



ISLE OF WIGHT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY



May 2025

Number 157

SAVE THE DATE

ONE DAY CONFERENCE, SATURDAY 27TH SEPT 2025



Newport Minster, Church of Saints Thomas, St Thomas' Square, Newport PO30 1SL

This year's One Day Conference will be held in Newport Minster. Recently refurbished, it is a well-used venue for conferences and exhibitions.

With display space and a modern café, we have already exhibited there at a Heritage Day in September 2024.
More details and booking information in May and August Journals
2025.

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Programme of Events Spring/Summer 2025

Date	Subject	Speaker
12th May	National Coastwatch	Jeremy THOMAS
2nd June	AGM + Anniversary of end of WW2	See page 20
7th July	TBA	TBA
27th September	One Day Conference	See inside front cover
28th September	40th Anniversary Lunch	See inside rear cover
6th October	William Schaw LINDSAY, Victorian Entrepreneur	Bill LINDSAY

For an up-to-date list of future events visit www.isle-of-wight-fhs.co.uk/events

Monthly Meetings are held (unless stated otherwise) at
Arreton Community Hall, Main Road, Arreton, Newport PO30 3AD

Doors open at 1:30pm talks start at 2:00pm

Admission members £2, non-members £3

2025 Calendar Year Subscriptions

Standard Membership (eJournal)	£8
Classic UK Membership	£16
Classic Rest of the World	£30

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The Isle of Wight Family History Society takes no responsibility for articles submitted to the Journal, nor does it necessarily agree with opinions expressed.

Authors are expected to have checked for factual accuracy and to have obtained the necessary permissions for lengthy quotations and the use of illustrations.

Editorial

The theme for the Society's One Day Conference (ODC) in September (see [inside front cover](#)) is 'Licensed Premises and Licensees'. An enthusiastic team of volunteers was introduced to the project in February at the Heritage Resource Centre (HRC); they have started on the long process of capturing basic data from a number of sources and collating the details into searchable spreadsheets. On the same theme, an article in this Journal gives a insight into the history of an Island pub and brewery along with its owners.

The Society commemorates its 40th anniversary this year and a celebratory lunch has been arranged for the same weekend as the ODC in September; see [inside rear cover](#). You will find some nostalgic memories of our early days in the pages of this issue.

The AGM will take place at Arreton on the 2nd June. If you are unable to attend in person, you can vote online or by post. Full details are listed in the centre [yellow pages](#). The AGM will be followed by a 'Show and Tell' audience participation session to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the end of WW2. ([see Page 20](#)).

My special thanks to all those members whose articles appear in this issue.

Steve NEWBERRY (IWFHS Member 2189)

Journal Editor

journal.editor.iowfhs@gmail.com

Cover Picture

'The Red Lion Hotel' in Carisbrooke

From a postcard 'The Village of Carisbrooke, Isle of Wight' (No publisher).

Image available in the Carisbrooke album on the Society's Flickr photostream:

<https://www.isle-of-wight-fhs.co.uk/flickr-photo-albums>

Non-Committee Officers

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Newspaper Reports Project

Tony BEVIS newspapers.iowfhs@gmail.com

Pedigree Index

Mike HOAR pindex.iowfhs@gmail.com

The deadline for the August Journal is 1st July 2025

Heritage Resource Centre

West Chapel,
Northwood Cemetery,
Newport Road,
Cowes PO31 7ER

Opening Times

Tuesdays 1 pm to 4 pm
Wednesdays 10 am to 1 pm

Please do not use this street address for correspondence

Email enquiries to research.iowfhs@gmail.com

We can also be available at other times by arrangement with the Librarian, Hazel PULLEN.

The Friends of Northwood Cemetery will have representatives on hand at other times during the week.

We are pleased to be part of the Heritage Resource Centre at the West Chapel, Northwood Cemetery.

Northwood Cemetery is a working cemetery, managed by the Isle of Wight Council Bereavement Services section. Priority is given to any funeral services and visitors should be respectful of the needs of people attending such services and other visitors to the grounds.

There is very limited parking at the Cemetery. Visitors **must not** use the nearby Medical Centre Car Park. The Park & Ride car park at Somerton is a few 100 metres away (one bus stop).

Southern Vectis bus service (Route 1) from Cowes Red Jet Terminal or Newport Bus Station stop at Cowes Medical Centre. Use the service showing '**Park & Ride**' which operates approximately every 15 minutes. Buses showing 'Round House' use a different route.

A Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant toilet facility is available to visitors. We have facilities to copy, scan and print materials for personal use (subject to copyright restrictions).

The Heritage Resource Centre will be 'free to use' but donations towards our running costs and any materials will be welcomed.

Non-members will be asked to become temporary members (just a quick signature and a suggested minimum donation of £1 is all that is required) to enable us to offer access to privileged material available to our full members.

Annual Report 2024-25

Prepared for members of the society by Geoff Allan, Chairman.

The contents of this document are confidential to the society and should not be disclosed to non-members.

Welcome to the Annual Report of the Isle of Wight Family History Society, which covers the period May 2024 to March 2025. We normally hold our Annual General Meeting in early to mid-May, but due to other commitments the AGM this year will be held in June 2025.

Overall Governance and Responsibilities

Details of who is who within the Society can be found at the front of this Journal and have not been repeated to avoid duplication.

Honorary Member: Mr Richard Smout,
former IW Council Heritage Services Manager

Honorary Auditor: Mr Dean Finlayson

The Chairman and Committee Members are elected at the AGM. Specific roles are confirmed or assigned at the first Committee meeting following the AGM.

Proposals to be raised at AGM in June 2025

No proposals have been received.

President

Jon Matthews completes his term as President this year. Nominations have been invited for the next 3-year term, for this purely figurehead role.

Re-Election of Committee Members

The following Committee members have agreed to stand for re-election:

Geoff Allan, Hazel Pullen, Sharon Beddard, John Pullen, Gillian Glasbey, Mike Hoar, Gerry Newberry, Claire Willis.

Peter Spencer stood down as Journal Editor during 2024. Steve Newberry was co-opted to the Committee to take on this role and will stand for election this year.

Hazel Pullen stood down as Vice-Chair and Programme Secretary in 2023 but will continue as Librarian. No replacements have been found as yet for these positions.

Chairman's report

Resources and Premises

The Society continues to rent a storage unit at Ryde for material held in abeyance awaiting cataloguing and also administrative documents such as the Financial Accounts held for 7 years.

We continue our residence for two sessions per week at the West Chapel at Northwood Cemetery, which has been designated as a Heritage Resource Centre (HRC), managed overall by the Friends of Northwood Cemetery (FoNC).

The Cemetery and premises remain in the overall ownership of the Isle of Wight Council. A Licence agreement has been signed between the Friends of Northwood Cemetery and the Isle of Wight Family History Society which regulates our usage of the HRC.

Due to lack of patronage on Saturday mornings we are no longer formally open on that day or on other days, but can do so if required, by arrangement with the HRC Manager, and FoNC.

Journal Distribution

Thistle Print Ltd, based in Leeds, continue as our printers and distributors for the Journal sent to those Members electing to receive a printed copy.

The Membership Secretary provides a distribution list quarterly to Thistle Print and can provide some back copies of Journals for new Members joining later in the membership year.

Obituaries

We know of the following members (and some past members) who died during the past year, or whose deaths in the previous year were subsequently notified to us (in alphabetical order):

Robert Blake, Michael Cant, Janet Griffin, George Lowndes, Kenneth Randall, Ralph Snudden

Website

The website continues to be our main 'shop window' to the world. We make frequent updates to the content of the website in terms of news, events, articles and datasets.

Federation of Family History Societies (FFHS)

We are members of the FFHS to whom we pay a capitation allowance based on member numbers. We will continue to attend FFHS meetings and training events where relevant and where travel and subsistence costs can be justified. The Federation have re-branded themselves as The Family History Federation (FHF) to better represent their membership profile.

Attendance at other Societies' events

We have not attended any other events.

Attendance at Volunteer Fairs

We were represented at two events, at the Isle of Wight Steam Railway and at Newport Minster. Although useful from a networking viewpoint, no volunteers were actually recruited directly.

Member contributions

As always, I welcome any comments or suggestions with respect to any aspect of the Society.

The following reports summarise the activities of the other Committee Members:

Secretary's report – Gillian Glasbey

Continued to act as point of contact with external correspondents and Meetings Secretary.

Membership Secretary's report – Gerry Newberry

The Membership distribution is as follows:

Type	Current Year	Previous Year
UK	401 (465)	535 (612)
eJournal	455 (503)	636 (705)
Rest of World	33 (34)	51 (54)
TOTAL	889 (1,002)	1,222 (1371)

This total does not include Honorary, Exchange or administrative categories.

Since membership covers 1 or 2 people in a household, the actual number of people who are members is also shown for each year in parentheses. During the 2024 membership year 93 subscriptions were taken out by new members.

Overall membership figures for 2024 have decreased by 27.3% compared to the previous year.

Any standard subscriptions which fall short of the new subscription amounts are converted to eJournal subscriptions with any residual amounts considered to be donations. The new SumUp payment option is being used, particularly useful to members abroad paying by card.

Treasurer's report – Claire Willis

The provisional audited accounts (see elsewhere in this Journal) have been provided by Dean Finlayson based on the transactions recorded and submitted. The Society's financial year runs from 1st January to 31st December.

As at 31 December 2024 the summary position was as follows (to nearest £)

Lloyds 1 (Current)	£1,848
Lloyds 2 (Deposit)	£6,570
Lloyds 3 (Fixed Term Deposit)	£15,000
Paypal	£3,048
Cash in hand	£126
Total	£26,592

Overall, we show a surplus of £2,915 for the year – a useful buffer to allow for any increases in expenditure in the coming year. Full details are given in the separate Financial Accounts.

Programme secretary's report - Hazel Pullen

Monthly Meetings

April	From the Isle of Wight to the USA - Lavers emigrants by Anthony LAVERS
May	Conference: Churches, Chapels and Cemeteries
June	I'm not blessed well jokin'! by Alan PHILLIPS
July*	A local wartime diary and D-Day June 6 1944 : East Cowes memories by Sarah BURDETT
Sep	Renewing the Minster – Newport by Hannah GRIFFITHS
Sep	Visit to Farringford House and gardens
Oct	Auxiliary Units of the Home Guard on the Isle of Wight by Sam BILES
Nov	How did I get here? by Hazel PULLEN
Dec	Old Gurnard by Geoff ALLAN, plus Members' social and chat
Jan 2025	A Gentleman's Tour of the Isle of Wight by Sheila CAWS
Feb	The Isle of Wight Railways by Cara TREVOR
March	Apprentices from the Workhouse by Jean THOMPSON

We now hold Monday afternoon meetings at Arreton Community Centre. Although not ideal for those members who are in employment, we felt this was a reasonable compromise. We shall continue to review the provision of meetings, in terms of location, timing and method of delivery.

* We did hold one evening meeting at Newport Cricket Club – this was attended mostly by the same people as attend the Arreton meetings. We will still consider holding evening meetings in future.

A number of informal workshops were held, hosted by Sharon

BEDDARD, Steve NEWBERRY and Geoff ALLAN, related to specific areas of interest or to gain volunteers for upcoming projects.

Journal editor's report - Peter Spencer / Steve Newberry

The Di Harding award winners for this year are:

1. Anthony LAVERS 2. Steve STOTESBURY 3. Tony EWEN

We have revised the prize structure to offer free memberships (in terms of 3, 2, and 1 year(s)), rather than cash.

Librarian's report - Hazel Pullen

We continue to work on the organisation and cataloguing of our library and documentary holdings, but much more needs to be done, especially in weeding out material which is redundant or not relevant.

The library catalogue is available on the website:

<https://www.isle-of-wight-fhs.co.uk/databases/library>

The wildcard character % can be used anywhere in its search fields.

We now display a banner at the entrance to Northwood Cemetery when we are in attendance at the Heritage Resource Centre, and this has attracted several new visitors. We have also received a number of mainland and overseas visitors wishing to pursue their research.

Projects

The County Record Office Volunteers team

The CRO team have now completed their major project to index entries from the Guardians of the Poor Meetings books.

Thanks to Derek Osbourn and Rosemary Stewart for completing the final push on this Project.

Other Volunteers who have given their time over the last decade are noted on the Website project page.

Since inception, Guardians of the Poor Meetings covering over 50 years have been transcribed, with over 100,000 individual payments by the Committee being recorded to the recipients. The format of the minutes

changed in 1836, requiring more interpretation of the records to make them more useful to researchers.

The HRC Volunteers

A number of volunteers are engaged on various transcription projects and administrative tasks such as cataloguing photographs. If you are interested in helping, please contact Hazel Pullen or Sharon Beddard. We have just initiated a project to document Licensed Premises and Licensees on the Island, which will form the basis of our Conference in September 2025. At least a dozen people have volunteered to contribute to this.

Pedigree Index

Mike Hoar has reviewed the functionality of this and plans to implement an improved web based system using material captured in Family Tree Maker. He has also taken on the role of Administrator.

Remote Volunteers

Ian Roach in Canada has commenced the creation of a 'one Island family tree' covering the pre-1837 period. Calling it the Island 'Forest of Trees' Ian welcomes any contributions to populate this resource, which will be held as an Ancestry tree.

Having reviewed the coverage of inscriptions at municipal cemeteries on the Island, there are 'missing links' regarding Sandown, Shanklin, Ventnor and Wroxall cemeteries. We are slowly gathering more information on these, with Sue Samways being heavily engaged in surveying Shanklin Cemetery.

Related Projects of interest

Friends of Northwood Cemetery

Our sister organisation continues to make considerable progress, both in historic records, and grounds maintenance. Their latest newsletters can be found at <http://www.friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk/>

Friends of Newport and Carisbrooke Cemeteries

Details of a similar initiative for the Cemeteries of Newport and Carisbrooke can be found at <https://www.foncc.org.uk/>

Friends of East Cowes, Kingston Cemetery Records

Details of a similar initiative for the Kingston Cemetery can be found at <https://www.friendsofeastcowes.co.uk/>

Financial Report 2024

Isle of Wight Family History Society Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2024 Confidential

2023	Income	2024
£		£
9,911.00	Subscriptions	11,716.00
1,523.00	Donations	2,245.63
551.98	Publisher Licences	152.98
171.67	Interest	102.90
284.00	Monthly Meetings	515.00
456.50	ODC/AGM tickets	394.90
0.00	Summer Outing	417.14
20.00	Books/media sales	28.00
0.00	Easy Fundraising	34.20
5.90	SumUp Income	0.00
30.00	Misc Income	0.00
1,114.86	Misc Refund	1,200.00
14,068.91	Total Income	16,806.75

	Expenditure	
3,120.00	Premises Rental - HRC	3,250.00
1,274.40	Storelt Rental	1,274.40
600.00	Beddard Rental	250.00
381.00	Monthly meeting Room Hire	426.50
337.93	Monthly Meetings, Speaker Fees and Refreshments	344.77
465.00	ODC Room Hire / Speakers Fees	462.30
0.00	Summer Outing	417.14
5,719.80	Journal Production	4,624.04
47.10	Stationery, phone, post	141.70
477.28	FFHS Capitation	422.94
115.25	Insurance	115.25
135.00	Legal Obligations	135.00
295.75	SumUp and Paypal fees	356.77
0.00	Anniversary Lunch	150.00
419.62	Media (website, software, licences)	965.55
0.00	Committee Meal	170.65
24.24	Library Acquisitions	34.98
220.52	Retirement Presentation	250.00
0.00	Misc Outgoings	100.00
28.00	Member Refunds	0.00
13,660.89	Total Expenditure	13,891.99
408.02	Surplus	2,914.76

2023		2024
£		£
1,698.50	Lloyds Current Account	1,847.54
4,931.16	Deposit Account	6,570.10
15,000.00	Fixed Term Deposit Account	15,000.00
229.28	PayPal	3,048.41
113.30	Cash	125.82
21,972.24	Gross Current Assets	26,591.87

	Current Liabilities	
3,956.00	Subscriptions Received in Advance	5,196.50
	PayPal adjustment from 29/12/2023	1,500
		6,696.50
18,016.24	Net Current Assets	19,895.37
14,984.22	Fund Balance as at 31 December 2023	15,392.24
408.02	Surplus for 2024	2,914.76
15,392.24	Fund Balance as at 31 December 2024	18,307.00

I certify that upon the evidence of the records, vouchers and bank statements presented to me, together with explanations given by your Treasurer, the Accounts give a true and fair view of the surplus on the Society's activities during the year ended 31 December 2024.

Signed : Dean Finlayson

Dated : 18th March 2025

Membership Secretary's Report

I wish a warm welcome to those of you who have joined or returned to our Society in the past three months.

If you have not already done so, please take the time to have a look around our website and familiarise yourself with the self-managed aspects of **My Account**.

Advice and guidance can be found from our Home page under the **Help** and **Membership > Membership Information** tabs and, as always, you are welcome to either e-mail or write to me for assistance.

You can edit and change your personal details - name, address, email address, phone number and password.

The membership subscription renewal date is 1st January each year. Our membership database allows payments to be made by you for the following year from 1st November onward.

All subscription payments are made by you, we do not take payments. The Society's bank account is checked daily and your membership account up-dated accordingly.

Where possible we would appreciate on-line payments for any payments, as there are now bank charges in place for cash and cheque deposits.

Information about the One Day Conference and Anniversary Lunch can be found in this Journal. Please contact me with any questions or bookings.

Could you join our Committee and help to keep the Society going?

We are always looking for new faces and have a number of Committee roles which would benefit from extra help. The roles of Vice Chairman and Programme Secretary are vacant.

Gerry NEWBERRY (IOWFHS Member 2189)

Membership Secretary

membership.secretary.iowfhs@gmail.com

From the Desk in Westward Ho!

In this our anniversary year, I am sure there will be plenty of reminiscing about the early days of the Society.

I wasn't there right at the very beginning but arrived soon afterwards, for the Christmas 1985 meeting, at a very crowded Athena House. As I and two other members were all heavily pregnant at the time it made the small room seem even smaller. I soon assumed responsibility for the bookstall and as I didn't drive at the time, would often carry boxes of books up the road from Ryde St John's station.



I was involved with the wider family history movement, as part of the then Federation of Family History Societies (now the Family History Federation), which meant that I had contacts with several mainland speakers, so it usually fell to me to organise the one-day conferences. It was also this connection that led to IWFHS being the smallest society to host a residential conference.

Many that I meet still talk fondly about the 1995 '*Cherry Stones*' Conference. No one will come, they said but come they did and it was one of the Federation's most successful events, at the same time making IWFHS the money that enabled us to lease our first premises. We had a wonderful team who helped to bring this about but it was hard work.

'Never again', I said but having gone through the learning curve, it seemed a shame not to make use of that expertise. I have organised annual Braund one-name weekends for over thirty years, one of which extended to eleven days (best not to ask!) but that was nothing to organising a national/international weekend. Despite the 'never again' I ended up being heavily involved in organising three more residential conferences, this time for the Guild of One-Name Studies, the last about ten years ago.

‘That’s definitely the last time’, I said. Except that I now find myself organising a weekend family history conference in North Devon and yes I have said ‘this is absolutely the last time’. Just in case you want to enjoy a weekend of family history next year, early details are already available <https://www.devonfhs.org.uk/devon-fhs-conference-2026/>.

Other early memories of IWFHS include various outings, one to Cowes particularly sticks in the mind and of course our many trips to London archives. We also visited the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies in Canterbury, when I believe we left two people behind. We also had stalls at some of the London family history fairs – the ones before the commercial firms took over. Best of all were the biennial trips to Weston-super-mare for the south-west family history fairs; all good opportunities to spread the word about IWFHS.

Little did I think at that 1985 meeting, where family history would take me, nor would I have conceived of some of the developments we’ve seen over four decades. I am looking forward to sharing more memories (some of which I can’t commit to print!) with you when I speak at this year’s conference.

Janet FEW (IWFHS Member: 0050)
Vice-President
Email: jfewhistory@gmail.com

Obituaries

We have been notified that Kenneth RANDALL (IWFHS Member 1787) has passed away. A message of condolence has been sent to his daughter Karen.

We have been notified that Robert BLAKE (IWFHS Member 2963) passed away on 13 December 2024. A message of condolence has been sent to his daughter Donna.

The Early Days of the IWFHS

I started to trace my family history back around 1977 when computers and indexes were something only to dream of. I joined the Hampshire Genealogical Society (HGS) as there was no local Society at the time and they were indexing the 1851 census. It was possible to buy these in book form by area so I was waiting for the IW bits (shame they didn't transcribe my ancestor's name correctly but any index is better than nothing and all volunteers producing indexes should be appreciated).

I probably saw the first meeting of the new IW Society advertised in the County Press for January 1985 in Ryde where I lived at the time so I decided to go along. It was at Athena House in John Street, Ryde, a study centre run by Brenda JAMES. She lived upstairs in the Victorian villa. There were steps up to the front door opening into a hallway. To the left two rooms had been knocked through to make one long space. The chairs were arranged in rows across the narrow part. I think there were twenty or so people there. Many had probably been to the classes run the previous year; from which the idea of a Society stemmed I believe.

I sat next to Sally McCONKEY and we became life-long friends. Robin and Denis GOSDEN from Freshwater were there. They were, and still are, distant cousins. We descend via different branches from a marriage in Brighstone in 1742 but I hadn't met them until then. Other names remembered from that first meeting are Janet GRIFFIN who became a stalwart of the Society and long-time committee member; Jean LOWE who volunteered to compile a strays index and Helen PROCTOR, an ex-WREN, always keen to help out, who later gave a talk on her research.

Brenda took the meeting and either the annual subscription or the meeting fee (I can't remember which) was set at 50p. She later produced an A4 format journal as and when she could so they were numbered as Winter, Summer, etc. Back then, journals were about the only way of advertising events and giving reports on activities. Eventually I took over as editor and tried to model the, by then, A5 journal on the HGS one. Over the years the journal has gone from strength to strength due to subsequent excellent editors so please support them with articles.

Early speakers were mostly well-known local historians such as Roy BRINTON on Ryde and Charlie TAYLOR on Cowes. Clifford WEBSTER, then County Archivist, also gave a talk. The layout of the room tended to be difficult, either lots of short rows across so those at the back had trouble seeing and hearing or a couple of long ones stretching the length of the room.

In November 1985, the Society had a display in the window of the then Anglia Building Society at the top of Union Street. As I was a window dresser I'm not sure if it was my idea or whether I was 'volunteered' to do it. Some members allowed their family memorabilia to be used. There were examples of various types of documents along with genealogical help books displayed. Apparently, it was hoped to do something similar in Newport but that never happened.

One summer, the Society held an open day at Athena House which caused a lot of interest with displays and an afternoon speaker. Even the County Press turned up and photographed me with a slightly worrying 1980's hairstyle showing my family tree to Janet FEW's young daughter, Rebecca.

It was a shame that the Society outgrew Athena House and had to relocate. Without the enthusiasm of people like Brenda James and Janet Griffin the Society would never even have started. It is a testament to everyone involved over the years that it has grown into the successful Society it is today. Who'd have thought 40 years later – all those indexes being produced by volunteers; still finding interesting speakers for monthly meetings and one-day conferences; the prestigious '*Cherry Stones*' Conference in 1995 (that long ago?); an excellent web site; resource centre at Northwood and even a Facebook page.

Hilary LLOYD (IWFHS Member 14)

Rose Cottage, Burnt House Lane, Newport Isle of Wight, PO30 2PW



IW County Press
24 June 1988 Page 46

Memories of Athena House

I attended my first meeting a short while after the IWFHS was formed and then became a member. My first task was being volunteered to take Chris BRAUND around the back streets of Ryde to find a shop that was open at 9pm as there was no milk or biscuits available for refreshments.

By the second meeting I was promoted to help make the tea in the kitchen which was in the basement. Firstly, I had to find the crockery and on opening a kitchen cupboard found a cat asleep on the cups and saucers. We let the cat out into the garden just before Brenda JAMES, a founder member and owner of Athena House told us the cat was not allowed out so we then spent 20 minutes trying to entice it in again. The worktop was unevenly balanced as it was propped up on wood and when crockery was placed on one end the whole lot shot on the floor. (dustpan and brush provided).

At Christmas everyone was invited to bring food to share. By then the membership numbers had swelled and so the room was far too small. Chairs were placed in 2 back-to-back rows and once seated you were unable to get up again. Everyone seemed to take only sausage rolls or mince pies and as they were passed along the rows there were varying degrees of Cordon Bleu or mainly not...as some looked as though they hadn't seen the oven or were made by King Arthur (charcoal is supposed to be a healthy addition to a diet)! I am sure some of them passed by several times!!

We dressed to impress as it was Christmas but one member always seemed to sport a rather fetching hair decoration which looked like an entangled psychedelic sock so she was then secretly given the nickname 'Sock'.

The following year I was asked to give a talk with slide show about my ancestors and as I had only been researching the family for a short time, I was very nervous especially when I saw Clifford WEBSTER, County Archivist sitting in the front row. Happy memories of the beginnings of the society and Athena House.

Christine BROOM (IWFHS Member 6758)

cbroom.roud@btinternet.com

AGM and Anniversary of the end of WW2

The purpose of this meeting (Arreton, 2 Jun 2025) is primarily to hold our Annual General Meeting (of which more details are to be found in the centre pages).

But there will be an opportunity to have further presentations to mark the 80th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War:

VE day (8 May 1945) and VJ day (14 Aug 1945)

To this end, we invite any members to come along with memories or artefacts relating to the War (whether personal or family) and give us a short 'Show and Tell' talk about them. There is no need to prepare elaborate presentations as we will have the ability to project images of documents and items on the big screen.

To kick things off, Hazel PULLEN is prepared to show us material related to her father, Pilot Officer Frank FITZJOHN, who served in 120 Sqn Coastal Command during the war, flying B-24 Liberators, and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his part in the sinking of a German U Boat.

Steve NEWBERRY will also tell the story of his father Aubrey NEWBERRY who was a Chief Petty Officer in the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean theatre, while Gerry NEWBERRY's father, John YATES, flew in carrier-borne Fairey Barracuda aircraft with the Fleet Air Arm.

Your relatives need not be so 'distinguished', but everyone has a story to tell.

We have notes on around 4000 men and women who served and/or died during the War and were from the Island or who had some connection with it.

Let me know if you wish to take part, and we will allot you some time during the afternoon.

Geoff ALLAN (IWFHS Member 392)
chairman.iowfhs@gmail.com

The Mystery of Francis Patrick CLEMENTS

Recently I came across three original national newspapers from 1911.

- The *Daily Mirror*, 6 March
- The *Daily Express*, 7 March and
- The *Daily Mail*, 9 March

They had been posted from Folkestone for a half-penny stamp on 10 March to Miss DAY, The Retreat, Bonchurch, Isle of Wight. The front page of the *Mirror* had a full page photograph of a man standing beside an unmarked grave in St Boniface's Churchyard, the 'new' church at Bonchurch. The grave was thought to contain the remains of the Hon. Francis Patrick CLEMENTS, brother of the Earl of Leitrim.

According to his naval service record on Find My Past, Francis Patrick Clements had been born in Donegal to the Earl and Countess of Leitrim on 13 September 1885. He was on the *Britannia*, a training ship, from May 1900 to September 1901 and also served aboard the *Warspite* and *Grafton*. His conduct was 'promising' and he seems to have gone to college as an acting sub-lieutenant in January 1905. His health was poor, possibly to do with his lungs, and he was allowed to resign his commission in November 1906.

His father had died many years previously and Francis' brother, Charles, had inherited the earldom when aged only 14 and so Francis had become the heir.

By 10 July 1907 newspapers in New York were sending reports to British newspapers saying that the Hon Francis Patrick Clements, brother of Lord Leitrim, had arrived in the city after serving as a stoker on the Atlantic liner *St Louis* with just 8 dollars in his pocket but with no definite plans for the future. More news poured in daily. He was said to have used the name of SLOAN[E] for the crossing, but no-one of that name could be found. Mr DOBSON, the liner's engineer, when interviewed by reporters, thought someone resembling the photograph of Francis he was shown could have been aboard as a stoker the previous month.

Newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic started to get carried away with news of Francis' apparent disappearance. He would have been 22 and had not been seen in his London haunts since June 1907. They claimed he had got tired of the 'artificial and unreal' London society, had sacrificed his prospective fortune of £40,000 and was working as a tram conductor in New York.

Some reports said he was a cowboy in Texas, another that he had been followed by a private detective. They dragged up the story that the 3rd Earl of Leitrim (Francis' great-uncle) had been shot dead by his aggrieved tenants. It had taken thirteen years of litigation before Francis' father could inherit the title.

The present Earl, Francis' brother Charles, had to issue a statement. He said his brother was independent and not in debt. He may have gone to America as he had served there while in the Navy, however the family did not have his address. In March 1908 there were reports that an unknown man had been found dead in Kansas and the body was to be exhumed in case it was Francis but that seemed inconclusive with no further reports.

Why would Miss Day be so interested in the 1911 reports? In February of that year the *Police Gazette* had published a photograph and a description of Francis, who had apparently been missing since 21 May 1907. He was 6' with a fair complexion and brown hair, clean shaven and with 'very good teeth' and they suggested he could be suffering from 'religious mania'.

Sarah Amelia DAY was then 59, unmarried, and living with her bachelor brother, Alfred DAY. They were the children of Daniel DAY the well-known and successful Bonchurch builder. Sarah's father and her brother also Daniel, on seeing the Gazette, recalled the burial of an unknown man at Bonchurch who very closely resembled the photograph.

In September 1907 Ventnor bootmaker Herbert Llewellyn WARNE, then aged about 23, had been walking on the Landslip near to Bonchurch when he discovered a man hanging from a tree. The *Daily Mirror* of 6 March 1911 had a picture of Mr Warne pointing at the very branch

where the body had been found. At the time, the Days and the sexton took the body to a cave near to the church which acted as a mortuary.

The body was photographed and his clothes described. He had an old service revolver in his pocket and a silver watch with an unusual chain. Enquiries were made. It was thought the man was Clifford BYNG who was performing in a concert party at Ryde but that was discounted. The Rector of Bonchurch, described as a 'broad minded man' allowed¹ the burial to take place and read the service. Mr Day Snr remembered the day well as it was 'a wet drizzly morning' and the next day they found that an unknown person had laid flowers on the grave.

It was decided to exhume the body after comparing photographs. In particular, it was noted the deceased had 'peculiarly rounded ears' so perhaps Francis did as well. The Earl of Leitrim thought it could be his brother and arrived at Bonchurch. The body was exhumed at daybreak one April morning in 1911 when the graveyard was partially covered in snow. Several constables were on guard but everyone had been pledged to secrecy. At 10am the coffin was taken to the cave for Dr PEPPER to examine the body, in particular looking for gold fillings in the teeth. The Earl said it was not his brother and immediately left.

So it was that it took until 17 July 1917 for the Earl to obtain administration of Francis' estate valued at £2,000. The wills index stated he had died on or since 21 May 1907.

It may be possible to work out who sent the newspapers to Miss Day but sadly, as no further mention of Francis seemed to appear in the press, what happened to him will forever remain a mystery.

Hilary LLOYD (IWFHS Member 14)

Rose Cottage, Burnt House Lane, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 2PW

¹ Suicides were not normally allowed a burial in consecrated ground

Register Your Votes in the Annual General Meeting

You can cast your votes **online** by going to:

<https://mhstpauls.me.uk/FHS/fhsvote/>

Please read the instructions on each page carefully

Voting will be available till Sunday 1st June

If you **do not have internet access**, please insert your surname and the first line of your address in the spaces below...

...then complete the voting form overleaf.

Please return the completed form to arrive by 1st June to:

Mr GK Allan
Apartment 3
Sandbanks
Esplanade
Sandown
Isle of Wight
PO36 8DW

Your surname:

First line of your address:

AGM Voting Form

Please register your votes for the Society Officers, Committee and Reports.
If you have a joint membership, you may also use the 2nd box for the 2nd member.

Officers

Chairman	Geoff Allan Proposed by Hazel Pullen Seconded by Sharon Beddard	☐ ☐ For ☐ ☐ Against ☐ ☐ Abstain
Vice-Chair	Vacant	
Secretary	Gillian Glasbey Proposed by Geoff Allan Seconded by Gerry Newberry	☐ ☐ For ☐ ☐ Against ☐ ☐ Abstain
Treasurer	Claire Willis Proposed by Hazel Pullen Seconded by Geoff Allan	☐ ☐ For ☐ ☐ Against ☐ ☐ Abstain
Membership Secretary	Gerry Newberry Proposed by Mike Hoar Seconded by Sharon Beddard	☐ ☐ For ☐ ☐ Against ☐ ☐ Abstain
Programme Secretary	Vacant	

Committee* (Vote en bloc)

Sharon Beddard	☐ ☐ For
Steve Newberry	☐ ☐ Against
Mike Hoar	☐ ☐ Abstain
John Pullen	
Hazel Pullen	

Annual Report

☐ ☐ For
☐ ☐ Against
☐ ☐ Abstain

Financial Statement

☐ ☐ For
☐ ☐ Against
☐ ☐ Abstain

Committee*

Sharon Beddard
Steve Newberry
Mike Hoar
John Pullen
Hazel Pullen

Proposed by

Geoff Allan
Gerry Newberry
John Pullen
Geoff Allan
Sharon Beddard

Seconded by

Gerry Newberry
Mike Hoar
Sharon Beddard
Claire Willis
Mike Hoar

Information about the candidates

Chairman. Geoff ALLAN who lives on the Island, has been the Chairman since 2013. He has been the Webmaster since 2008. He has an interest in War Memorials and Monuments. He has been a member of the society since 1991.

Vice Chairman. Vacant

Secretary. Gillian GLASBEY who lives on the Island, has been the Secretary since 2019. She has been a member of the society since 2005

Treasurer. Claire WILLIS who lives on the Island, has been the Treasurer since 2021. She has been a member of the society since 2011.

Programme Secretary. Vacant

Membership Secretary. Gerry NEWBERRY who lives on the Island, has been the Membership Secretary since 2023. She has been a member of the society since 2010.

Sharon BEDDARD who lives on the Island, has been the Heritage Resource Centre Education Officer since 2019. She has been a member of the society since 2010.

Mike HOAR who lives on the Island, has been Systems Development Officer since 2019. He has been a member of the society since 2017.

Hazel PULLEN who lives on the Island, has been Librarian and Strays Coordinator since 2013. She is one of the regular volunteers at the Heritage Resource Centre. She has been a member of the society since 2008.

John PULLEN who lives on the Island, has been the Friends of Northwood Cemetery Liaison Officer since 2018. He has been a member of the society since 2008.

Steve NEWBERRY who lives on the Island, was co-opted on to the committee as Journal Editor at the November 2024 committee meeting. He has been a member of the society since 2006.



Recollections of the **SPRAKE** Brewery in Chale

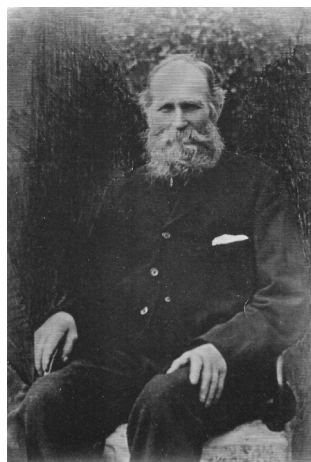
I've just joined the Isle of Wight Family History Society and would like to give you a brief outline of my connection to the Island. My father was Philip WILLS and my mother Irene Molly née BRIERS. They married on 16th April 1945 and lived in my Grandparents' house in Whitepit Lane, Newport. My brother David John was born there in 1946 and I was born in 1948 in one of the newly built council houses in Linden Road. My younger brother Christopher Philip was born there too in 1954.

My Great Grandparents, John WILLS and his wife Caroline née BARTLETT, moved to the Island from Somerset between 1888 and 1889 with their two sons, Fred and James. They lived at Froglands Farm, Carisbrooke. In 1890 my Grandfather Percy George WILLS was born. He married Phyllis Mary CLEAL in 1916. Phyllis was born in Puddletown, Dorset and she was the daughter of Charles CLEAL and Harriet BOWDITCH née HONEYBUN. Her family moved to the Island when she was four years old and they farmed Grange Farm at Brighstone.

My father, Philip WILLS, was born in Ryde to Percy and Phyllis on 22nd October 1919. Percy worked as a cooper in Portsmouth after WWI but because he wouldn't join a Trade Union he had to leave. My father and his parents then moved to live at Chale where my grandfather worked for Oscar SPRAKE as a cooper and for the rest of the day as driver of one of their old Model T Fords.

My father grew up in Chale and in the late 1980's and early 1990's wrote his memoirs entitled "Fords, Firkins & Fireworks". In it he writes about various people and things he could remember but he also wrote quite a lot about The Star Inn and the Brewery owned by Oscar SPRAKE who was generally referred to as 'The Governor'.

This is an excerpt from my father's book:



Oscar Sprake, The Governor

Fords, Firkins and Fords: Beginnings

‘...Chale, unlike most similar villages, had a brewery, one that brewed extremely good ale for almost one hundred years under the control of the SPRAKE family; themselves reputed to have been involved in the smuggling trade and finding the Star Inn an outlet for some of the fine contraband in days gone by.

The brewery was situated in Town Lane, the northernmost end of the long spread-out area comprising the village which ran roughly from north to south along the foot of Chale Down. Commencing at the brewery, Town Lane ran towards the east, ending at Stroud Green. Here the road turned to the right, heading south through Chale Green with its scattered houses, and so on up to Upper Chale with its church and school. The whole distance being about a mile and half, with a good number of cottages, farms and smallholdings on either side.

This was the village I knew from around 1922 until 1935, spending most of that time, when not at school, around and in the brewery and Star Inn or the cliffs, downs, beaches or fields within easy reach of our home in Town Lane.

Much has changed since those days; our cottage was pulled down shortly after 1935 to allow Town Lane to be widened. After the war the Star Inn was renamed the Jolly Brewer, finally being closed down and vandalised. There are houses almost the whole length of Town Lane and around the edges of Chale Green on which John BROWN'S old horse used to graze. There are even strange new names given to old loved places and even stranger people living there’.

Oscar SPRAKE seems to have taken a shine to my father for he writes:

‘I soon became a favourite of the Sprakes, at least of Tom SPRAKE and, in particular, the dear old Governor as Oscar SPRAKE, the then owner of the brewery, was generally known. Helping him in the daily working of the company were his nephews, Tom, Bob and Charlie Sprake. I remember him as a tall old man with a full white beard and he always seemed to be carrying a present of some kind for me. Some of these were most unusual; once I recall it was a quantity of mercury and

for years afterwards, we would find balls of it rolling around in the strangest places. Cigarette cards, sweets, fruit and biscuits all came my way in great profusion and it was not long before I became a frequent visitor to the brewery with the governor as my guide.'

Chale Brewery and The Star Inn

'When the old Governor died, (c.1926) it left his three nephews, Bob SPRAKE, Tom SPRAKE and Charlie SPRAKE in control of the brewery and inn. Tom was then the one mainly concerned with the brewery as Bob was involved with his business, The Vectis Stone Company at Bleakdown, while Charlie ran the Malt & Hops public house in Newport and the malt house in South Street. The other one, Bill, who in the early days ran a charabang (my father's spelling of charabanc) between Chale and Ventnor, later married the District Nurse and became landlord of The Horse & Groom at Ningwood.



BREWERY STAFF. LATE 1920s.

L to R. Jack Miller.F.Whitter.U/K.Mrs Whitter.Tom Sprake.P.Whitter.Frank Morris.
Front Row. Oscar Nicholson. Hugh Barton. Ernie Flux. U/K.
Missing. Bert Gosdin. Percy Wills. Fred Cleal.

19

I remember, at a very early age, I heard my first radio broadcast in The Star Inn. Tom Sprake had bought a wireless and fixed it up in one of the back rooms. I was invited to listen and the earphones were adjusted on my head and I clearly heard a man's voice followed by a piano, then, greatly to my consternation, I received an electric shock and I became wary of earphones for years afterwards. Some time later Tom fixed up an aerial on the trees at Stroud Green and installed his wireless on a trestle table beneath, and people crowded around to hear the results of the general election, probably around 1927. I would imagine Tom must have been the first person to own a wireless in Chale.

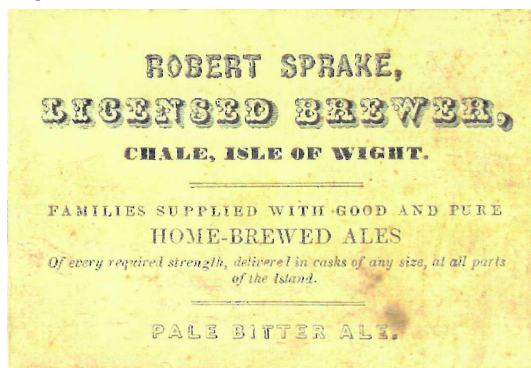
Two other constant visitors to the Inn were Jack KING and Harry COTTON. They were the village postmen and I never recall the mail failing to be delivered, regardless of the weather. These two had a most difficult job out in all weathers with only bikes as transport and having to make their way across muddy fields and lanes to out of the way farms and cottages, half a mile or so from the main roads.

On fine summer evenings the Star Inn really came into its own; then the narrow stone-flagged bar would be packed with people from all over the Island who came to sample its finest beers brewed by the Sprake brothers. Not only did they crowd the bar but spilled over onto the concrete yard at the front of the building, standing around or sitting on empty casks and cases, passing the evening in conversation and joking. Their varied makes of motor vehicles would be parked along the side of what we knew as 'the top road' leading to Atherfield or in the lane leading to Corve Farm. When the Brighstone Holiday Camp opened the drivers of the five or six charabangs carrying the visitors travelling from the mainland would pull up at The Star Inn and all would dismount, including the drivers, for a drink before continuing on to the camp.



Then there was that magnificent band of men who called themselves 'The Froth Blowers'. They would arrive very happy and confused with a large replica of a glass of beer with a cotton wool head of froth fixed to the radiator of their charabang. As they called at every public house on their route, and there were a good many before they reached The Star, there was always a good deal of singing and shouting during their stay.

Behind The Star Inn was the brewery. The main building, built during 1922 was of brick and three storeys high. Brewing commenced around five in the morning on Mondays and the wonderful aroma would come drifting down Town Lane announcing that Tom SPRAKE, assisted by Frank MORRIS, was in the process of producing the fine brews Chale was noted for. Later in the day, usually the evening, the Excise Officer would arrive to check the strength and alcoholic content of the brew. On the ground floor was the great wooden vat. It must have been all of eight feet in diameter at its base and stood around eight or nine feet high. When Brickwoods closed the brewery down, this vat was sold to



Hoars, the Shanklin brewers and my father and I cycled over to Shanklin one Sunday and he, with what little help I could give, reassembled it in its new home. I believe my father was paid five pounds for this and we were both given a cooked dinner.

On the west side of the main building and behind the living portion of the inn were the cellars where the beer was put into casks and awaited delivery around the Island. Power for all the working parts of the brewery was provided by small Petter engines. Altogether there were three of these engines on the premises; one in the brew house, one in the bottling shed and a third in a separate shed providing light throughout both brewery and inn. Steam and hot water were provided by a large vertical boiler maintained by Bert GOSDEN, a mighty bulk of a man, ex-Royal Navy I believe as he always wore a peaked cap. He was also in charge of the bottle washing plant.

Saturdays were only worked during the mornings and the time was taken to wash everything down, including Hilton MORRIS (my father's friend) and myself, if the younger members of the work force could catch us in the jets of their hoses as they washed the concrete yards. My father would spend the morning repairing casks or doing any carpentry work required. But there was still a chance for Hilton and myself to enjoy a trip in one of the old Fords. We found pleasure in the trips when out with my Uncle Fred CLEAL in the little half-tonner.

Those old Fords had many adventures if one could believe all the tales the drivers told. Breakdowns were frequent and bumps with moveable and immovable objects were quite common. One of them, late at night, neatly removed the roof of a porch which overhung the road on the approach to Godshill and brought it back to Chale on top of the van, slates and all, unknown to the driver.

We had wonderful journeys around the Island in them. A journey to the west of the Island could be full of interest, perhaps going part of the way along the Military Road before it was made into the modern coast road. At some point we would turn off to meet the main Brighstone and Brook road and stop to look at the lifeboat, the *Susan Ashley*, in its shed at Brook. Then Freshwater Bay with the Albion Hotel and Totland with its little pier. There were also times we would have time to go down to Alum Bay and collect the many coloured sands from the cliff face. Another favourite trip was that to Ventnor and Bonchurch. We would usually have been to Newport first to collect malt for Mr PHILLIPS at the Ventnor Brewery. Sprake's provided him with this vital ingredient from their malt house in South Street. The Bonchurch Inn was another point of call and here, again, I would be treated to a glass of lemonade or ginger beer.'

Liz POTTINGER (IWFHS Member 7396)

liz.pottinger@hotmail.co.uk

Images supplied by Joyce, Ella, Derek and Graham SPRAKE

Footnote: Liz mentions that her father could only afford to have four books bound; one for each of his children and one she believes he donated to Chale school. Apparently, the school closed in 2010. Perhaps one of our readers knows the whereabouts of the school's copy of the book?

The History of Railways on the Isle of Wight

Summary of a Presentation Given to Isle of Wight Family History
Society Members
3rd February 2025

Presented by Cara Trevor, Heritage & Learning Manager, Isle of Wight Steam Railway.

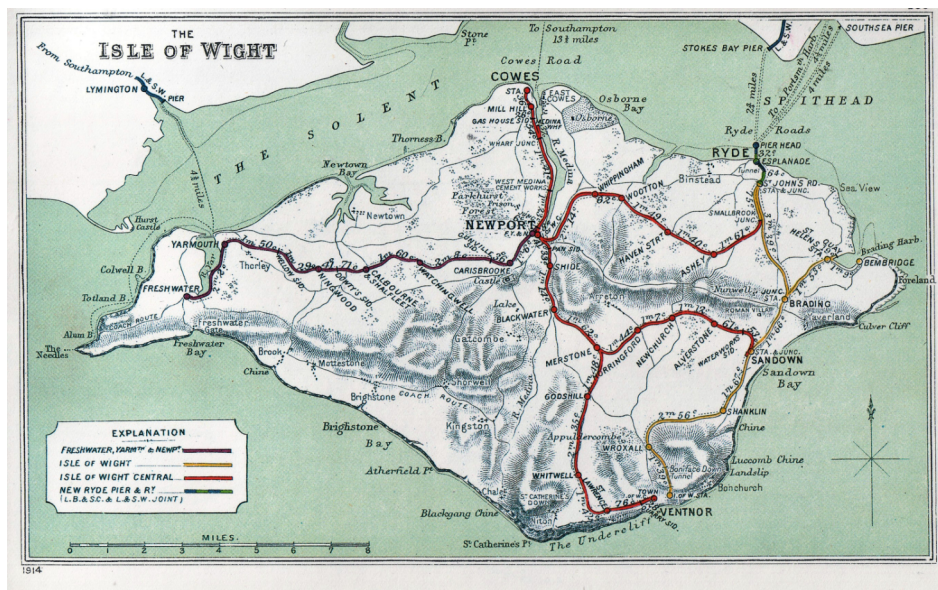
In the late 1850s, the first railway company on the Isle of Wight secured an Act of Parliament to open a new railway. The Cowes and Newport Railway opened on 16th June 1862, running 4½ miles linking the key port of Cowes with the county town of Newport. Two years later, the 7¼ mile Ryde to Shanklin section of the new Isle of Wight Railway opened on 23rd August 1864, followed by an additional 4 mile stretch to Ventnor opening on 10th September 1866. The delay in this line reaching Ventnor was due to the nature of the landscape, as it was necessary to create a 1312-yard tunnel to reach Ventnor. This railway line helped support tourism on the Island as it linked the key port town of Ryde with the seaside towns of Sandown, Shanklin and Ventnor.

1875 was a significant year for railways on the Isle of Wight, with two new railway lines opening. The 7¾ mile route of the Ryde and Newport Railway opened on 20th December 1875, linking Ryde to Newport and providing the first rail link between the two key ports on the Isle of Wight. This line included travelling via Smallbrook, Asheys, Haven Street (now Havenstreet) and Wootton, which now forms the route used by the Isle of Wight Steam Railway. The second new railway opening in 1875 was the 8¾ mile Isle of Wight (Newport Junction) Railway which opened between Sandown and Pan on the outskirts of Newport. Due to financial issues, the final ½ mile stretch was not completed until four years later, connecting the east wight Isle of Wight Railway to Newport.

The next two lines to be built are the two shortest stretches of railway on the Island. The Ryde Pier Company opened the 1¼ mile railway line from Ryde Pier Head to Ryde St John's Road in 1880. The first part between Ryde St John's Road to Ryde Esplanade opened on 5th April, with the remaining line to Ryde Pier Head opening three months later on 12th July 1880. Two years later, on 27th May 1882, the 2¾ mile railway between Brading and Bembridge opened. Run by the Brading Harbour Improvement Railway and Works Company, this line required

the construction of a dam embankment between St Helens and Bembridge. This line became part of the Isle of Wight Railway in 1898.

In 1887, the lines running between Cowes and Newport, Ryde and Newport and Sandown and Newport were amalgamated into Isle of Wight Central Railway. Whilst central and eastern towns on the Isle of Wight were served by railways, there were no railways supporting those living on the western side of the Island. This gap was filled with the opening of the 12 mile Freshwater, Yarmouth and Newport Railway on 11th July 1889. The Newport, Godshill and St Lawrence Railway became the last new railway to be built on the Isle of Wight, operating on a 5½ mile route between Merstone and St Lawrence. This line opened on 20th July 1897, with the final 1¼ mile stretch from St Lawrence to Ventnor West opening three years later on 1st June 1900.



1914 Railway Clearing House map of all railway lines on the Isle of Wight

Following World War One when railways were under government control, it became clear that there were benefits to having larger railway companies instead of lots of small independent railways. It was decided to group most railways into four geographical railway companies. These four railway companies were London & North Eastern Railway (LNER), London, Midland & Scottish Railway (LMS),

Great Western Railway (GWR) and Southern Railway (SR). The Grouping took place in 1923, and the railways on the Isle of Wight fell under the remit of the Southern Railway group.

In 1948 following World War Two, the next significant change affecting railways took place. The post-War Labour government decided to nationalise all transport into the British Transport Commission and the railways on the Isle of Wight became part of the Southern region of British Railways.

Following nationalisation, the future of a wide range of railways across the UK were assessed. British Railways originally proposed the closure of all railways on the Isle of Wight in the early 1950s, but the closures were implemented over a 14-year period. Between 1952 and 1966, all railway lines across the Isle of Wight closed, except for the line running between Ryde Pier Head and Shanklin via Brading and Sandown, which was electrified.

This appeared to be the end of steam railways on the Isle of Wight, but a dedicated group of individuals formed the Wight Locomotive Society with the aim of saving one Island locomotive and a selection of carriages. They managed to acquire the O2 Class locomotive W24 *Calbourne*, six carriages and some wagons.

ISLE OF WIGHT STEAM RAILWAY

An unforgettable adventure
through time

By Easter 1971, the Isle of Wight Steam Railway were running a service between Havenstreet and Wootton, and in 1991, this line was extended to Smallbrook Junction via Ashey, creating the railway line which now carries visitors to Isle of Wight Steam Railway today.

Cara TREVOR (non-member)
Heritage & Learning Manager, Isle of Wight Steam Railway

<https://iwsteamrailway.co.uk/heritage/isle-of-wight-steam-railway-history/>

Finished Your Family Tree?

A view of how you might have arrived there if ever you did.

Some people are content in just following back the line of their surname for a few generations and record just the basic facts like the birth, marriage and death dates.

Others will do just their ancestors. This can be quite a daunting and frustrating task as for each person there are two parents. So, as you step back through the generations the numbers increase. Two then 4 then 8 on to 16 then 32 and so on until you reach 15 generations back where there are 32,768 ancestors, if you managed find them all. As most families will have three or four generations per century this may only take you back to the 17th century.

Still others will, as well as going backwards, also work on all the descendants of each of their ancestors. Again this is quite a task as each person could be anything from an only child to having quite a few siblings; the largest number in my family tree is 18 siblings. Don't forget that a very large number of people married more than once.

Now to the last type of researcher. Like me, they also do the spouse of their ancestors and all their relatives, again following them back then working forward on all lines. Many will also have married so there are yet more lines to follow. It was while doing research on spouses and trying to break through a brick wall in one of my direct line ancestors that I found a link to the WARD family of Northwood House, Cowes. Some 12 sideways steps through the forest of family trees and hence names.

How easy is it to step back in time through the generations? That depends on many factors. What records are available, what names are being investigated and so on. Problems occur where birth, baptism and marriage records do not give a father's name. That effectively builds a brick wall on that line. Sometimes you can be lucky and find bastardy records as I did for one of my ancestors. It answered a lot of questions on the link between the DOUGHTY and CHAPMAN families in Lincolnshire.

Names can be a big problem. Go back just a 100 years or so and many people could not read or write and relied on the clerk to write down the

names in the register. He would have based this on what he heard or names he may have used in the past. So, ELGAR very easily became ALGAR, ALGER, ELGER or even EDGAR. When it comes to transcripts of written records there can be many errors as someone has had to decide what that scrawl is. Typically, was that a *T* or *F*, *S* an *L* and *a* was really *u*. I am still reporting many errors in the various census transcripts and other records where images are available.

In an effort to find or confirm links to people in the tree it is now possible to simply put their name and birth/death date into an internet search engine. Usually some hits turn up, many are not related, but those from Wikitree, Peerage, Geni, newspapers or Ancestry deserve a look. While many of these hits can confirm relationships and dates some even hint at missing dates or people. But there are also very many indicated people, relationships and dates that have already been dismissed as they proved to be incorrect.

As I always say; confirm the information for yourself from original documents if possible, no matter where it originally came from.

During a bit of spare time I decided to do a family tree for some fellow Island Games athletes; two sisters and their three brothers who all formed part of the team that went to Guernsey in July 2023. At the time three of them were married and had young children. Where to start? Usual entry forms ask them for basic information and to confirm what had already been found on the sports associations' websites 'Athletes' details section'. Sports associations can be a good source of information, many giving age, locations and competition results, sometimes also some family details.

I decided that I would initially just push back to around the 1851 census and restrict the number of sideways steps. After completing the basic ancestor line of the brothers and sisters, their line went back to Boarhunt in Hampshire. It was then the turn of their spouses. All went reasonably well for a couple of them but the third gave a surprise.

Working back through his line I came upon the name Lilian Kate BASTIANI (1884-1971). Now on my mother's side there is also a marriage to a Joseph BASTIANI (1863-1916). With such an unusual name and both with Island links the big question was are they related? After a bit of Census, BMD and register research the result was yes, they are related. So, my new cousins, quite a few times removed, went

to an International Games sporting event and came back with many medals.

Grafting this 200+ person family into my family tree bought the number of linked people up to 32,432. Just how big will my tree get? If I had restricted the number of sideways steps, I would never have found links to the families of WARD, CHURCHILL, Sir Edward ELGAR and a whole raft of other prominent people as well as many who were just an AgLab on an out of the way farm.

Sporting associations, clubs and sports related newspaper reports can be a very good but often overlooked resource.

Some years ago (1999) I found a book that made reference to a sports related newspaper report.

On page 64 of *Kent Headlines* by Alan BIGNELL was the following:

'The Shippe Swallower -- The Goodwin Sands ten miles long and about four miles wide lie roughly six miles off Deal beach. The first recorded cricket match played on the sands was on Friday 31 August 1813 when five Ramsgate gentlemen led by Thomas Elgar played four Thanet men led by George Withersden of Bethersden. Withersden's team won by 22 runs to 21.'

It is probable that tide stopped play. It goes on to describe other sporting events golf, running etc.

What for the future? Looks like it's to keep adding people and information from any and all links found in addition to direct line research and bashing down those brick walls as more resources become available/accessible.

Every time one of my nieces, nephews or one of their children marry that's yet another line to add and investigate, so the work will never stop and the family tree will expand ever further and will never be complete.

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Appuldurcombe House and What the Papers Said – Part 2

Henrietta BRIDGEMAN inherited Appuldurcombe House in 1805. She married the Hon Charles Anderson PELHAM in 1806. Their children were Charles Anderson Worsley PELHAM b1809 and Charlotte Anderson PELHAM b1810. Several papers reported her early death in June 1813.

The *Hampshire Chronicle* dated September 1818 has the next mention of the house. The Hon Charles A Pelham obtained a Game-keeper's Certificate at the rate of One Pound Five Shillings for the year 1818 for Henry LOE.

The matter of poaching cropped up again with a notice in the *Hampshire Chronicle* dated September 1819:

'Gentlemen being requested not to sport on any part of these estates without permission; any person found trespassing will be prosecuted. August 27th 1819. T SEWELL, Steward.'

In August 1822, the *Hampshire Chronicle* reported that

'A few days since, Mr George WHITE, of Sheepwash Farm, in this island, caught a remarkable milk white swallow, which he has presented to the Hon Chas Anderson Pelham of Appuldurcombe Park.'

The notice regarding poaching on the

'Lordship, Manor, and Royalty of Appuldurcombe; Manors of Sandford, Week, North Godshill, Godshill (otherwise South Godshill) Apse, Stenbury, Whitwell, St. Lawrence, and Wroxall; and Farms of Appuldurcombe, Apse Park, Redhill, Wroxall, Span, Little Span,



Henrietta Anna Maria Charlotte
BRIDGEMAN

Sheepwash, Saynham, Stenbury, Scotland, Whitwell, Dean, Berryl, Week, Wrongs, Upperhouse, and St. Lawrence, in the Isle of Wight – the property of the Hon. Chas. Anderson Pelham’

was once more reported in the *Hampshire Chronicle* dated August 1823 by T SEWELL, Steward.

Upon the death of his father in 1823, Charles Anderson Pelham became the Second Baron Yarborough.

Wild fowl appeared once again; from the *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* dated March 1824 when

‘Some days since, a man caught an eagle of an enormous size, in Appuldurcombe Park, in consequence of its being wounded.’

In August 1825, the *Morning Post* reported that

‘The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, accompanied by Prince George and Princess Augusta of Cambridge, and attended by Colonel PROTT and Baroness AHLFELDT, arrived here on Sunday from Portsmouth in the Medina steam packet.’

After a few days visit to Mr and Mrs NASH at East Cowes, Their Royal Highnesses, accompanied by the infant Prince and Princess, left in two carriages and passed through Newport and visited Appuldurcombe Park. His Lordship then returned with the Royal Highnesses back to East Cowes to the residence of Mr Nash. The Marquis of Anglesea, Lord Henry Seymour, Lord Yarborough, etc had the honour of dining with their Royal Highnesses.

The *Morning Post* dated January 1826 reported

‘FESTIVITIES AT APPULDURCOMBE PARK – Appuldurcombe Park has been, for the last week, the scene of a series of festivities. Its noble owner, Lord Yarborough, according to a custom long established at his seat in Lincolnshire, has received a succession of parties, embracing all the gentlemen’s families of the Island, in the true style of the elder times. Dinner is served in the saloon, the brawn’d boar’s head and the princely baron of beef, form prominent objects, whilst the full pledge that hails the Yule cake, and the log blazing on the hearth, carry us insensibly back to feudal ages, and baronial splendour. We need not add, that amidst the luxuries of the

rich, the poor have not been forgotten: every cottage in the neighbourhood has been plentifully supplied with beef and strong beer, and every casual comer partakes of his Lordship's bounty. The whole has been a display of hospitality hitherto unknown to the Isle of Wight, and which, we understand, will not cease till it has ushered in the new year.'

Another notice regarding game and poaching was printed in the *Hampshire Chronicle* in August 1826.

In October 1826, the *Hampshire Chronicle* reported

'We are sorry to say, that as our worthy Commodore*, Lord Yarborough, was going from hence on Tuesday night, to his seat, at Appuldurcombe, his carriage, in going down Hunny Hill, the entrance of Newport, upset. His Lordship and his eldest son, the Hon. Charles Pelham, and Mr BELL, the surgeon of his yacht, were the inmates; the two former, we are happy to say, were only slightly bruised; the only unfortunate sufferer was the doctor, whose collar bone was dislocated and his arm broken. This accident was occasioned by the neglect of those employed in lowering the hill and widening the entrance of the town, where a hole was left, and no light or other precautionary steps taken. This is the second accident which has taken place there.'

*Lord Yarborough was a founder of the Royal Yacht Squadron, West Cowes and in 1825 was appointed as Commodore.

The *Morning Herald* (London) dated November 1828 reported

'NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT – On Thursday a very merry peal of bells announced to us the arrival of our noble and respected recorder, the right Hon. Lord Yarborough, after an absence of six months. He stopped only to breakfast, and immediately after left here, in company with his son and two gentlemen, for his splendid mansion at Appuldurcombe, in this Island.'

The splendidly titled *Naval & Military Gazette & Weekly Chronicle of the United Service* dated March 1834 reported that

'Commodore Lord Yarborough arrived at his seat, Appuldurcombe Park, on Friday last. His Lordship paid a visit to the R.Y.S. house

yesterday. We are happy to state that his Lordship is in good health. His Lordship leaves the island in a few days.'

In April 1835, the *Hampshire Chronicle* reported

'Lord Yarborough and his sister, the Hon. Mrs TENNANT, are arrived at his Lordship's seat, Appuldurcombe Park, where they will remain for the Easter recess.'

The *Morning Post*, dated January 1836 stated that

'The benevolent Lord Yarborough has been making great largesse's to the poor at the magnificent family seat, Appuldurcombe, in the Isle of Wight.'

The *Hampshire Advertiser* dated September 1837 reported that

'A fine Elm tree was deposited in Mr. Joseph WHITE's yard on Tuesday, which had blown down on the domain of the Earl of Yarborough, in Appuldurcombe Park, in this Island; it measured 275 solid feet.'

This was to be used for a new yacht for the Earl of Yarborough.

The *Hampshire Advertiser* dated March 1838 reported

'Died, on Monday night, at Appuldurcombe Lodge, Mr Henry LOWE, head gamekeeper to the Right Honourable the Earl of Yarborough.'

The *Salisbury & Winchester Journal* dated May 1840 reported that

'A sheep of the extraordinary weight of 55st. 4lbs., bred on the estate of Lord Yarborough, at Appuldurcombe, I.W., was exhibited in our market on Wednesday, and drew considerable attention.'

The 1841 Census recorded that two female servants, Ann BRITTON aged 40 and Martha WARGENT aged 45, were the sole occupants of Appuldurcombe House.

Lesley ABRAHAM (IWFHS Member 540)

Sources: British Newspaper Archives, Wikipedia, FindMyPast,
A Web of English History – Dr Marjorie BLEY

Apprentices from the Workhouse

This report is based on the talk Jean THOMPSON gave to the Society on Monday 3rd March. She derived her presentation from research undertaken as part of her dissertation for the degree of MA in History at the Open University; based on the period 1802-1830. Jean focused on the Poor Laws and their implementation, concentrating on the treatment of children; then compared and contrasted the differing outcomes of the apprentice schemes operated by the Borough of Newport versus pauper apprentices from the Island's House of Industry.

The Poor Laws

In the 16th century a series of statutes were passed which were eventually consolidated into the 'Great Poor Law'. This Act set up the first mandatory system of publicly financed poor relief and ordered that 'every aged, disabled and impotent person should be relieved'. Parishes were the unit of administration. Taxes (Poor Rates) were raised and set locally by the Overseer of the Poor and were payable by residents.

The impotent poor were to be cared for in poorhouses, the able-bodied poor were set to work in a house of industry, the idle poor and vagrants were sent to houses of correction (or prison) and pauper children would become apprentices. There were two types of relief:

- Outdoor Relief; the poor stayed in their own homes and would be given a 'dole'. In 1821 Richard WARE from Northwood was awarded a pension of one shilling per week for his children as they were deaf and dumb
- Indoor Relief; the poor and orphans would go into the parish workhouse. On 27th December 1804, James TUCKER from Godshell who had a withered hand was admitted into the house of industry

These arrangements led to arguments over which parish was responsible for a pauper until the Settlement Act of 1662 which determined residence of a parish by the location of birth, marriage and apprenticeship. On 14th August 1820 Harriet NEWELL aged four was issued with a removal order from the Isle of Wight.

In 1834, the New Poor Law abolished outdoor relief and centralised control in the hands of commissioners in Somerset House. Parishes had to form into unions and assistance was only available after admission to the workhouse.

The House of Industry in the Isle of Wight 1771-1833

This was originally located on Holyrood Street when a 1771 Act established a house of industry belonging to the several parishes on the Island. Its purpose was to manage the impotent poor, let out able-bodied poor for harvest work and apprehend idle persons not maintaining their families. It also gave the guardians the legal right to put out as apprentices all children aged from nine to twenty-one.

By 1774, there was a new house of industry; the old workhouse became the town gaol and county bridewell and finally the police station. The new house was located on 80 acres in Parkhurst Forest and was built at a cost of £19000 paid for by a loan taken out against future income. The yearly rent charged was set at £8 17s ½d.

The house was a large two-storey L-shaped red brick building. It was 300 feet long by 27 wide and provided separate accommodation for men, women, boys, girls and infants. Unusually at the time, there were rooms for married couples. Other facilities included the dining hall and kitchen, bakehouse, sick wards, washhouse, brewery, laundry, workrooms, schools, governor's and matron's sitting room and chapel.

Jean showed us a chart of statistics for the number of residents each month in 1802. There was accommodation for 700 residents but numbers never exceeded 550. There tended to be slightly more adult females than males and slightly more boys than girls.

Inmates were given clothing, food and shelter. There were set times for meals, morning, noon and evening, and for bedtime. Clean linen was issued on Saturday evenings. Tobacco, spirits and tea were prohibited. Girls were instructed in cookery, housewifery, washing and scouring to prepare them for domestic service. The able-bodied were expected to work producing sacks used for coal, flour and biscuits; they were rented

out to farmers during harvest time but all income was the property of the house.

Conditions were deemed 'good' according to four detailed inspections. The national view was that it was one of the better establishments. Jean showed us a chart of the food provided at the daily meals; there was boiled beef for Sunday dinner but otherwise it mostly consisted of potatoes and bread and butter.

Residents were subject to the Bye-Laws set out in 1792 in a ten-page regulations document. Unmarried mothers were kept separate and had their names entered in a 'black book'. They were not permitted to eat meat and had to wear coarse yellow coats.

From 1771, 24 directors and 36 acting guardians were appointed as Guardians of the Poor. They sat on two committees; 2 directors and 5 guardians on the Weekly Committee dealing with everyday matters and 15 guardians and directors on the Quarterly Committee. The house was run by the governor, matron, treasurer, schoolmaster, chaplain, chapel clerk, secretary and two surgeons.

Treatment of children in the early 19th Century

At the time, the working classes were mostly illiterate so little is known first-hand about their attitude towards children. As awareness of children's treatment increased, legislation for their protection was enacted, starting with the 1788 Act against the employment of child chimney sweeps and continued on through several factory acts.

The 1833 Factory Act limited the maximum working week for children to 48 hours per week with no more than 8 hours per day for those aged 9 to 13 and no child less than 9 was permitted to work in a factory. Jean explained that the changing attitude towards children is an important factor in understanding the role the parish authorities played when assigning children to apprenticeships.

Apprenticeship Schemes

The 1563 Statute of Apprentices, till its repeal in 1814, provided the legal framework under which apprentices and masters worked. This

applied to all trades except agriculture (husbandry) because the crown and a parliament dominated by large landowners required abundant cheap farm labour to work the land.

A legal covenant drawn up between them sanctioned the relationship between an apprentice and master. The master would agree to teach a profession and the apprentice to learn. Other parties to an indenture must include parent or guardian and officer of the charity or workhouse.

The apprentice had to obey all lawful commands of the master in connection with the business. Money earned by an apprentice was the rightful property of a master. An apprentice could be chastised for misbehaviour or if he absconded, the master could apply for his return. There was little redress for apprentices; their most common complaint was low or no wages.

- On 9th January 1823, Sir Richard BASSET was instructed by the Guardians of the Poor on the Isle of Wight to enforce a warrant for the return of Barnabus SERLE who had been apprenticed to John LAWRENCE.

In a normal apprenticeship a parent or guardian would choose a life-long career for their wards or children. The scheme was designed to exclude poor children. Apprenticeships in some trades such as Merchant, Mercer, Draper, Goldsmith and Ironmonger were only permitted to those with land worth 40 shillings.

Pauper children were also subject to the Statute of Apprentices of 1563 but with different conditions which gave powers to two Justices of the Peace to bind them out. A 1696 Act compelled parishioners chosen by rota to take pauper children as apprentices; refusal could be punished by a £10 fine.

The system was soon perverted by becoming a means of purging a parish of the need to support pauper children by placing them with a master in a different parish where they would acquire settlement rights.

Jean analysed data from 705 entries in the Parish Register of Apprentices from the House of Industry 1802-1833 which were the only registers that survived. She could find no indentures for apprentices from the House of Industry.

If masters could not be found for children, the guardians would instruct the overseers to put out advertisements at Michaelmas giving the names of children available and offering £10 to respectable persons willing to take them.

Jean then showed us a series of detailed charts on the outcomes for pauper apprentices from the house of industry:

- Island landowners with details of acreage owned and number of apprentices employed
- Names of apprentices with details of their trade, master and residence
- Statistics of the number of apprentices from the house of industry per year from 1802 to 1833
- How many apprentices were assigned to which trades
- Their ages when apprenticed, percentages of boys and girls, and length of apprenticeship and fees paid by the house of industry

Jean's statistics demonstrated that well over two thirds of pauper apprentices went into agriculture (husbandry) or service (housewifery). She was able to find little information on their subsequent careers.

By contrast, a pie chart showed the range of trades taken on by children apprenticed by Newport Borough. They included tailors, cordwainers or carpenters, and certainly no husbandry or housewifery:

- Leigh WILLIAMS (indenture NBC/3/559) was registered as a hairdresser. He was apprenticed in 1831 to James ALLEN by his father who paid a premium of £7
- James SNUDDEN (indenture NBC/3/560) was registered as a tailor in Pyle Street. He was apprenticed in 1832 to James ALLEN
- Henry MARSHALL (indenture NBC/3/567) was registered as a bootmaker in Chapel Street, Newport. He was apprenticed in 1834 to Emanuel SILVERLOCK

Jean concluded that pauper children were at a distinct disadvantage when compared with children apprenticed under normal and charity schemes. They were assigned to trades which were unlikely to give them the ability to support themselves.

Reported by Steve NEWBERRY (IWFHS Member 2189)
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New Members

It is courteous to respond to any messages from other members.
Only IOW surname interests will be listed here.

- 7396 **Mrs Elizabeth POTTINGER:** liz.pottinger@hotmail.co.uk
(no research interests yet received)
- 7397 **Mr Gary Raymond HODSON:** gazza1500@hotmail.co.uk

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LOVE	IOW	All Areas	All Centuries
- 7404 **Mrs Georgina GREEN:** gng1@live.co.uk
(no research interests yet received)
- 7406 **Mrs Juliet ROBERTS:** mumof8@gmail.com
(no research interests yet received)
- 7410 **Mr Peter TAYLOR:** peter.taylor6571@gmail.com

ALMY	IOW	19th Century
ASHFORD	IOW	18th-19th Centuries
KELSEY	IOW	19th Century
SPURRIER	IOW	18th-19th Centuries
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- 7414 **Ms Lisa CARLE:** lmcarle@gmail.com
(no research interests yet received)
- 7415 **Mr Alexander NEALE:** nealeaj@live.com
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- 7416 **Miss Georgina MORRIS:** gmorris17@hotmail.co.uk
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- 7420 **Ms Debbie WORNER:** debbie.worner@gmail.com
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- 7425 **Mr Steven SHEATH:** spsorchs@btinternet.com
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- 7429 **Miss Anne Elizabeth SALTER:** anniealfie85@btinternet.com

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RYALL	IOW	All areas	All Centuries
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- 7431 **Ms Jane Carina WALLACE:** brightshadow3@gmail.com
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- 7433 **Mrs Debbie BEAVIS:** sunraysia@hotmail.co.uk
(no research interests yet received)
- 7434 **Mr Christopher STEPHENS:** chris.karenstephens@gmail.com

HAYES	IOW	19th Century
HAYLES	IOW	19th Century
STEPHENS	IOW	19th Century
- 7436 **Mrs Jacqui MIDDLEMISS:** scruffyjacks@gmail.com

STEPHENS	IOW	Shanklin	19th Century
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- 7438 **Mr Brian Eric MORRIS:** brian123uk@gmail.com
(no research interests yet received)

Returning Members

- 6684 **Mrs Roz HAWKRIDGE:** rhawkridge@sky.com
(no research interests yet received)
- 6969 **Mrs Jill KIDDLE:** jill26kiddle@btinternet.com
(no research interests yet received)

Some Useful Addresses

Isle of Wight County Record Office (closed on Tuesdays and weekends)
26 Hillside, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 2EB

record.office@iow.gov.uk

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/births-deaths-and-ceremonies/family-history/>

Isle of Wight Register Office

Seaclose Offices, Fairlee Road, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 2QS

registrars@iow.gov.uk

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/births-deaths-and-ceremonies/>

Bembridge

<https://www.bembridgeheritage.org.uk>

Brading

<https://www.bradingcommunityarchive.com>

East Cowes

<https://www.friendsofeastcowes.co.uk>

Freshwater and Totland

<http://www.fatag.co.uk>

Newport and Carisbrooke Cemeteries

<https://foncc.org.uk>

Northwood Cemetery

www.friendsofnorthwoodcemetery.org.uk

Isle of Wight History Centre

<https://www.iwhistory.org.uk>

Ryde

<https://www.rshg.org.uk>

Shalfleet

<http://www.sources.shalfleet.net>

Ventnor

<https://ventnorheritage.org.uk>

Family History Federation

<https://www.familyhistoryfederation.com>

The National Archives

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>

SAVE THE DATE

ANNIVERSARY LUNCH, SUNDAY 28TH SEPT 2025



Lakeside Park Hotel, High Street, Wootton Bridge, Ryde, Isle of Wight, PO33 4LJ

Reserve your place(s) at our anniversary lunch by emailing
Membership Secretary

Gerry Newberry membership.secretary.iowfhs@gmail.com

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