



Isle of Wight Society Newsletter

OCT 2020

ISSUE 128



The Isle of Wight Society has been in lockdown, along with everybody else this year in 2020.

Our Conservation Awards have been postponed until next year, when we will be judging the 15 properties entered this year.

However, we have not been idle. Our monthly column in the County Press has been submitted, apart from one month when Sarah mistook the date! It was very easy to lose track of time during lockdown.

Our AGM has been postponed. Reports have been submitted in this newsletter. We hope that next year things will be back to normal.

In this issue:

Reports from the Chairman and Treasurer for the AGM 2020 and the annual East Cowes Heritage Report for the AGM 2020.

The Brick Display planned for Whippingham Church Hall grounds.

Government Planning Reforms

Isle of Wight Society
Chairman's Report for the AGM 2020

The past year has been very mixed with a change from normal daily life to a period where guidance for a safe existence during a global pandemic changes from week to week. While so much uncertainty exists the Executive have decided not to resume any meetings as they are not essential for community well-being. However we feel that we should report on the year's activities and make preparations for an AGM by asking for nominations for officers of the Executive who wish to be voted in when we do hold our AGM. Several organizations have used the internet to hold on-line meetings. I have participated in a few of these and they can be successful once participants have learnt how to operate the software of each particular application. This can take time. As you see I am already using terminology that most of us did not experience during our formative years. Therefore we shall be patient and wait until it is completely safe for members and the public to gather in one room. I have included the public as we welcome anyone who is interested in attending any of our meetings. All members are encouraged to bring friends along to hear about what we do. Of course only paid up members are eligible to vote on motions but we would like the opportunity to encourage new members to join.

Since the 2019 AGM when David and Sarah Burdett, Colin Arnold and Michael Paler were elected to be officers of the Executive we were lucky that Paul and Jo Bingham agreed to be co-opted onto the committee. However all the officers are busy in their own community activities and their own personal commitments with little time to take on additional tasks. So there has not been any expansion of our activities except in presenting Island history to the public.

The lack of a larger work force is unfortunate because recently the government has announced the wish to change the planning system yet again. In one respect the policy is good in that they wish to encourage town and parish councils to create Neighbourhood Plans. This has been government policy for the last two decades. Here on the Island several parishes have done good work in creating their own local plans and having them approved by the County Council as official documents but the majority still have to do so. These plans will provide developers with better guidance through both Island-wide and local specific plans. The government has advertised more clearly that there is financial support from central government to help parish councils carry out the extensive work needed to create a Neighbourhood Plan. It is hoped that more councils will be pro-active and find those with time and energy to put the plans together. One recent example is the East Cowes Town Council that has set up a forum to allow local residents the opportunity to get started. The IWS was invited to show the planners the problems experienced in the town.

While we welcome the above initiative of the government, we are worried that, at the same time, they are discussing the removal of public comment on individual planning applications in favour of communities deciding on a permanent basis a blanket decision whether their area is a development area or not. This will mean that one policy will apply to all applications whereas we know that all planning applications are different and need a guided flexible approach. Our Society really could do with help from someone who has the time to follow closely the arguments put forward by government and civic organisations such as CPRE, Heritage England, National Trust and Civic Voice.

The work involved with our bi-annual Conservation Award went ahead as usual as this was supposed to be an award year. We reached the stage where the nominators had submitted all their details and we were due to carry out our judging tour of the properties when the shut-down was imposed. We did discuss whether the judges could make their decisions by viewing photographs sent as attachments to emails. Experience caused the judges decide that this would not be a wise choice as they have found over the years that one has to visit a property to obtain a proper understanding of the effort put in by all concerned – owner, architect and builders. So the decision by the joint IoW Society and RIBA committee was to postpone the awards until next year. Happily all those involved were agreed to leave everything in place until next year. One aspect that affected the decision is that, after the awards evening, we shall again set up an extended public exhibition, hopefully next time in Sts Thomas' Church, Newport.

The postponement means that there will also be a presentation of awards in 2022 as projects are still going ahead during 2020 and 2021. Members should remember that if they see a development worthy of recognition completed within the last five years we shall accept a nomination. If you do not know who to contact, inform us directly or via the East Cowes Heritage Centre and we shall see if the owners wish to nominate their property.

An important new activity has concerned the history of the brick making industry on the Island. The Isle of Wight Industrial Archaeological Society (IndArch) was reformed in the summer of 1995. Mrs Jill Reilly was the secretary at that time. She had been a driving force in collecting sample bricks and information about the brick yards of the Island. An early achievement of the IndArch Society was the establishment of a small museum in a barn at Clamerkin Farm between Newtown and Porchfield. A permanent exhibition put the material on display with supporting information about the brick industry. However in 1998 the farm was sold to the National Trust and the museum had to find a new home. A new permanent venue was not found so the collection of bricks was put into store in East Cowes where it has remained. In 2014 the Industrial Archaeology Society became inactive due to a shortage of replacement officers.

In 2015 I started talking to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St Mildred's Church, Whippingham, about using an old building of theirs, that had lost its roof, as a new home for the brick exhibition. Agreement was reached with the officers of IndArch that the IoW Society could borrow indefinitely their material to create the exhibition. The situation was complicated in that the building had for many years been used as a small cafe and souvenir shop helping to raise funds for the church. The heritage officer of the planning department was asked about replacing the roof and verbal agreement was reached. When an application was submitted to change the use of the building from retail to a heritage use things became difficult and the attempt was abandoned.

During 2019 one of the church wardens single-handedly re-roofed the building and discussions resumed. Once the building was useable other people became interested in using it. The final decision was reached that a local businessman would rent the building, providing funds for the church, while a shelter could be created in the grounds surrounding the church hall to display the brick exhibition. Plans were presented to the PCC and approved. Rough costings of the construction were made and an appeal made to the Foyle Foundation for money to purchase the building materials. The brick collection was transported from the store to the orchard behind the church hall car park for sorting. The Foundation said that it could take up to three months for a decision to be made on the application, and regrettably it has been refused. In the meantime a member of the IoW Society has made a generous donation that will allow us to start purchasing building material once we have decided on the size of each section of the display.

The fine weather and easing of the Lockdown has allowed Sarah and myself to travel around the south and west of the Island more than we normally do, hence the photograph on the front cover of the magazine. I am always struck by the contrast between this area and the north-east quadrant of the Island. In appearance the south and west remain very much as it has for many decades. Blackgang Chine has had to move as erosion dictated but the noise of children enjoying themselves during the school holidays confirmed that changes in this area had not changed the use nor character of the landscape. On the other hand the north-east has seen an almost continuous series of plans and proposals, both in detail and in characterisation, such as the Area Action plans for three main areas- the Medina, Ryde and the Bay Area. None of these plans were fully developed.

I make these comments because there is a topic that I have not heard discussed at length recently. That is that the next electoral boundary review will propose that the Island is divided into two constituencies. To my mind this is another example of centralised political thinking. The government think that it will be fairer if all members of parliament represent the same number of residents. In other words another case of "One size fits All". What is needed is joint action between our one MP, the County Council and all residents to persuade the government to award Island Status to the Isle of Wight. A decade or so ago we were on the verge of achieving European recognition of Island Status but a general election brought a change of politics in the Island Council and the incoming councillors would not have anything to do with the plans of their

predecessors so the application was dropped. To get recognition for our particular problems we need to act as a united Island. I shall be asking our Executive Committee to discuss this matter to see what action we should take. I hope members will provide their own views to guide our debate.

I hope all members manage to remain safe and healthy until life becomes easier for all of us.

David Burdett September 2020

The Brick Exhibition.

The plan is to mount a display about the building of St Mildred's church, and Island Brickyards. This will be housed in a free standing structure, with a display approximately 40 feet long by about two feet deep, covered by an overhanging tiled roof. The overhang will protect both the exhibition and the visitor from the weather. The tiles will match the church hall. It is proposed to use a wooden framework and the floor will be laid with bricks. Nothing will be attached to the old stone wall. Information panels at the rear of the exhibition will be supported on battens between the posts.

There will be five exhibition bays. Each will have a different appearance, with shelves to support materials, a mock-up of brickmaker's bothy with tools, numerous examples of bricks, and perspex waterproof information panels, which will have written and photographic information. The artefacts will be behind perspex. We want to achieve a professional finish to a high standard.

Bay 1. **The creation of the Church**. This will look at the building St Mildred's church, and the materials used in the craft of stonemasonry. Bricks from the various eras, such as the 16thc Flemish bricks, will be included. The 21st century restoration of the church will be described.

Bay 2. **Queen Victoria's and East Cowes brickyards**. There were two Royal brickyards, to produce both red and buff bricks. Combinations of the two colours of brick can be seen of several of the properties built on the Queen's estate. In East Cowes the major brickyard was that made for the East Cowes Park development. We have examples of various types of VR and ECP bricks and tiles.

Bay 3. **Working at a brickyard**. This will describe how bricks were made by hand, or with the use of mechanical aids such as a pug mill and a kiln. Wooden brick moulds will be shown. First-hand accounts from the Island will be included.

Bay 4. **Island Brickyards**. We have many examples of the different bricks from the 100 or so Island yards. Photographs, maps and historical information will be on display.

Bay 5. **Island Terracotta work and "Twiddly Bits"**. Maps and information of where to see good examples in situ will be shown, along with numerous examples of what to look for.

We think that the exhibition will add to the publicly available information about the history of our Island, and present an invaluable collection of brick artefacts that have been hidden away for many years.



Annual East Cowes Heritage Report for the AGM , October 2020.

Since the summer of 2019 East Cowes Heritage Centre has been busy, albeit not “as usual!”

In the summer of 2019 we celebrated the 60th Anniversary of **the first hovercraft**, and the autumn exhibition looked at the changes to East Cowes High Street and Castle Street. Both exhibitions were accompanied by appropriate **video displays, with “then and now”** photographs of the High Street and Castle Street. This was important for the High Street, as it no longer exists, now being under Red Funnel’s marshalling area.

The Heritage Centre took part in the “**Christmas in the Square**” event, where we had a stall for the whole day and raised a good sum. The **new book, “The Osborne House Stable Block”** was popular.

Work had been going on behind the scenes on improving our **cataloguing of artefacts**. We were able to buy a new steel cupboard for artefacts and two sets of book shelves when Queensgate Primary school moved into their new smaller building on the same site.

The first exhibition of 2020 featured the work of Trinity House in East Cowes, with a new leaflet to accompany it. Year 6 **children at Holy Cross School were given a talk about the 1942 Blitz on East Cowes**, and then taken on a “Blitz” walk around the town. Preparations were well underway to start our “**VE Day in East Cowes**” exhibition in April, when we went into Lockdown. We attended the small service commemorating all those who died in the Blitz, taking the Remembrance lamp for the Polish Sailors from Błyskawica.

It was decided to **continue to change our window displays** as often as possible during Lockdown, and once we realised that the VE Day exhibition at the Town Hall would not happen we expanded the research, and changed the window every two weeks to enable us to cover all aspects of living in the town in 1945. We also took part in a socially distanced film session describing VE day in East Cowes.

We were in email contact with the organisation recording **the Secret Resistance army**, which would have gone underground should the South Coast have been invaded. We found that at least three people in East Cowes were involved in this, and we were able to supply information that the men had written down in their old age to help expand the Isle of Wight information. Google www.staybehinds.com to find out more.

As home work several members took on **transcribing the East Cowes and Whippingham Census records** onto legible Excel spread sheets. This has been a laborious process, but so much easier to read now than the old handwriting, especially that of our enumerator in 1891 and 1901. His handwriting was atrocious! We still have not quite finished the task, but our thanks go to all who have helped with this.

We were given a Government Grant to help us pay the bills during Lockdown. When restrictions were lifted, we looked at re-opening, but found we could not comply with all the regulations, so the closed sign remains on the door. However, if people need to visit for research or to donate items and photographs we make special arrangements. We do have a QR code that those with modern phones and Apps can zap.

Our doorway has been useful to house three stands of Island **information leaflets** as more visitors arrived on the Island, with new leaflets for local people as well. Scarcely a day has passed without having to top up these containers. We have been busy catching up on filing and cataloguing new material, but really could do with a few more months of lockdown to finish the task!

This week we were offered two terracotta pots covered in shells from the Cambridge Road Shell House garden, so a window exhibition on the Shell House is the next project!

The Isle of Wight Society Annual General Meeting should have taken place in May 2020. It will not now take place until 2021.

The accounts for the last financial year have been independently audited and found to be correct. , They will eventually be presented for adoption when we do have our AGM.

**Isle of Wight Society
Account of Income and expenditure
1st January 2019 to 31st December 2019**

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Membership	508.00	ECHC Communications	163.65
Meetings	80.00	Quay Arts Exhibition	700.00
Donations	102.00	Civic Voice membership	95.00
Interest on Savings	21.53	Locton Insurance	203.83
		KW Professional Artwork	127.50
Income	<u>711.53</u>	Netguides website	<u>115.00</u>
Expenditure	<u>1404.98</u>		1404.98
Excess expenses/Income	- 693.45		

The Exhibition at Quay Arts was a one-off event marking the Society's 45 years of Conservation Awards.

Assets			
Brought forward from 2018	£	Assets at 31 Dec 2019 were made up of	
Balance at Bank	1178.75	Balance at Bank	545.17
Cash	90.00	Cash	8.60
National Savings	<u>2013.47</u>	Savings	<u>2035.00</u>
Total Dec 2018	3282.22	Total Dec 2019	2588.77
Loss for 2019	<u>- 693.45</u>		
Total at 31Dec 2019	2588.77		

Subscriptions are due on 1st January.

Website : www.isleofwightsociety.org.uk

The rates are: Full membership £12, Joint Full membership £20,

Email: eastcowesheritage@gmail.com

Senior membership £10, Joint senior £18,

Address: Isle of Wight Society,
East Cowes Heritage, 8 Clarence Road, East Cowes, Isle of Wight, PO32 6EP

Corporate membership £20.

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

Chairman and Treasurer : Mr D Burdett
Executive Committee members:
Colin Arnold, Paul and Jo Bingham, Michael Paler, Sarah Burdett

Name: Isle of Wight Society Bank :Lloyds

Charity Commission Number 27689

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

Government Planning Reforms Consultation

Background

The Government is failing to achieve the mandated target of 300,000 homes a year and consider that the planning system is a cause of the delay. They are therefore proposing to 'cut the red tape' in order to get houses built more quickly, speed up the process for creating Local Plans and digitalise the whole system.

Documentation

The Government have produced three documents which can be accessed on line. (Google – '**Government Planning Reforms**') They are:

1. A White Paper on the reforms (the official text document)
2. A White Paper on a changed formula for creating housing numbers (text document)
3. **A White Paper "Planning for the Future"** This consultation document sets out the Government's proposals under three groupings (pillars) which are: Planning for development; Planning for beautiful and sustainable places; Planning for infrastructure and connected places. The paper asks for comments in the form of questions throughout the long text, **to which you respond. (PLEASE!)**

There has been a lot of critical response to these proposals in the media. People are concerned that Local Authorities will have their scrutiny of planning proposals weakened.

Our Society is concerned with the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of public interest, and promoting high standards of planning and architecture on the Island. We would urge every member to respond to the Government proposals as outlined in the third consultation document above.

Deadline

The deadline for **submitting your comments** is the **29th October** for the "Planning for the Future" document. Although it is long and wordy, ***we hope that you will be prepared to spend some time to read it and send in your comments on the possible impact of these proposals.*** This will help the necessary scrutiny that this paper deserves. Thank you on behalf of the Island!

We hope that you are checking planning applications near you. We are concerned that some applications may have crept through unmonitored.

There may soon be another application from the developers of Norris Castle, East Cowes, as we have been invited to have another look around that vulnerable Listed building with the developers this week. The access to Norris Castle is one of the main stumbling blocks, with Historic England still voicing concerns at any detrimental intervention to the integrity of the building and estate.

The Isle of Wight Society was formed in 1969 to stimulate public interest in the character of the Island, promote high standards of planning and architecture, and secure the preservation and protection of buildings of historic or public interest.

What and/or where are these? All seen around the Island this year. Answers in the next issue!



1. This one we know where but not what!

2.



3.

4.

5.



6.

7.

8.