



Isle of Wight Society Newsletter

November 2016 Issue 120

Launch of Civic Day 2017

Civic Day is held on the third Saturday in June, which will be 17th June in 2017. The aim is to get local community groups to show that they are proud of where they live, carrying out as many activities as possible.

Members of the Isle of Wight Society held the conference in Newport on Civic Day this year, where Council leaders and the Editor of the County Press and others had a chance to tell us their thoughts on the financial future of the Island.

For doing this, the IWS received an award for “partnership working and campaigning” from the national group Civic Voice to which the society is affiliated. The executive were invited to attend the 2017 launch ceremony at the Palace of Westminster and three of us were able to make the trip to town.



Sarah & David Burdett Helena Hewston

Our visit coincided with the deputation, which included the Leader of the IWC and the Editor of the County Press, delivering the “Fight for the Wight” petition, and we met purely by accident outside Westminster Hall after a guided tour of the public parts of the building. The County Press photographer was able to take a photo of the launch event!

The Isle of Wight Society Ideas for next year may centre around celebrating our many Conservation Areas on the Island.

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PARKING UP THE WRONG TREE

A thought provoking article from Executive member Newman Smith

How often have you reached your destination by car and spent an inordinate amount of time looking for a convenient parking place?

Unfortunately, when a planning application is submitted for approval the need for on-site car parking generated by the proposal is ignored because our planning system is based upon an assumption that a comprehensive, integrated public transport facility exists everywhere. It patently does not.

The planning guidelines on car parking within acceptable development are couched in vague terms with a commendable intent of promoting

sustainable public transport, for example:- "STANDARDS MAY BE REDUCED TO AN OPERATIONAL MINIMUM PARTICULARLY IN LOCATIONS WHERE EASY TO USE PUBLIC TRANSPORT IS AVAILABLE".

And get this one:- "DEVELOPERS WILL NOT HAVE TO PROVIDE MORE CAR PARKING SPACES THAN THEY THEMSELVES WOULD WISH TO PROVIDE"

....Is there any developer out there who wouldn't welcome this panacea for avoiding the reality of providing adequate parking and thus make the maximum investment return?

A perfect example of this head in the sand planning philosophy is the recent application by Premier Inns to replace the Carlton Hotel in Sandown. No vehicle parking whatsoever is proposed within the site to serve 100 bedrooms; 190 cover restaurant with 40 full time and 25 part time staff, and a likely peak demand of 72 overnight parking spaces!

The Island Planning Authority has now approved what is undoubtedly a substantial investment which will regenerate the dated Esplanade, but should this persuade supine acceptance of a situation where inadequacy of parking will make life intolerable for everyone within the area? The irony within the design of this particular development is that the natural contours of the site would have readily accommodated underground parking and servicing for the hotel.

In comparison, the recently opened hotel in Lake by the same developer has 82 car spaces for the 81 bedroom hotel and associated restaurant with 80 covers. The very fact this hotel provides parking on a one/one ratio makes the Sandown proposal even more preposterous. One can only presume the land value differential together with the inherent developer greed are the only reasons for the unreal

decision to provide no on-site parking or servicing area. But under no circumstances should commercial values influence any planning application, otherwise our towns and cities would soon grind to a halt.

The perspective from the Island's Planning Authority is that they must follow the intent of the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) and their own Core Strategy Plan/UDP when considering development proposals.

Inherent in these documents are laudable objectives, like maximising densities on development sites to avoid encroachment into "greenbelt" and avoiding anything that might deter inward investment. While it is understandable that under the NPPF there is "a presumption in favour of approval" and the Island Planning Authority do not wish to become embroiled in costly "Appeals" in straightened financial times, it does not seem reasonable that each newly completed development worsens our ability to park and our streets become unsightly car parks due to a flawed perception of the current role of the private car in society.

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Subscriptions are due on 1st January 2017.

The rates are:

Full membership £8, Joint Full membership £15,

Senior membership £7, Joint senior £13,

Corporate membership £20.

Subs should be paid direct to The Treasurer, or by Bank transfer to the Society Account:

Name: Isle of Wight Society Bank :Lloyds

Bank Code: 30-95-99 Acct Code: 00331217

A few words from the Chair *Helena Hewston*

As you know it is six months since the last newsletter. Reviewing those months shows that several important things have happened which will have a bearing on the future.

The committee has been quite active.

For **National Civic Day**, we planned and achieved a public meeting on “The Financial Future of the Isle of Wight” and with the help of Diana Conyers have kept abreast of the Devolution Deal as the Island Council strives to achieve a realistic budget for the Island. Your comments are important in keeping the Island an attractive place to live and a secure place for families to settle and work. It’s a fine balance. Keeping the status quo is not necessarily the best for us all. Read Diana’s article on page 7.

The next event was also in conjunction with Civic Voice to which we are affiliated. Through the IWSociety, two Island buildings, **the Hop Kilns at Briddlesford Lodge Farm and Off the Rails at Yarmouth, the old station, received national recognition for their excellent conservation work.**



This was at Portcullis House, the new part of Parliament buildings, and several of us attended. The more eagle eyed among you may spot Judi Griffin of Briddlesford in red holding her plaque.

If you know of a building undergoing restoration work or that has recently been restored, let us know so we can encourage them to enter our IWS Awards competition.



At very short notice, the committee attended and set up a stall at the **Wolverton Fair** in September. There was a wonderful interactive display that generated interest in the Society, but not many new members. You can help us raise our profile with your support and ideas.

We enjoyed the event and hope to do some more events next year. **Will you help?** We have already applied to have a stall on 23/24th July at Sandown Airport at the Lions Charity event to celebrate their 100th anniversary.

There was a worthwhile meeting at the Heritage Centre about the planning applications for East Cowes. We continue to make comments on **planning applications**, and attended a meeting about development at Westridge Farm, Ryde.

We have met with **CPRE** (Campaign for the Protection of Rural England) and the Planning Office to see where joint forces can make a difference to housing and land use, including foot paths and access routes. You can make your own comments on planning or send them to us to include them in our submissions.

We have had the web site overhauled making it up to date. Your in-put is to recommend it to your friends and acquaintances, especially the pages on the Conservation and Design Awards.

We have a Drop -Box on the web to help with the Awards. We are soon going to have a Face Book Page to help you with your comments.

Ryde Town Council is trying to deal with the issues involved in preserving **Vectis Hall and the Royal York Hotel**. Newport needs to do the same with the Mill at the back of Halfords and the old Electricity building. Lone voices cannot do it.

By being active The Isle of Wight Society can make a difference.

Our Treasurer, **Mr. John Barnes**, has after many years of reliable and efficient service stepped down. Someone needs to contact David Burdett, acting Treasurer, email: burdett.sd@gmail.com to offer their services and take on this role which is not onerous but is absolutely essential to the legal running of the Society. At the time of writing he is in hospital and we wish him a speedy recovery.

The active service of one of our members, Sarah Burdett, to conservation and heritage, has been recognised by the Crown in awarding her the **British Empire Medal**. It was a pleasure and an honour to be present when the Lord Lieutenant made the award, this month, in the company of David and their daughter Helen

Our next six months may not be quite so varied but with your contributions the Isle of Wight Society will continue to have a voice in the happenings on the Isle of Wight.

Thank you for reading my few words.
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Civic Voice

This newsletter has mentioned Civic Voice several times. **The Isle of Wight Society is affiliated to Civic Voice**, which campaigns on behalf of Civic Societies all over the country, with a good lobbying voice in Parliamentary ears.

One advantage for us is the good **insurance cover** that they have negotiated for us. This covers us on Isle of Wight Society events, giving us public liability cover. It also covers us helping at the Heritage Centre.

Every week we hear of different campaigns that are going on. Currently they are asking members to help Historic England in updating or correcting the Register of Listed Buildings, look at our Conservation Areas and get involved in promoting "Caring for where you live." All of these activities are something we should do, so please have a look at the Civic Voice Website and take some action. As a member, you can!!!! And please alert the Executive if there is anything that you think should be urgently flagged up.

Do you have any DL vehicle photographs?

Mark Chessell is carrying out research for his third book about Isle of Wight road transport history. This will be a sequel to "DL: Isle of Wight Motor Vehicles 1896 to 1939" and will cover the story of **motor vehicles which were used on the Island from the outbreak of WW2 to February 1964**. These vehicles had no prefix to DL, only those two letters.

The focus of the book will be on the **DL registered cars, motorcycles, lorries, emergency vehicles and buses**. Mark has already obtained some excellent photographs from various sources. He would be very pleased to hear from anyone who has photographs of vehicles owned by family members in this period for possible inclusion.

Please contact him at info@chinepublishing.co.uk if you are able to help. Copies of his book "DL" are still available at East Cowes Heritage Centre.

LAKE WITHOUT WATER

*by Executive member
Colin Arnold*

Historically, Lake, (near Sandown) gets a very low-level press cover. Somewhere, in an old Isle of Wight guide book, I remember reading that Lake started as a mere hamlet. Also, that in the days of early roads, a toll-house was to be found at the lower end of Newport Road, on the junction with Sandown Road.

Two historic tithe cottages became a main feature of Lake Green Road.



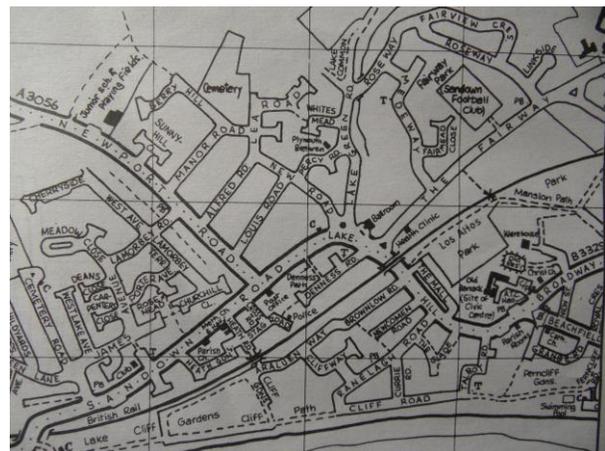
I was familiar with No.1 and No.3 Farm Cottages as my Aunt and Uncle and family lived in No.3 and my Uncle Charlie's mother - Grandma Edmunds lived in No.1.

Charlie Edmunds had worked on Lake Manor Farm for Major Perowne and was able to continue to live at the tithe cottage by purchasing the property from Major Perowne upon the Major's retirement. The Major at that time owned Lake Manor Farm as well as the old Manor House. Later the Manor House was sold to the Bolwell family. The farm yard and barn have long vanished as have the haystacks where we used to play. A large amount of farm land associated with the farm and the manor was sold off for development in the 50s, and became the local

Medeway Estate, a council owned area. Other parts of the developed land became Roseway and Fairview Crescent, an extensive area of bungalows, soon filled by retiring couples from the mainland.

Lake shopping centre was simply a row of shops, each side of the road including a popular Co-op, a post office, and a bakery called Nutters. Other shops included a dairy, a sewing shop run by Mrs Chase and a small sweet-shop called The Matchbox. At the junction at the bottom of Lake Hill, just below the Railway Bridge stood the war memorial and nearby was the cobbler's shop of Mr. Owen.

At the south end of the High Street, Sandown Road stretched towards Gatten and Shanklin and not far beyond the shops you would come to The Good Shepherd Church and a turning off led to Lake Methodist Chapel. Back at the north end of the High Street, along Lake Green Road you would pass Sunnyside Farm, a small holding owned by Mr. Merwood. This is where we would go for our free-range eggs, freshly picked lettuce and tomatoes. Passing Sunnyside, we would reach Lake Common, a popular area for us boys. It was here that we would play football or cricket, once we had made sure there were no cows chewing the common land grass. The cowman, Char Lewis lived nearby on the edge of the common.



A 1972 Perry's Guide map

The other end of the common, past the white gate and beyond, you could find Gandy Salter's Farm. He kept a herd of milking cows and would deliver milk far and wide, dispensing it via a metal measuring ladle, into the waiting jugs along his round. Today there is no sign of the old farm.

Up Lake Hill and beyond you come to Lake Cliff and the slipway that leads to Lake Beach. This was run by the Hinks family, who rented out deckchairs and boats. Ted Hinks was the boat builder who made the rowing boats, and between them, the brothers, Ted, Bert and Bill ran the long-shore business. In Lake Cliff Road were situated a number of popular holiday houses, including Mount Pleasant Hotel, where my parents celebrated their wedding.

Today, Lake has greatly extended in the Newport direction, in what historically was known as the Merry-gardens area. This now incorporates Morrisons and currently, the newly opened Aldi super-market. Merry Gardens farm house has been restored and a restaurant called Merrie Gardens has been added. A little further away, we now have a modern Premier Inn, bringing Lake right up to date.

A further feature of Lake, which also deserves a mention, is the fact that in 1987 a Lake Railway Halt was built, as a stopping point for locals and visitors, helping Lake to gain just a little more recognition.

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Yet another Awards Ceremony!

In early October it was my third awards ceremony at the Royal Yacht Squadron. The previous two had been Conservation and Design Awards. I knew what to expect. There was the response of the canvas of the marquee to the blustery wind, the interruption to proceedings from the noise of a passing Red Jet craft; the sea-sick wobbling of the TV screen display; the subdued lighting and the need to turn off the noisy heating unit. This time David, Sarah, Helen Burdett and I were in the audience. Glancing

towards the awards table I could make out the stack of framed certificates, the silverware and crystal and at the corner a single red cushion. "That must be for your award Sarah." I commented.

The programme showed that the presentation of the British Empire Medal was the first event of the evening. Sarah had been told to remain seated while the citation was being read. "Must be a long one. What on earth can it contain to be so long?" was her comment. I thought back to the four letters of support sent with the nomination. There had indeed been quite a list of activities to her credit to be announced in the field of conservation and heritage as service to the community of the Isle of Wight.

The British Empire Medal is awarded for meritorious civilian service worthy of recognition by the Crown. What an honour and our Sarah has it through her work with the Isle of Wight Society and the East Cowes Heritage Centre.

The red cushion was lifted gently from the table and carried respectfully, by a uniformed officer, to the Lord Lieutenant, Major General Martin White. Sarah stepped up on to the dais. The silver medal with a distinctive red and silver ribbon was attached to the pre-positioned holder on the lapel of her jacket. There was applause and photographs and smiles from everyone but especially from we three.

When good things happen, other good things seem to follow on. We have no idea what the future holds but I have no doubt that the recognition of Sarah's service to The Isle of Wight Society and the East Cowes Heritage Centre will be good for us all.

Helena Hewston Oct 2016



Sarah with the Lord Lieutenant Martin White

Devolution for the Island?

An article by Executive member Diana Conyers

It looks as if the Isle of Wight Council has moved one step forward and two steps back in negotiating a 'Devolution Deal' with the Government. At the end of October, the Council joined Portsmouth and Southampton City Councils in submitting a proposal for a Solent Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA). However, according to a recent press statement (County Press, 18 November), they have now been told that the Government is not prepared to consider any more proposals until it has dealt with those already on the table.

Discussions about devolution began more than a year ago. The original idea was to devolve powers to the whole of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. A proposal to this effect was published in November last year. However, when the Government indicated that the combined authority would have to have an elected Mayor, Hampshire County Council withdrew its support. For some time, it looked as if that could be the end of devolution.

However, in June this year, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight Councils put forward plans for a Solent MCA. It would consist of representatives of each of the three councils and the Solent Local Economic Partnership (SLEP). The latter would be a 'non-constituent' member with limited voting powers. It would be headed by a mayor, directly elected by all voters in the area. It is said that some of the borough councils in Hampshire wanted to join, but they needed Hampshire County Council's permission and this was not forthcoming.

The MCA would take on various powers currently exercised by the Government, mainly in relation to transport and economic development. It would retain all business rates collected in the area and also receive a substantial grant (£30 million a year for 30 years) for investment purposes. The three constituent councils would retain their current powers and functions, but decisions about the distribution of the additional funding would be made jointly.

The councils were required to conduct a public consultation before submitting a formal proposal to the Government. This consisted of a questionnaire survey and meetings with the general public and key stakeholders, including (on the Island) the Chamber of Commerce, parish and town councils, voluntary organisations and NHS staff. The findings of the consultation were discussed at a Full Council meeting on 19 October and an Executive meeting on 24 October.

Throughout this process, views about devolution in general and the Solent MCA in particular have been divided on the Island. No one appears to be highly enthusiastic about it. The Council's Executive are pursuing it primarily as a means of alleviating the Council's financial problems and thus ensuring its survival as an independent authority. They have been told by the Government that this is the only way they will access extra government funding.

However, many members of the Council are against the proposal. At the Full Council meeting on 19 October, only 16 of the 35 councillors present voted in favour of going ahead with the negotiations; 17 voted against

and two abstained. However, the Executive, which had the final authority, decided (by a vote of six to two) to overrule this decision and proceed.

The general public also has mixed views. The results of the questionnaire survey indicated that the majority of respondents supported the proposal. But the response rate was low and the questions were phrased in a rather general way, suggesting that the support may be for general principles of devolution and cooperation rather than the proposal as such, and at the public meeting many reservations were expressed. More significant perhaps is the apparent support of many members of the business community and many (but not all) parish and town councils.

The main concerns expressed by both councillors and members of the public relate to the financial arrangements, especially the lack of a guarantee that the Island will receive a fair share of the additional revenue. Other concerns include the requirement to have an elected mayor, the involvement of SLEP and possible pressure to increase the Island's housing quotas. Some people also think that because the Island is predominantly rural, it would be better to cooperate with Hampshire County Council than with Portsmouth and Southampton.

Unfortunately but perhaps inevitably, party politics has influenced the discussions. For example, a deal with Hampshire is more attractive to some Tory voters, since the mayor is likely to be a Tory, while in the Solent MCA the outcome would be less certain. This perhaps explains the undercover negotiations between Hampshire County Council and the

Island's Conservative councillors which are rumoured to be taking place at the time of writing.

My own views are also mixed. I am in favour of devolution, especially of financial powers. But I would have preferred devolution to existing local authorities rather than to these new 'super councils'. I also dislike the ad hoc way in which the process is being undertaken. In my view, the country needs a comprehensive review of local government financial policy, rather than a lot of individual, politically negotiated 'deals'. This piecemeal approach is pitting local authorities against each other, rather than creating a strong local government system. In fact, one could argue that it is a classic 'divide and rule' strategy.

However, given the situation in which the Island finds itself, I tend to support the Solent MCA proposal. It would give the Council access not only to additional financial resources but also to professional and technical expertise that it lacks at present. The Council's recent decision to share Portsmouth City Council's finance officer rather than appoint its own has already had financial benefits. Personally, I prefer a Solent deal to one with Hampshire County Council. The Solent is a 'functional economic region'. The Island is very different from Portsmouth and Southampton, but there are many ties between the three areas.

Hopefully, if or when a final decision has to be made, we will have more detailed information, especially regarding the financial arrangements. My own experience with devolution in other parts of the world suggests that, as with so many other policies, 'the devil is in the detail'.