



# Isle of Wight Society Newsletter

May 2017

Issue 121

## 2017 Conservation Awards Winner



### Northwood House

The ceiling of the central bar area has been excellently conserved and is a worthy winner of the IWS 2017 Conservation Award.

This major project was completed in just six weeks. It involved inserting major steel beams into the existing collapsing structure, suspending a new wooden frame to support the dome from them, inserting new floor beams and restoring the beautiful painting to its original condition. The distortion had broken the curved corridor roof glass. No-one could replicate the original but an exact copy was made in modern Lexan based material.

Without remedial action the whole dome would have collapsed. It was only when the cleaner suggested that someone might like to stick back up the pieces of plaster work that were falling from the ceiling that it was realised just how bad the situation had become! Cracks had appeared all around the domed ceiling rim together with radial cracks.

A wooden end beam had disintegrated due to water ingress, leaving the dome unsupported. Upstairs the floors were severely distorted, in some places by six inches.

Today, the main corridor and the original gentlemen's billiard and smoking room have ceilings to be proud of, and ones that should stand for many years to come.

Northwood House Trustees, Tim Wander the project manager, John Sutton of Elmstone Design, and SJS Fabrication and all those who worked on the project are to be congratulated on an excellent piece of work.

**Certificates of Merit** were given to three properties. These were **Niton Parish Church**, **The Man in the Moon** Newport, and the old **Greenmount School** in Ryde.

**Haven Hall**, Shanklin received the **Landscaping Award** for perfectly fitting new building within the improved landscape, and **Tapnell Farm** was given a **Rural Regeneration Award**.



**Niton Parish Church** has been buffeted by gales for hundreds of years. The spire had begun leaking so badly that the timbers supporting the bells were saturated and tarpaulins had to shroud the spire. Much stone work repair was needed to the spire, towers and the south east and south west windows.

After considerable fundraising, work was carried out by GJ Banks. Clearing out old cement mortar and replacing it with lime mortar, carving new stone blocks and waterproofing the walkway at the top of the tower have made the tower watertight again. Two windows have been restored. The church can now stand up to wind and rain again!

**Greenmount School Ryde** was made up of two buildings, the old National School in Green Street and the Bible Christian Chapel in Newport Street. Redundant since the school moved to the Mayfield site, the buildings have now been converted to residential

accommodation. There are thirteen units fitted carefully into the school building, and eight into the old chapel for Housing Association use.

The work has been sensitively completed by the designer Robert Aubrey of ermc Ltd, and Vectis Builders Ltd., for the developers Daldorch Estates Ltd. Many original features have been retained.

Much needed residential accommodation has been provided in upper Ryde. The buildings have been restored to good use, maintaining and improving the character of the area.



Part of the old Greenmount school.



The old Bible Christian Chapel



The Congregational Chapel in Lower St James Street Newport had been turned into a night club in 2002. In 2014 Wetherspoons took over the building and transformed it into a venue for everybody.

The stone work was restored and cleaned, the entrance greatly improved, and the interior sensitively repainted. A comfortable and calm space has been created in the old chapel, which is a benefit to all the community. The architects were KD Paine.



**Tapnell Farm** has turned redundant farm buildings into a restaurant, café and children's activity areas. The architect for the work has been Colman Cotter. The Contractor was West Wight Developments.

Now the public have another amenity on the Island for all ages, and the wide structure of the original barns can be clearly seen. The play barns and “meet the animals” areas give youngsters plenty of space to let off steam. The latest amenity is a farm museum, or “mooseum,” which looks at the dairy industry.

The IWS created a special “Rural Regeneration” award for this extensive project.

**Our Landscaping Award this year went to Haven Hall at Shanklin.** An imposing Edwardian house had been turned into a hotel, which needed much careful restoration work to bring it back to its former glory. This was achieved for owner David Barratt by architect Sean Macmillan.



It was difficult to believe that the single storey owners' suite extension, seen to the left in the picture, was new. It fits so effortlessly into the landscape. This landscape had been created to help the house in its new role as a wedding and events venue. An Edwardian mansion has been given a new lease of life.

## ***The RIBA New Build Awards 2017***

The Principal Award winner is

***“The Lion Tree House” Yarmouth***



The Award is made for the dynamic contribution made by its form, its functionality, the architecture it expresses and its detail. There is a response of the whole building to the setting of a heritage asset and to the special interest of a Conservation Area.

The new dwelling element maintains the scale of built form and good neighbourly disposition which other houses in the High Street possess. It presents architecture of its own time. The glazed link to the Listed Grade II house Shandon gives apparent continuity across the new component, and allows the eastern façade of the old house to remain on view. It also allows sea views from the rear courtyard.

Architect: Henry Murray Smith

Builders: J R Buckett and Sons

***RIBA gave two commendations in 2017.***



Firstly, to ***“The Briars” at Seaview***, for an exemplary outcome in the design of internal and external spatial improvements to an existing dwelling house. The Architect was Lindsay Mattinson, Building work by Hermans and Luck.

**The second commendation**, for the ingenious resolution to a very complex range of physical and visual constraints and opportunities presented by the site in its context went to



***“The Sea House,” Seaview.*** Colman Cotter was the architect and MCM the constructors.

***Please go to page 10 for the other entries visited***

**47<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the**  
**Isle of Wight Society to be held**  
**at Whippingham Church Hall, Beatrice Avenue**  
**on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017**

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the previous meeting
3. Matters Arising therefrom
4. Reports
  - a) The Chairperson's Report
  - b) The Treasurer's Report
5. Election of Officers

Chair

Vice Chair

Secretary

Treasurer

Membership Secretary

News letter Editor

6. Nominations of members for the Executive Committee
7. Independent Examiners of Accounts
8. Subscription Rates  
**Proposal** : Subscription Rates should be increased to  
Full £12  
Joint Full £20  
Senior £10 Joint Senior £18  
Under 18s free  
Corporate £25  
This rise in subscriptions will help pay for the additional website costs
9. Any Other Business notified to the Chairman in advance.

**Future events.**

Coming up soon. The Society is going to hold a **stall at the County Show on 25<sup>th</sup> June.** It would be lovely to see members, whether current or lapsed. Come and have a chat, join in the table top quiz and see what the Society has been doing.

Before that we have the **AGM at 3.30 pm on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June** at Whippingham Church Hall where a "garden walk" around the churchyard will precede a cream tea and cake. See left for the agenda. I do not want to put anyone off but all AGMs require members to come forward to run it. Sarah and David do so much they really would appreciate more assistants to lighten the load. Come and join us - Don't just think about it - Do it.

**Sandown Airport has an event on 22<sup>nd</sup> July** where we will set up the same stall. This is more of a craft event as opposed to horses and machinery. Come for a pleasant afternoon in a different setting to the usual fairs and outside events.

Next is **Chale Show w/e of 5<sup>th</sup> August.** Always a good time out with holiday visitors.

We finish the summer with **Wolverton Fayre** at the beginning of September. Since this is Age Concern most of us have an affinity with this show and the gardening theme as well as being with many similar organisations promoting themselves.

Somewhere in all of these there will be fine days and a relaxed atmosphere. A pleasure to belong and support.

**See you there**

Helena Hewston (Chair)



## Isle of Wight Society Information

Registered with the Charity Commission No.  
276986

**Affiliated with the national organisation for  
civic societies – Civic Voice**

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Bank: - Lloyds at Newport , Sort Code  
30-95-99 , IWS Account No. 00331217

*Subscription rates for January 2017 were: -*

*Full £8 Joint Full £15*

*Seniors £7 Joint Seniors £ 13*

*Corporate £20*

*The proposal is to raise these at the AGM*

**Meetings for members** and the public are held  
on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 7.30 pm  
except December at East Cowes Heritage.

**\*\*Through Civic Voice we have been given  
eleven one day passes to National Trust  
properties. These are available free from the  
treasurer on a first-come-first-served basis.\*\***

## AGM

**The AGM of the IoW Society will take  
place at St Mildred's Church Hall,  
Whippingham, on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June.**

The event will start at 3.30 pm with a  
guided tour around the church  
grounds. The AGM will start at 4.00 pm  
and will be followed by a cream tea and  
cake at a cost of £ 4.00 per  
person. **Please let the chairman know  
if you intend coming so we can order  
sufficient food. If you are sending  
apologies, please could you tell the  
Chairman she can have your proxy vote  
to ensure sufficient numbers for voting.**

Any member who wishes to become part of the  
team running the Society should contact the  
Chairman by e-mail, or writing to her. If you  
wish to visit the church as well as the grounds,  
please come as an ordinary visitor at about  
3p.m. Stewards are on duty to show you round.  
There is plenty of car parking at the Church  
Hall.

*On Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June Civic Voice is organising its  
Civic Day when Civic Societies are invited to  
celebrate all that is good about their  
communities. The theme this year is Conservation  
Areas. On the Island we are organising a number of  
walks around local conservation areas.*

We also intend having stands at the following shows  
and **any help (free show pass)** would be welcome: -

25<sup>th</sup> June at the County Show

22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> July at the Sandown Lions show at  
Sandown Airport

5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> August at the Chale Show

2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> September at the Wolverton Fayre

## MEMORIES OF ISLAND STEAM

by Colin Arnold

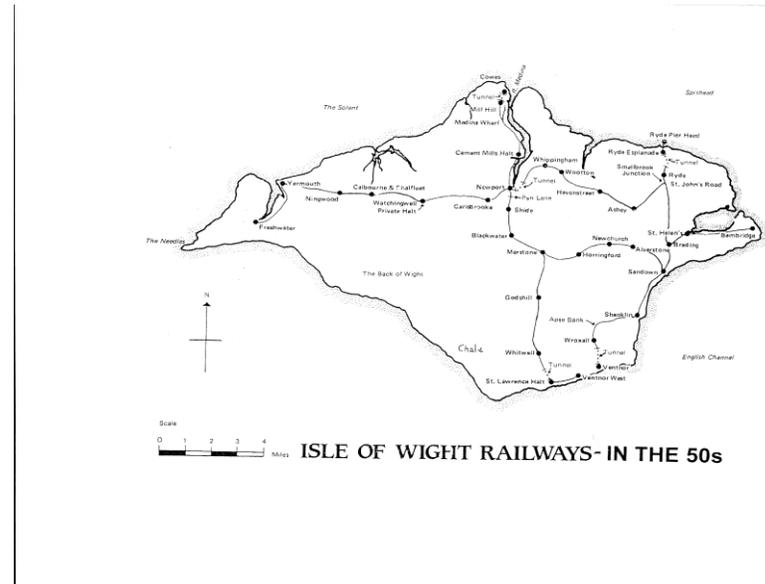
There was a time when the Isle of Wight Railway could transport passengers to most areas of the Island, the exception being the Back of the Wight. In the 50s it was a delight to spend a whole week exploring the Island by rail. If Mr. Beeching had not viciously removed most of the railway lines in the early 60s this delight would still be open for all those fascinated by steam trains, whether Islanders or visitors to the Wight.

From Sandown us group of boys paid five shillings each for a weekly gadabout ticket, to go anywhere where the rails could take you. From Sandown, we could simply do a short hop to Alverstone, for the pleasure of boating. A most popular spot. Here we could explore the winding river of the Eastern Yar, by canoe or rowing boat. Or we could take a trip to Ryde, via Brading, or skip off along the branch line via Brading to Bembridge. Here we could watch the train engine detach and turn 180 degrees on the turntable, reattach and take the train back to Brading.

If we travelled on to Ryde, we could go rowing on the Ryde canoe-lake, another pleasure no longer available as proper boats like rowing boats and canoes no longer exist there. An alternative was to travel from Ryde to Wootton, and canoe up Wootton Creek, amid the reeds and wild-fowl.

Newport did not attract us much, but from this station, which always smelt strongly of brewery exhaust fumes, we could go on to Cowes. Cowes Regatta and fireworks attracted us. Just before the final firework set-piece of The Queen, we would rush off to the station to

catch the first steam train back home to Sandown, leaving the slower viewers to catch the later train. Both trains would be heavy laden with passengers.



We could on another day, enjoy the long western stretch of rail, past Carisbrooke Castle and head to Yarmouth and Freshwater. The train got up a good head of steam on this route, with a rhythmic jilting roll as it reached its full capacity. At Freshwater, the end of the line, we would board the little brown and cream bus, which would take us to Alum bay, to see the Needles Light-house and visit the shore and cliff, to collect our phial of coloured sand.

The ride from Sandown to Ventnor, via Shanklin and Wroxall took us through a very long tunnel under St. Boniface Down, to magically re-emerge at Ventnor Main Station. There were five tunnels in all on the whole local rail network, but the Ventnor tunnel was the best of them.

The Ventnor West line was only open during the summer, in the fifties. From Sandown, via Alverstone, Newchurch and Horringford, the train would arrive at Merstone, where you could board the train that went from there to Ventnor West Station. This was an interesting line that took you to Godshell, Whitwell and on to the quaint station of St. Lawrence Halt. Finally, you arrived at Ventnor West Station.

Today, the only steam trains to be found on the Island are at the Havenstreet Station area. Thanks go to the hard work and enthusiasm of those who rebuilt the stretch of rail between Havenstreet and Wootton and established an organisation that that re-introduced steam trains and who set up the site, with its trains and museum. They also made possible a train link with the main-line trains via Smallbrook junction.

*Editor's note : The recent Heritage Lottery Funded railway museum at Havenstreet has widened the appeal of the station, even on rainy days, and is well worth a visit.*



*Don't forget to visit the special events such as the 1940s weekend at the end of July.*

**A few of the other properties visited on judging day, all of which had aspects we commended.**



**Waterside, Cowes**



**Woodlands, Brighstone**



**Willows, Shalfleet**



**Vista, Freshwater Bay**

A thought provoking article from retired RIBA architect and IWS member Newman Smith

### **THE NATURE OF ARCHITECTURE**

A building will appeal to us in many different ways. We may be impressed by the fitness for purpose, by the texture and form or the skilful use of building techniques and materials used. Inevitably the form and design is a reflection of society, its expectations and aspirations and the building techniques of the day.

The building heritage that we rightly conserve and enjoy is an historic tabloid of architecture created at different times. In each age which created the recognised styles of architecture we discover the mind of the builder and the people's attitude towards life at that time. Thus, architecture will continue to change.

During the twentieth century innumerable contemporary styles and "isms" emerged attempting to continue the great industrial revolution of the previous century, creating a sort of architectural anarchy, a second Industrial Revolution. After the stylistic revivals of the Victorian Age a new and extreme philosophy was needed as a solid foundation for the future. What evolved was the mantra FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION established by the German architect Walter Gropius of the Bauhaus School. Based upon a philosophy that mass production was a precondition to successful design in the Machine Age and diametrically opposed to the earlier emphasis on individual man made objects of the Arts & Crafts Movement in the UK, presided over by William Morris.

Modern architecture which employs machine production and pre-fabrication technology cannot easily balance visually with the Arts & Crafts style or any other earlier movement. However, the contrast between the precision of metal and glass set against the roughness of stone or brick can give a sense of tension between old and new creating a cohesive whole.

No building can be thought of as an isolated unit, without any regard for its neighbours. So whenever a new building is proposed within an established community there is the need to somehow absorb it in a neighbourly fashion in an attempt to dilute the likely public outcry and natural reaction to change ( and improve the likelihood of gaining the necessary planning approval ). Consequently the dilemma facing the architect is whether he produces a blatantly modern building reflecting today's technology, or design in a mannerist style of the local vernacular, replicating details and materials of the neighbouring building. But is the latter true architecture or just a craft form? However, resolving this dichotomy is often overridden by the local planning authority through the terms of their brief and so outside the control of the architect.

We must accept that like every other artistic and scientific endeavour our search for a satisfactory life style will involve a changing architecture. If we choose to reproduce revivalist architectural styles without variation and ignoring new technologies then our architecture would be merely craftsmanship.

*A thought to ponder!*

# The speed of development

By David Burdett

Recently a situation has arisen in East Cowes that, while it is exciting, reveals the reality of the time taken for development ideas to reach fruition. Through the Society's presence and activities at East Cowes Heritage Centre, we were able to host a meeting with all the parties involved with Red Funnel's plans to expand their marshalling yard. Next we received an invitation from the new owners of Norris Castle to a presentation of their ideas. Then we accepted an invitation from the companies proposing to build a new marina on the East Cowes waterfront with supporting hotel, dining and housing.

All three instances filled us with excitement at the possible benefits to the Town. At about the same time the Springhill Estate was sold to a developer. Then the IoW College and GKN put in a joint bid for funding for a new College facility concentrating on composites to prepare youngsters for an apprenticeship with GKN. The projects being discussed together totalled an investment of over £100 million pounds. It was hard to believe that so many businesses considered East Cowes a suitable location to invest. The presentations took place up to two years ago. So far, out of all these projects, only the college building beside the main road at Whippingham has materialised.

The process of a development is obvious. A business seeks locations, often globally, to acquire and make a profit from a building or activity.

Then there is a choice – either to seek planning permission which, if granted, encourages the developer to purchase, or, alternatively, to purchase and then seek planning permission. The problems arise when the way the company wants to make a profit does not bring benefits to a community or affects the community detrimentally.

When a planning application is presented to the committee for approval the financial implications are not their concern, simply the appropriateness of the proposal and its compliance with national planning policies, the Island's Core Strategy Plan and, where they exist, local neighbourhood plans. The more these planning policies are in place, then the better the chance of the development meeting local aspirations. Some companies acquire large portfolios of property that they keep to develop at a later date. To prevent properties being unused for a long time, once the planning permission is granted, a condition of approval is that work must start on the site within three years.

Just because a developer promotes a plan and discusses a planning application it does not mean that anything will happen. Even when things start to progress, it may be a slow process. During the last decade we have seen several projects move slowly or fail. Examples are Harcourt Sands and the Pennyfeathers site in Ryde and the Newport Football Club site. Once started developers will invest only as it suits them. Examples of this have been the slow progress with the Pan Meadows estate in Newport and the Hawthorn Meadows in East Cowes.

So the message is – do not expect developments to be completed rapidly, monitor all amendments to initial planning applications, closely read the conditions attached to a planning approval and finally kick up a fuss if you think that conditions are not being enforced. For example Barratt were supposed to complete the important Saunders Way at Kingston within eighteen months of starting work. It has taken them over eight years to do this despite much pressure by County Councillors. The watchwords are patience and perseverance.

## The East Cowes May 1942 Blitz remembered.

**East Cowes has a new information panel, put up by the Isle of Wight Society.** It was unveiled on 8<sup>th</sup> April, in time for the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary commemoration of the 1942 Blitz on the town. Over thirty people attended the ceremony, including five survivors of the blitz. Guides and Scouts uncovered the plaque, as it is that generation that will have to keep the memory of the Blitz alive.



Sited in Kings Road, it is near the place where an air raid shelter received a direct hit early in the morning on May 5<sup>th</sup> 1942. Twenty three people were inside the shelter but only three survived. Minerva Road and Clarence Road were also badly hit, together with the shipyards. Two churches were destroyed. In all, thirty five people died that night in East Cowes, including babies, children, their parents and grandparents. Two firemen from Ryde also died, along with Mrs Hann of the WVS who was serving them tea from her converted butcher's delivery van. Hardly a house in the town was left habitable, and a stream of refugees walked out of the town the next day, some still in pyjamas, clutching what possessions they could find.

The survivors all have very clear **memories** of that night, and these have been or **are being written down**. These are still being used in a display at the East Cowes Heritage Centre. Survivors also talked to youth groups.



The **annual Blitz walk** was organised and over a hundred people attended, with many more meeting the walkers at the Cemetery for the interdenominational service.



There was a **talk** about the East Cowes Blitz at St James Church, East Cowes, when the hall was filled to capacity. Further talks will be given to other churches in the town, with retiring collections split between the churches and the East Cowes Heritage Centre.

**East Cowes Heritage Centre** was host to three television crews filming survivors of the Blitz talking of their experiences. The Town Hall was packed with people looking at our Blitz exhibition, with over 450 people visiting on the Saturday. It felt a very worthwhile exercise, especially taking youth groups and school children around the town to observe the effects of the bombing.