord Lieutenant felt confident in supporting it for a number of years. To mark the 45th year of the Society's Awards Sarah Burdett single-handedly created an **exhibition at the Quay Arts Centre**. It was on show for three weeks and received numerous favourable comments from the public. With hind-sight it appears that this was her swan-song as she will be standing down as chairman at the next AGM.



Unless other members are prepared to take on the work involved in running our Conservation Awards presentation, these will probably cease. RIBA will be presenting their awards bi-annually in future. The Executive have decided to do the same. So in 2019 there will be no IWS celebration of the good work carried out across

the Island by architects and the various trades in the Island's building industry for those developing new properties or those preserving our historic buildings.

Until Sarah Burdett resigns she continues with the Society's work and has contributed Executive views on the Island Strategy Plan consultation as well as encouraging others to do so.

The East Cowes Heritage Centre has become a valued facility for the town. It is the Burdett's intention to ensure its continuity. Therefore it is logical to maintain the Isle of Wight Society as a charitable organisation to enable it to benefit from a favourable insurance scheme to cover the volunteers. To this end **membership of the Society will continue.**

At the Society's AGM in May we shall again be looking for members to take on the role of being an officer of the Society. If a new Chairman is not forthcoming, David Burdett will accept nomination for that role and continue his work as the Society's Treasurer. It is his intention to continue the Society's website.

In the Executive's debate about the future of the Society it has been agreed that it is a product of a past era. The Executive has been made up of elderly members. The need to represent residents' views on planning matters appears redundant due to the increasing percentage of the population who use the internet and a variety of Apps on their computers and phones to keep continuously up-to-date on developments and contribute their own views.

Planning matters tend to be a boring subject unless one is personally involved. David Burdett's interest while working for the Society has been to see a complete planning system implemented on the Island that ensures that all local communities views are given full weight in planning the future of the Island. This continues to be a battle as central government policies change and implementation locally is often slower than the changes. He is most concerned about how town and parish councils will take up much of the work previously carried out at County level. It appears to him that their duties and funding may well return to those of the late 1800s. There will still be topics where a Society such as ours can contribute to the public debate.

If the Executive is not strengthened the Isle of Wight Society is likely to slowly slide into oblivion.

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Wilf Curtis cuts the ribbon to open the exhibition at Quay Arts, November 2018.



Ann Barnes with other visitors on opening day.

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Isle of Wight Society Subscriptions

Due 1st January - The Rates are:

- Full membership £12, Joint Full £20
- Senior membership £10, joint Senior £18
- Corporate membership £20

*Subs should be paid direct to
The Treasurer, Isle of Wight Society,
East Cowes Heritage Centre,
8 Clarence Road
East Cowes, PO32 6EP*

or by Bank Transfer to the Society Account
Name Isle of Wight Society Bank Lloyds
Bank Code: 30-95-99 Acct Code: 00331217

D-Day celebrations 2019

This year is the 75th anniversary of the successful landings of the Allied Armed Forces of Britain, the Commonwealth and the United States of America on the beaches of Normandy.

The Isle of Wight Society's article in the County Press for March recounted some of the activity on the Island connected with D-day. The editor contacted us to enquire whether we had other photographs that they could use in a **D-Day supplement** being produced by the regional papers.

The article also led to Jill Cowley, wife of the Mayor of Yarmouth, informing us that an exhibition is being prepared for **display in the Yarmouth Community Hall**. This will concentrate on the troops who were billeted in the Yarmouth area and carried out training exercises with landing craft.

Mrs Ann Springman then called to bring to our attention an exhibition she is organising at the **Shanklin Chine PLUTO Room**. The Chine opens on the 8th of April but the exhibition will not be opened until the **19th May**. It will highlight the training of 40 Commando of the Royal Marines and the 2nd and 5th battalion of the U.S. Rangers. Some American veterans may attend. A tree will be planted to mark the occasion. A PLUTO video is available to see in the Pluto Room.



A raised section of the Pluto pipeline at Shanklin. Part of the pipe can still be seen in Shanklin Chine.

The installations at Sandown and Shanklin went by the name of BAMBI, not an acronym,

simply after a stag's head found by workmen in the ruins of one of the hotels that workmen were using as a cover for the pumping installations.



PLUTO arrived on the Island from Hampshire at Thorness Bay, and the remnants can still be seen on a low tide.

In addition, part of the material on display at the Chine is the work of the Victorian landscape photographer Hudson, an Islander who was as famous at that time as Julia Margaret Cameron was with her portraits.

East Cowes Heritage Centre, which is manned by Isle of Wight Society members, has a lot of information about East Cowes involvement in WWII. **Bembridge Heritage Centre** at the back of the library has a PLUTO pump. Visits to the **Wight Military and Heritage Museum** on the Newport Road at Northwood, the County Records Office at Hillside in Newport and other Heritage Centres such as **Historic Ryde Society in the Victoria Arcade**, Union Street, Ryde, would provide interesting information about this historic event.

The Island has a rich history and it good to see much of it accessible in the public domain.

Personal comments on the Island Strategy Plan David Burdett IWS Vice chairman

The cuts in government support for local authorities means that the Island Council is desperate for funds. This pressure is affecting their policies to the detriment of the Island. The Council appear to be giving national developers what they want in return for some funding. The Council should not be allowed to develop policies based only on financial gain.

Retail outlets – the Plan States – The role of town centres will be strengthened. Appropriately located retail floor space will be supported. I have suggested the following amendment.
The Island Council recognises that the percentage of land occupied by the retail sector is sufficient for the next ten years. To maintain the current percentage the council will permit a change of use of properties from retail to other categories on the understanding that the area being lost for retail will be made available for new small retail outlets in locations that serve local sectors of communities that do not have convenient retail outlets, particularly the new large residential sites. This policy is aimed at reducing the need for travel for simple day-to-day items.

Highways – the Plan states - Improvements to existing **road networks, particularly in Newport** are planned and a bridge across the Medina is being investigated. Multi-user routes will be developed. I have suggested a different policy.... *The Island Council recognises that there is unlikely to be major funding of new roads in the next ten years despite the anticipated increase in population. It will be the responsibility of developers to provide adequate access to new properties. The Council will include in its plans to regenerate Newport Harbour a proposal for a new crossing of the Medina at the northern end of the harbour. However this will require investors in the regeneration developments to fund this part of traffic relief for Newport.*
I have also requested an addition - *Improvements to the highway infrastructure as required must be implemented at the commencement of development. Failure of the developer to implement improvements at this stage will lead to a stoppage of the development.*

Plan Statement – **Health and well-being needs** of Island residents are recognised with appropriate access to medical facilities.....I suggest an addition to the **health and well-being policy** – *It will be a condition of all new housing development of over 60 units that the developer must take measures to ensure that additional medical facilities are installed at the commencement of construction to cater for the total number of new residents that will be accommodated on that site.*

Developer Contributions – **Affordable Housing**.....I suggested the following addition to this housing policy - *Where a developer submits an application for a development of such a scale that affordable housing is required, the developer must be required to build the houses and not be allowed to make a payment in lieu of the buildings.*

I suggested an amendment to the policy concerning the extension of planning permission if approval expires – *In most circumstances if a further permission is granted the consent will only be added ONCE for a further year.*

Planning for **housing delivery - the new dwellings target** averages 641 dwellings per year. I have suggested an addition to this section – These houses must only be for full-time occupation by tenant or owner. An additional point should be added - *This increase in housing will only be pursued as long as agreement is achieved with the public service companies that they will be able to provide gas, electricity, water and sewage disposal to meet the expected demand.*
A better connected Island - This policy must be amended to include a park and ride for East Cowes.

Funding the Island communities

We have a central authority managing Island-wide policies and parish and town councils taking responsibility for local affairs. Each is funded differently. In the 1800s parish councils knew that they had to raise funds locally for everything they wished to achieve in their area. Now the Isle of Wight Council has responsibility for all the important community functions. To do this household rates across the community have increased and central government has provided additional funds through the Rate Support Grant.

During recent decades central government decided that there should not be a large local authority work force running many of the community functions. They established and funded specialist agencies and delegated duties and powers to them. The government could then control the way money was spent rather than hand it out to County Councils to use as they saw fit.

In 1990s the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), with its base at Guildford, started to invest government money on the Island to boost existing industry and help start new businesses. They called their work Regeneration. Their major plan started with the whole of the Medina Valley. This gradually shrank to cover East and West Cowes, then to just East Cowes. While SEEDA were involved in several projects around the Island their major investment appears to have been in East Cowes where they spent £12 million buying the GKN North site and preparing it for redevelopment. The only business they managed to attract was Waitrose who set up a store in the heart of the town and Victoria Walk housing by David Wilson Homes.

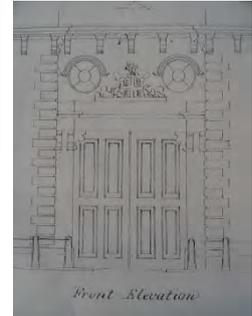
With a change in government all the Development Agencies were dissolved and their assets handed over to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). Basically their brief was to attract builders to construct as many houses as possible on the land they owned. They are now called Homes England.

Another way central government is trying to boost industry through reliable management is by setting up Local Enterprise Partnerships. The Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (SLEP) was given £500 million to boost industry in the Solent Area. An example on the Island was a joint venture by the IoW College and GKN that attracted £14 million to set up the Centre of Excellence in Composites Advanced Manufacture and Marine, CECAM, to prepare youngsters for an apprenticeship in the aerospace industry.

(More ideas for attracting funding on a post card, please! Editor)

East Cowes Heritage presents a “Grand Victorian Exhibition” Open 9.30 a.m. Saturday 25th May, Sunday 26th May, and Monday 27th May at East Cowes Town Hall

**This will show the great impact on East Cowes and Whippingham created by having
Queen Victoria living at Osborne House.**



Queen Victoria and Prince Albert 2019

Bicentenary Anniversary Celebrations

In East Cowes

Thursday 23rd May – Monday 27th May

*Various IWS members have been involved with setting up **VA flower beds** around the town. There are 4 at present, and more to come before the Anniversary weekend.*

On Thursday 23rd at 11.45 there will be the unveiling a new seat by the Romanov memorial in York Avenue, followed by the unveiling of the first part of the **Royal East Cowes tapestry** at Osborne House at 12 noon.

This superb tapestry depicts the royal houses that were associated with the Royal Family.

On Saturday 25th there will be events taking place in the town, and on Sunday 26th a grand procession at 11.a.m. starts from the Queen's Osborne entrance and goes down York Avenue to the Esplanade, where a Festival takes place from 12 noon to 9p.m.



Brightening up East Cowes Town Hall



The first bed, at Whippingham Church.

History in Post Cards

The first postcards in Britain were produced in 1870 by the Post Office. They were plain with a printed stamp already on the address side. On 1st September 1894 the PO allowed cards printed by other people to be used, with an adhesive stamp placed on the address side. Rapidly printers started producing cards with a small picture, with sufficient space to write around it, as only the address could be written on the stamp side.



In 1902 the Post Office changed its rules to allow full pictures to be printed on one side and half of the

address side to be used for a message. Britain was the first country in Europe to allow this practice. From September 1902 manufacturers started printing a vertical line to divide the address from the message. Instructions were printed on the left hand side. "You may now write your message in this space."

The Edwardian period was the height of postcard sending. There were several postal deliveries each day. Local messages could be sent and an answer received the same day, or certainly the next. The postcard was the equivalent of sending a text today.



Old postcards are invaluable in showing the development of our towns, how the buildings have changed, old forms of transport, and even disasters like fires, floods and shipwrecks.

Postcards of Osborne House were produced before the death of Queen Victoria. The earliest cards of Osborne were sent when the message had to go on the same side as the picture. A few of these will be on display at East Cowes Town Hall 25th-27th May in the exhibition showing the effect Queen Victoria had on the town. By 1904, when Osborne was opened to the public, full card pictures of the house could be printed.

With the Bi-Centenary of the birth of Queen Victoria occurring on 24th May this year, look out for the commemorative stamps that will be issued that day. For us on the Island, these should be special. How many will be stuck on postcards from Osborne House?!

The Isle of Wight Society was formed in 1969 to stimulate interest in the beauty, history and character of the Island, and to encourage high standards of planning, building development and Conservation.

The Society is affiliated to the national Civic Voice organisation and is a Registered Charity, No. 27698
